

# IDEAS for *Evangelism*

David & Linda Cloud



*Ideas for Evangelism*

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# About Way of Life's eBooks

Since January 2011, Way of Life Literature books have been available in eBook format. Some are available for purchase, while others are available for free download.

The eBooks are designed and formatted to work well on a variety of applications/devices, but not all apps/devices are equal. Some allow the user to control appearance and layout of the book while some don't even show italics! For best reading pleasure, please choose your reading app carefully.

For some suggestions, see the report "[iPads, Kindles, eReaders, and Way of Life Materials](#)" at the Way of Life web site.

## Which Format?

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that they provide syncing across devices (i.e.: a Kindle reader and Kindle for PC or Kindle for Mac and iPad). If you read on multiple devices and use bookmarks or make highlights, consider a store download from the appropriate site.

# Preface

The following report is the fruit of our effort to collect ideas for evangelism. They have been gleaned from many sources, including our own missionary and church experiences that go back more than 40 years. We have spent 20 years in church planting in South Asia. We have also ministered on bus routes, in jails, taught Sunday School classes, witnessed on military bases and university campuses, in nursing homes, and in many other situations.

We have also had the privilege of corresponding with hundreds of people on this subject.

It is so easy for churches to get “stuck in a rut” with their gospel outreach. For some reason, the New Evangelical and Charismatic crowds often appear to have more resourcefulness and vision than Bible-believing fundamental Baptists do. Of course, I realize that much of their evangelistic work is operated contrary to the teaching of Scripture. They are willing to use carnal means such as rock music, and they are not “hindered” by having to preach unpopular things such as repentance and separation. But the fact remains that it is largely the New Evangelical and charismatic and emerging crowds that are busy on the public school and college campuses, who are going head to head with the secular humanists, who are reaching into every part of the communities, from the poor to the rich, who are in the city ghettos, and who are targeting the unevangelized “people groups.”

It is always helpful to get a fresh vision, but we do not need to go to the “church growth” gurus such as Bill Hybels and Rick Warren to learn how to use carnal,

ecumenical, and self-esteem tools to attract a crowd. Many have fallen into this trap and are now traveling down the slippery slope of compromise.

We simply need to stand back and prayerfully analyze what we have been commanded to do, what we are doing, and how we can do it more effectively for the glory of Jesus Christ.

We need to evaluate our “traditional” programs and meetings before the Lord and His Word with the goal of using our brief time on this earth to the greatest spiritual advantage. It is easy to get into a traditional rut, and fundamental Baptists are as guilty of this as anyone else.

The difference between being fruitful and less fruitful in soul winning is often determined by relatively small things. I have observed this in fishing. When I was growing up in Florida, I went bass fishing frequently with my dad and granddad. During the years we lived in the Pacific Northwest, I learned how to fish for trout, salmon, and walleye. The difference between a good fisherman and a mediocre one often comes down to small things, such as how you work the lure (how fast you reel it, how you twitch it, how deep you work it, etc.), how well you discern the fish’s bite, how you fix the bait on the hook, what color lure you use, how fresh the bait is, and dozens of other “little” things. Two fishermen can go to the same lake at the same time of the day and use the same equipment, but one can consistently catch more fish than the other if he is wiser about the little things. I remember when I finally learned how to work a Buzz Bomb lure effectively to catch salmon off the shores of Whidbey Island north of Seattle. Day after day I had gone out to the hot spots where the other salmon

fishermen were congregating, and I had cast my Buzz Bombs out into the Pacific Ocean until I thought my arm was going to fall off, but more often than not I returned home empty handed. I had the right equipment, even the right color and size Buzz Bomb, but something was missing. One day a friend showed me that I was jigging the lure too aggressively, that I needed to let it stay closer to the bottom and jig it more gently. Bingo! That was the missing piece of the puzzle. My salmon fishing became very effective. In fact, my two boys and I caught 220 pounds of salmon that fall, largely because of that one simple tip.

The same is true for evangelism. Two Bible-believing churches can operate a Sunday School in the same city and one will be more fruitful than the other simply because of the difference in zeal and effectual planning and the details of how the Sunday School is operated. The same is true for Vacation Bible School and “door knocking” and every other type of evangelism. Having a “program” is not enough. It must be conducted wisely.

Of course, the bottom line with evangelism is that it must be done. There is a saying, “I like my way of doing it better than your way of *not* doing it.” While it is crucial that we subject everything we do to the biblical standard—prove all things; hold fast that which is good—it is also crucial that we rise up and do *something* for the Lord while there is still time. One evangelistic “idea” well used is better than 100 not used.

David & Linda Cloud  
Fifth edition  
January 3, 2012

# Introduction

## Pastoral Leadership Is Essential

An effective and fruitful evangelistic church outreach begins with godly pastors who rise to the challenge of training, motivating, and leading the congregation to fulfill this essential responsibility before God.

There is a saying that “everything rises and falls on leadership.” While we do not agree completely with that, for the simple reason that a lot also rises and falls on “followship,” we do agree that *much* rises and falls on leadership. Though God’s people are individually responsible to obey His commands and to seek the salvation of the lost, they are also likened to sheep; and sheep must have a shepherd. That is why God has given pastors to the churches. It is why the apostles quickly ordained pastors in each church they started (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). It is a fact of history that the rise and fall of churches is largely determined by the character and zeal of the leadership.

The first key to evangelism in the congregation, therefore, lies with the church leaders. It is crucial that the pastors be godly men who are zealous for evangelism and world missions and that they promote this zeal to the congregation, and that they frequently bring in other men who can help stir up this zeal. The natural tendency is for Christians, through the normal business and cares of life and the natural tendency toward spiritual slothfulness, to turn inward and to lose their zeal to win the unsaved to Christ. There must, therefore, be a regular emphasis on this urgent matter or it can quickly grow lukewarm.

In planting new churches, one of the keys to success is for the preacher(s) to spend many hours a week in soul winning endeavors. God blesses this zeal with church growth. It is not uncommon, though, for preachers who start out spending a lot of time in personal evangelism to grow increasingly lax in this matter as the years pass.

## **A Biblical Goal of Evangelism Is Essential**

We must understand that the goal of a church's evangelism ministry is not to produce big numbers of professions, but to preach the gospel to as many people as possible and to baptize and disciple the converts that God gives. The goal is to make disciples, not obtain mere professions.

The goal of a church in every endeavor is to be faithful to God's Word. We are not free to use just any type of evangelistic promotion or methodology to get a crowd. Everything must conform to the Word of God. For example, promotions that turn the holy house of God into a carnival are wrong. Can you imagine turning the Old Testament Temple of God into a promotional circus, with the high priest swallowing goldfish to attract a crowd! Promotions that encourage shallow, emotional decisions are wrong. Worldly things such as rock music cannot be used to lead people to a holy God. A wise man observed, "What you win them with you win them to."

The following letter from a missionary to Germany speaks to the matter of having the proper biblical goal in our evangelism and not being pressured into the "big church equals success" mentality:

"I and my wife are missionaries in Germany. We are sent out by the Emmanuel Baptist Church in

Morgantown, WV., which the Lord used us to plant before coming to try the same in Germany. Our work here is somewhat unusual in that we have Germans, Russians, and Gypsies making up the congregation. We have been in Germany for 12 years and it seems the church is getting to the place where it may be able to go on without us in the not too distant future.

“Having to adjust somewhat to another culture (really three cultures) we have tried to constantly emphasize that we are not here to establish an American church, or a Russian church, or a Gypsy church, or even a German church (all of which would love to see it done ‘their way.’) I have tried constantly to stress the need for a ‘Bible church.’ This has caused me to reexamine all my philosophy of ministry in light of Scripture, for if I do anything that I cannot back with Scripture, they will let me know that I am trying to ‘Americanize’ them. There are some traditional ‘Baptist practices’ that I had to reexamine in light of the Word of God and pitch overboard. Not that they are bad practices, but they are just traditions and not necessarily found in the Bible.

“Our church is by no means a large church and I do not profess to have found anything new, but I feel there are biblical means and methods of evangelizing that God does bless. **I do feel if anyone is looking for something that produces ‘great numbers’ they are setting themselves up for a fall. In fact, I believe that mentality has hurt our Independent Baptist Churches more than anything else in this generation.** Many of us (of course there are no doubt many exceptions) were schooled in the ‘super church’ philosophy of doing ‘something great’ for God. I was led to believe that if I followed certain methods and philosophies of ministry that God would bless and build a great church. I think many of us were and maybe still are consumed with ‘doing something big’ and after a while if God doesn’t seem to be adding as quickly as we think He should, we tend to resort to our ‘modern methods.’ As I see it, many have been so consumed with achieving ‘great goals’ that must be attained if we are to be ‘successful’ we have permitted the enemy to dupe us into filling our churches with many lost people who have been taught the doctrine of

eternal security and believe that all is well. Our churches, in such cases, are usually powerless and do nothing but fuss over things that do not amount to a hill of beans. Since we are not experiencing God's blessings, we are tempted to find still 'better and newer methods' so we can stay 'competitive' with churches that are growing in number, for whatever reason.

"In my opinion we are reaping what we have sown for a number of years with our foot in the door, bow your head and repeat this prayer, evangelism. Many have then resorted to 'promotional evangelism' which seems to have cheapened the power of the gospel to a worldly carnival atmosphere. Many of us have tried to sow the seed, water the seed, and reap the harvest in a matter of 15 minutes. How often have we been guilty of baptizing lost people just because they bowed their head and parroted a prayer. How many of the problem people in our churches today are there because we recruited them and baptized them and got them on the roll as members *ourselves*?

"I think if we really expect God's blessing, we don't need 'new methods,' we need to get back to some biblical methods. IN MY OPINION WE NEED TO FORGET THE WORD 'SUCCESS' AND JUST BE CONSUMED WITH DOING GOD'S WILL. Being a missionary in a cold, hard, and mostly spiritually dead country like Germany soon made me realize that the success and bigness mentality will do little more than discourage you and send you packing in search of 'greener pastures,' which is usually artificial turf. Biblical success is simply doing what God has ordained in His Word. Most people would say that we are total failures for we have been in Germany for 12 years and have a church of about 80 people, some of which were in the church when we took it over. Something that I had to learn quickly in a spiritually cold country like Germany, is that we can only sow and water, but God has to give the increase. We have tried our best not to get involved with the number or success mentality but to simply try to be faithful in doing the biblical work of the ministry. I am sure that there are many of our brethren who have not made the same mistakes in

these areas that I have, but I do not think that this problem has been confined to only a few of our churches.

“Here goes with some things that I feel we need to do in our Independent Baptist Churches if we are to see the Lord’s blessing and power. This does not mean that we will have great numbers, nor does it mean that we will be able to ‘compete’ with the Evangelicals or Charismatics, but it means we may be able to hear HIM say ‘well done thou good and faithful servant.’

“(1) I think we as preachers need to spend more time in our studies doing the hard work of sermon preparation so we can stand before our people with confidence and power when we preach. I think that most of us have spent too much time running and ‘staying busy’ because we have not been disciplined or maybe have not been taught how to study the Word of God. (I do not profess to have attained this discipline, but I do recognize it as a major weakness in my ministry). . . .

“(2) I think we need to determine to preach the whole counsel of God. Again, I am not saying that I have attained this discipline, but I see the great need in our churches to preach much more expository type sermons. If we spend more time expounding what God has said within the context in which He said it, we can expect Him to bless it. I believe this is a very great weakness in our churches, we (at least I) was never taught the very difficult work of preaching expository sermons through books of the Bible and giving things the emphasis that God gave them in His inspired Word. I don’t want to be too hard, but I wonder why we as Independent Baptists spend so much time preaching about the inspiration of the Word and so little time preaching what it says. Is it not true that we all are guilty of trying to find a Bible verse to ‘prove’ what we ‘feel’ the Lord wants us to ‘preach.’ We stand up and read a verse of Scripture, close our Bible, and then launch out into the deep of our own little pet peeves and hobby horses. If we get real red in the face and scream loud enough and get enough amens and send our people home wounded and bleeding from the brow

beating we gave them, we feel as though we really preached a barn burner. When the people don't come back or soon transfer to another church, we skin them alive, and tell everyone, ourselves included, that they probably are not saved or they just can't take the 'strong meat' of the Word. I am not suggesting compromise, I am simply suggesting sound biblical preaching that brings Holy Ghost conviction on the lost as well as feed the people of God and cause them to want to bring their friends and neighbors to hear more of the same. . . . [Note from Bro. Cloud: We agree completely with Bro. Darnell about the importance of sound biblical preaching and we also agree that much of the preaching in fundamental Baptist circles is shallow. We believe a mixture of expository and topical preaching is the ideal balance. The bottom line is that the pastor must carefully teach the Word of God so that the people become strong in the Scriptures and become real disciples of Christ, and this missionary's comments remind us that in many cases this is not happening.]

“(3) I think we would do well to reexamine our ‘altar calls.’ Only the Lord knows how many people have walked an isle and parroted a prayer and were baptized, that have left the church never to be seen again. The modern altar call as we have practiced for so many years and believed to be a fundamental of the faith, sometimes neglects the need of good old-fashioned Holy Ghost conviction. In examining the soul winning methods of our Savior, we can't help but notice that He never pressed for ‘decisions.’ He never tried to maneuver people into praying a prayer so He would look successful. He preached and taught the Word of God and usually left the people to themselves to think over what He had said. He realized that sowing and reaping seldom happen on the same day. He expected the Word to do its work in the heart of the individual. He did not run after people who were not willing to repent and trust Him. In my opinion, we need to quit trying to manipulate those who come to listen to us and permit God to use the Word that we preach to do a real work in their lives. This does not mean that we should not give them an opportunity to respond to Christ in some way after the sermon, but if we are

consumed with our 'record' of having someone down the isle every Sunday and go into the baptistry, I fear we will be an easy prey for 'an ego driven ministry' rather than a ministry that glorifies the Lord.

"(4) I think that ongoing discipleship classes would help make our churches stronger and would produce real converts for the glory of God. Of course, if a preacher is consumed with being 'successful' he will want to be out beating the bushes trying to get someone lined up for the baptistry for the coming Sunday, rather than discipling his people. Please forgive me if I sound somewhat sarcastic, but I am simply preaching to myself with the thought that there may be some more of the brethren that have been tricked by the enemy into a carnal, fleshly, egotistic ministry, most of which will go up in smoke at the judgment seat of Christ. Most of us would rather blast our people for their lack of Christian growth rather than take the time to disciple them as we should. Maybe the reason they are not growing is that they were never really saved and maybe they were never really saved because they were victims of our pulling and tugging or high pressure 'soul winning' tactics. Or maybe they are not growing because they are saved but don't know how to grow and learn and mature, because all they have ever heard from us has been our list of hobby horses that we have come to believe are the marks of true Christianity. ...

"In closing, I think we need to try to think biblically. . . . Christ told us to be faithful and He reminded us that our works will be tried at the Bema seat as to 'what sort' they are. God help us not to simply sit passively by and let the world go to hell, but at the same time not to forget that only He can give the increase as we are faithful in ministering biblically."

Thanks for your very informative ministry, Brother Cloud,  
Barry Darnell

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This is the type of preacher that we need.

We need preachers who don't follow the crowd and who are more fearful of God than the "good old boys network." We need preachers who want to honor and impress Christ more than the school they attended or some well-known Baptist Pubah. We need preachers who don't give mere lip service to the doctrine that "the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice," but who are willing to examine even revered Baptist traditions by that Authority and let the chips fall where they may. My prayer is that the Lord will multiply this tribe.

# **Training the People**

Not only must the pastors lead the church in evangelism by their example but also by training and challenging the people. Pastors can do only a small part of the ministry. Their chief task is to train the congregation so they can do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-13). It is God's will for every believer to be a missionary at some level.

It has often been observed that most people who get saved and added to churches do so not through the efforts of a pastor but through the efforts of "ordinary" church members. A pastor's goal is to train the congregation in evangelism and missionary work, lead them in it, help them have a vision for it.

In light of the emphasis God puts upon the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8), it should be obvious that this type of training must have a high priority. This training must involve all levels of the congregation, the new converts, new members from other churches, the older saints, the young people, the women, the men, even the children. The pastors must develop and carry out a training program that thoroughly and repeatedly prepares the congregation for the work of seeking the lost. This does not have to be the same material used over and over. The pastors should be constantly on the outlook for fresh material to use in this task.

## **Emphasize Evangelism by Word and Deed**

One of the most important things a pastor can do to promote evangelism through his congregation is to exalt

and emphasize the work of the gospel. There are countless ways to do this: Mentioning it often during the messages, having regular training sessions, bringing in special speakers, requiring that church workers be involved in evangelism, etc.

A pastor must also remember that he sends messages to the congregation not only by his speech but also by his actions. If he says he is concerned about evangelism and wants the people to be involved but he isn't involved, or if he promotes members of the congregation as workers and leaders who care nothing for evangelism, his actions will say more than his words.

I recall a pastor who had allowed the evangelism program to die in his church because of lack of interest by the people. After a year or so, he announced to the church that he was deeply concerned about the situation and was convicted that he had not done right to stop the organized visitation program. For several services he told the people that the visitation would start again and that he wanted large participation. In several sermons he preached boldly that it is wrong for deacons and Sunday School teachers or choir members, etc., never to share the gospel and visit the unsaved. He had meetings with his deacons and Sunday School teachers and told them that he wanted all of them to participate in the visitation.

After a few weeks of this he re-started the visitation program on a Thursday night. Only a handful of people showed up. If I remember correctly, there were no deacons or Sunday School teachers there. After a few weeks of this, with little or no noticeable increase in the number of church members who came out for visitation, he let the subject drop. He kept up the visitation program

in a low-key manner, but he did very little to push it and he stopped rebuking the people for their lack of participation.

In fact, even though most of the men refused to come out on visitation, he let them start up a new inter-church softball league for Saturday evenings just a few weeks after starting the new visitation program. Lots of people who showed zero interest in evangelism got enthusiastically involved in this new scheme.

Through all of this the people received a loud message: the pastor will preach about some things that might make you uncomfortable once in a while, but you don't have to take it seriously. If you simply ignore him he will eventually let it slide and things will get back to normal. The people are in charge in that church, and they know just what to do to manipulate the pastor.

This reminds me of how crucial it is to have high standards for church workers. An "ordinary" church member cannot necessarily be forced to participate in visitation or to dress properly during the week or to separate from worldly music or such things, but a church can certainly require that its workers be examples of what God requires of His people. The workers set the tone for the whole congregation. They set the tone for what new converts will eventually become. If the pastor does not require that the workers be examples of what he preaches from the Word of God, he is undercutting the preaching. We have seen this scenario repeated time and time again across the country.

## The Right Message

The first thing that we need to learn in order to be an effective evangelist is the right message. In Acts 20:21 the Apostle Paul summarized the message that he preached: “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Christians today must be taught to avoid all forms of “quick prayerism.” Any Christian, no matter how young in the Lord, can testify for Jesus Christ; but it is also crucial that Christians be instructed in the gospel message and God’s obligation upon sinners. It is crucial that they understand that salvation is of God and that people cannot be saved merely by mouthing a prayer. There must be the working of the Holy Spirit in conviction. The sinner must exercise repentance toward God and faith toward Christ.

These things are dealt with extensively in the book *Repentance and Soul Winning* [Way of Life Literature, [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org)]

*The Soul Winner* by Charles Haddon Spurgeon has much excellent material for challenging Christians in evangelism. There are online editions.

An excellent tool for explaining biblical repentance and faith is *Salvation Bible Basics* by Pastor Doug Hammett, [Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, <http://www.lvbaptist.org>.] This consists of four in-depth lessons on Bible salvation. A good foundation is laid by defining sin from God’s perspective and helping the sinner to see his lost condition before God. In Lesson Four, Repentance and Faith are carefully explained. It is very unusual for an evangelistic Bible study to go into repentance as thoroughly as this one does. A simple chart helps

illustrate the Bible truths. This is not only a good course to use with the unsaved but is also a good training tool for church members. By taking the members through this course, the pastor can present the gospel clearly to his own people and can also show them how to use the course with their unsaved friends.

## **Scripture Memorization**

Another important aspect of evangelistic training is the memorization of Scripture. The better the church members know the Scriptures, the more effectively they can witness for Christ.

The first thing that impressed me about the man that led me to the Lord in 1973 was his thorough knowledge of the Bible. As I spouted off to him the various foolish things that I believed in those days, having been deeply influenced by New Age philosophy, he was able to quote specific Scriptures that contradicted my false beliefs.

I said, for example, "I believe in reincarnation." He replied, "The Bible says that 'it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment' (Heb. 9:27)." I said, "Well, I believe that every man who is sincere will be accepted by God." He replied, "The Bible says, 'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death' (Prov. 14:12)." I said, "I believe a man must follow his own heart." He replied, "The Bible says, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' (Jer. 17:9)."

He was able to wield the sword of the Spirit very skillfully, and God used His Word to cut through the lies that bound me and to shine light into my darkened heart.

It is a wise church that has a regular program to help motivate and guide the members in memorizing practical Scripture passages. This can be incorporated into every teaching ministry of the church. The Sunday School classes can memorize Scriptures. The evangelistic classes can include a Scripture memory plan. Discipleship classes can include Scripture memorization. The whole church body can memorize Scripture together during the services.

Our church memorizes a verse each week, and one of the men lead the congregation in this by having them repeat the verse from the previous week and then repeat the new verse. Sometimes the members are called upon to stand up and quote the previous week's verse. In this way, the church is continually committing Scripture to memory.

The following are resources for Scripture memory:

*Treasure Path to Soul Winning* [P.O. Box 2104, Lynchburg, VA 24501. 888-898-8237 (orders), 804-239-4528 (voice), 804-239-8974 (fax), akgrooms@juno.com (e-mail)] Scripture memory plans include the following: *Treasure Path to Soul Winning* (Many Scriptures relevant to evangelism), *Soul Winner's Paradise* (dealing with various types of people), *Soul Winner's Blessed Hope* (Scriptures on second coming), *Soul Winner's Fast* (Scriptures on fasting), *Soul Winner's Prayer Life* (Scriptures on prayer).

The book *How Can I Except Some Man Should Guide Me?* comes with a memory verse pack. [Fox River Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1094, Oswego, Illinois 60543. 630-554-1847 (voice).]

Scripture Memory Ministry [110 S. Mineral Springs Rd. Chesterton, IN 46304, 219-929-6446 [www.scripturememoryministry.com](http://www.scripturememoryministry.com)]

The Netcasters evangelism course has a Scripture memory plan. [Preach the Word Ministries, P.O. Box 5614, Woodridge, IL 60517. <http://www.ptwm.org/resources.html>]

Source of Life has a Scripture memory plan. [Source of Life, 1011 Mission Road, Madison, GA 30650. 706-342-0397 (voice), [sollusa@sourcelight.org](mailto:sollusa@sourcelight.org) (e-mail), <http://www.sourcelight.org> (web site)]

## **Learning to Deal with a Variety of Situations**

The Lord's people need to be taught how to handle all sorts of situations which arise in evangelism, how to deal with the various cults, false religions, how to answer the excuses which the unsaved make, how to defend the Bible and the gospel against the common challenges which are made (e.g., aren't there contradictions in the Bible? is there evidence that the Bible is true? hasn't science proved that man evolved? etc.). The more thoroughly the church members are grounded in the Scriptures, the more fruitful they can be in evangelism, assuming they have a heart for the task.

When witnessing to the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip began with the book of Isaiah and preached Christ to him (Acts 8:35). God's people need to have the goal of being so thoroughly knowledgeable in God's Word that they can start at any part of the Bible and explain the gospel.

A good project is to assign church members the task of making their own study of evangelism from the

evangelistic work of Christ in the Four Gospels and from the evangelistic work of the apostles in the book of Acts. The lessons they gain in this manner will benefit them more than any lessons that the preacher can teach them.

It is important to know how to deal with all sorts of people who will bring up many types of questions. Two helpful books in this endeavor are the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity* and *Things Hard to Be Understood: A Handbook of Biblical Difficulties* [Way of Life Literature, [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org)].

*Things Hard to Be Understood* deals with a wide range of verses that are misused by false teachers to support their heretical doctrines (such as Charismatics, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Roman Catholics, Arminians, Calvinists, baptismal regenerationists, Ecumenists, those who deny eternal security). It also deals with many other biblical difficulties that are often brought up by unbelievers in their attempt to undermine the Bible's credibility, such as seeming contradictions.

The *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity* covers many of the cults and denominations and Christian movements and refutes their doctrines from the Bible. It also contains a wealth of information Christians can use to answer questions that commonly arise during witnessing, such as the following:

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

Is abortion murder?

Is capital punishment right?

Did Jesus make alcoholic wine?

Did Jesus have long hair?

Why don't Christians keep the sabbath?  
Was Jonah really swallowed by a whale?  
How could all of the animals fit into Noah's ark?  
Was there really a worldwide flood?  
Is Jesus God?  
What is eternal security?

Practical training is often missing from the church's ministry. We tell the people to read their Bibles, witness, etc., but too often we do not show them how to do these things. The more practical training a church can give to its people, the better they can be used of the Lord in evangelism (assuming they have the heart and zeal for it).

The *ONE YEAR DISCIPLESHIP COURSE* contains a lot of practical instruction. There are lessons on such things as repentance, faith, the gospel, eternal security, the Law of Moses and the New Testament believer, Christian growth and spiritual victory, the Bible's Proof, daily Bible study, Principles of Bible interpretation, foundational Bible words, knowing God's will, making wise decisions, and tests of entertainment. This is available from Way of Life Literature in print and eBook formats -- [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org).

*AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH* is a 385-page apologetics course that includes a series of 18 professional PowerPoint/Keynote presentations consisting of 1,850 slides that deal with archaeology, evolution/creation science, and prophecies pertaining to Israel's history. (Keynote is the Apple version of PowerPoint.) The course is available from Way of Life Literature - [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org).

*An Unshakeable Faith* includes an extensive practical section on the use of apologetics in evangelism which can be used as a soul winning course.

## **A Library of Evangelism-Related Materials**

A good aid in the church's work of evangelism and in the pastor's task of training the flock for this work is to build a library of materials related to soul winning. These are things such as a wide variety of gospel pamphlets devoted to various approaches and themes, materials on how to do evangelism, materials exposing the error of cults and false religions and various heresies that are commonly encountered, etc.

## **Fasting and Prayer**

One of the reasons evangelistic outreaches are often barren is the lack of earnest prayer and spiritual burden that accompanies the effort.

Christians, left to themselves, easily lose their eternal and spiritual focus. This is often evident in the nature of the prayer requests that are mentioned during prayer meetings. The requests focus on various material things and neglect the more important eternal matters. As the leader of the congregation, it is the pastor's job to keep the church's focus on the salvation of the unsaved. Prayer meetings should be oriented in this direction. It is not that the Lord does not care about our physical needs and it is not that we should not pray for these things, but our priority in prayer should be the spiritual and the eternal. We see this in the prayers that are recorded in the New Testament. The church members need to be continually

challenged to be soul conscious and to bring the names of unsaved friends to the prayer meetings.

Charles Spurgeon believed that one of the reasons so many were saved under his preaching was prayer. He had prayer meetings before the preaching services and every Monday night and on other occasions. Sometimes when the auditorium of the Metropolitan Tabernacle was full, a group would remain in the downstairs prayer hall and pray during the preaching (as per e-mail from Mrs. Hannah Wyncoll, Administrative Assistant, Metropolitan Tabernacle, June 2, 2000). Prayer was a very central focus of Spurgeon's ministry, and the fruit of it continues to abide a century later.

Following is the testimony of two specific occasions my wife and I saw God work mightily through fasting and prayer in the country of Nepal:

"Since spiritual wars are won 'not by might nor by power,' it can just as truly be said souls are won 'not by programs not by methods' but ultimately by the Spirit of God. True, we are to put some activity into the battle. 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in...' 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel ... baptizing ... teaching...' There is work to be done on our part, but apart from Him, without dependence on His Spirit, all the methods of planting and watering the seeds we sow will not produce the fruit that remains. God gives the increase. Therefore, in order to be truly effective in winning the lost, we need complete dependence upon God. Only the Spirit of God can break the power of Satan in the lives of unsaved people. So any idea, any program, any method is emptiness without our complete reliance on the power of God to bring forth fruit.

"Just over two years into our service on the mission field we were having weekly meetings in our home. Wealthy, educated Hindu neighbors were attending these meetings very faithfully. Week after week they

came, sang hymns, listened, and returned to their homes. During the week we would visit them, further befriend them, and share the gospel. Every Sunday evening a good group of adults would be crowded together in our home to hear the gospel. But nobody responded. Nobody was moved by it. None showed any evidence of conviction, let alone of repentance or faith. The bands of wickedness were tightly fastened. Week after week there was no fruit for our labors. Finally, my husband suggested we fast and pray one day each week. This seemed to be the key, as immediately after we began fasting people began responding to the gospel. The bands of wickedness were loosed in hearts (Isaiah 58:6) and people 'turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.' A church was begun!

"A couple of years later, when our little church numbered in the twenties, we held a ladies retreat at a primitive 'hotel' on top of a nearby mountain. During the retreat, I encouraged our ladies to counsel together and agree on a certain number of women that they would ask the Lord to add to our number during the next year. After talking it over and praying about it, they agreed they should ask the Lord for 10 ladies to be added. That would double the size of the ladies' group. During the following year, we often prayed together towards this goal. We had times of fasting as we continued to witness, pray, and hope. Nearly one year later the church held a baptismal service during which one man and exactly ten ladies were baptized!

"A friend of mine says, 'Fasting makes me weak that His spiritual strength might work'" (Linda Cloud).

There is a practical study on biblical fasting in the *One Year Discipleship Course*.

The book *Effective Evangelistic Churches* is the product of a survey of 576 fruitful soul-winning churches. Author Thom Rainer observes that intercessory prayer is a crucial component. Following are some of the statements on this topic:

“So often churches get stuck in a rut in their prayer. A Florida pastor shared that their Wednesday evening prayer services ‘had become Who’s who in the hospital. Our young people avoided the service like the plague.’ Many churches, perhaps most churches in America, focus their corporate prayers on physical needs: sickness, bereavement, and hospitalizations. While these prayer needs are valid and need fervent intercession, the eternal needs of those without a relationship to Jesus Christ are even more critical” (Rainer, pp. 74, 78).

“Most churches that are effectively reaching the lost have broken out of the ‘rut’ of prayer-as-usual and have experienced wonderful results brought about by effective emphasis on praying for the lost. While this is not often seen today in independent Baptist Churches, it was not unheard of in churches in times past for designated intercessors to be in another room praying earnestly throughout the preaching service. In this survey of 576 churches of notable evangelistic fervor, nearly half indicated that this was done regularly during their worship services, with ‘the time of preaching as the time of most intense intercession” (Rainer, p. 74).

“Focusing the church’s attention on intercession for the lost has brought the Lord’s blessings time after time. One pastor shared the thought that, ‘Praying for the lost did more to refocus our church than any single factor. We became a church with an outward focus after being an inwardly focused church for years” (p. 78). It is said of one of the largest and fastest-growing SBC churches in the nation that the explosive growth of the church is associated with the beginning of a churchwide prayer ministry (p. 75). Another said, ‘Our growth through conversions? It’s the result of our prayer ministry” (Rainer, p. 69).

“Fasting has often been a key factor not only in focusing the people but also in bringing about spiritual power. One pastor wrote, ‘I pray and fast one day a week. Though I do not advertise it, the church has become aware of it and many have followed my example” (Rainer, p. 75).

“Of those responding to the survey were ‘many testimonies from church leaders about the miraculous work of God after a new corporate prayer emphasis was begun, or after the leadership of the church called the people to an extended time of prayer and fasting. Not only did numerical and evangelistic growth result, but new ministries often began as well’” (Rainer, p. 152).

“A pastor in Alabama described the organization of his church’s prayer room as follows. Six Rolodex files are placed on one long table. The files include cards in one of six categories.

1. Lost persons -- by name or relationship to someone
2. Physical needs, sickness, etc.
3. Other intercessory needs: financial, job, relational, grief, etc.
4. Church, staff, missionaries
5. All church members’ names and their families
6. The praise file -- answered prayers!

“Each person is instructed to spend ten minutes at each Rolodex ‘station.’ A colored clip marks the point where the previous intercessor ended. The person in the room moves the clip to his ending point as well. The pastor commented that many of the people had never before prayed for one hour without interruption. They testified of their own spiritual growth as an intercessor” (Rainer, p. 73).

Many churches in the survey indicated that the pastor and staff meet regularly to pray for the lost.

In one church the members volunteer one hour per week to specifically pray for lost people. This church has consequently experienced much conversion growth.

Rainer further observes:

“I recently reviewed my consultation notes of dozens of churches I visited over the past few years. Most of them were in a slow decline that we sometimes mislabel ‘plateau.’ Perhaps more than any single

factor, the absence of dynamic corporate prayer ministries was the contrasting element compared to these 576 evangelistic churches. More specifically, I could not find one declining church that had an ongoing prayer ministry specifically for the lost. Perhaps these dying churches have not because they ask not" (Rainer, *Effective Evangelistic Churches*, p. 77).

In my Bible conference ministry I have preached in over 550 churches, and I have observed that churches that host special prayer times, such as a men's prayer meeting before the services and cottage prayer meetings in the weeks before a conference, have more evidence of God's power.

The following occurred at Pelham Baptist Church, in South Carolina, which was pastored by Harold B. Sightler from 1942 until 1952. Dr. Sightler later pastored Tabernacle Baptist Church of Greenville, South Carolina, for 42 years until his death in 1995.

"In 1946 only three people were baptized at Pelham, and so in early 1947 a week of prayer meetings were held at night at the church, prayer only, for revival and salvation of souls, with no preaching or singing. People began to get saved, and the church grew. It was during these meetings that my dad testified that he was filled with the Holy Ghost. The prayer meetings continued, and by 1949 were being held on Sunday nights after church in a pasture belonging to Thomas Leonard, located about 200 yards north of the intersection of what is now Westmoreland Road and Abner Creek Road. These often drew a hundred people and sometimes lasted until one o'clock in the morning. A rock altar was built around a tree. According to Thomas Leonard each represented a person being prayed for by name" (James Sightler, "Observations on Dr. Harold B. Sightler's Early Ministry and the Heritage of Tabernacle Baptist Church," <http://tabernacleministries.org/Church/history.php4>)

## Tears and Compassion

“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:6).

“And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it” (Luke 19:41).

“But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears” (Acts 20:31).

The following important observations are from the book *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism* by Iain H. Murray:

“It is more than knowledge of the love of God as taught in Scripture which preachers need. They must themselves be possessed by the love of which they speak. Invitations to trust in Christ preached without love are no invitations at all. And a preacher who calls men to faith, uncertain about Christ’s desire to save his hearers, will never make an evangelist. Present fellowship with Christ is needed to end such doubt. It is Christ’s love, known and felt, which creates the spirit seen in such men as Robert Murray M’Cheyne whose hearers believed that he was ‘dying to have them converted.’ ‘We win by love,’ says Spurgeon. ‘We win hearts for Jesus by love, by sympathy with their sorrows, by anxiety lest they should perish, by pleading with God for them with all our hearts that they would not be left to die unsaved, by pleading with them for God that, for their own sake, they would seek mercy and find grace.’

“For Spurgeon there was therefore this fundamental need for preachers to know more communion with Christ himself. And though such communion does not remove all theological difficulties, it does, he believed, go some way towards it and it certainly

delivers the gospel preacher from being impeded by them.

“Spurgeon said: ‘We are often in the dark, and puzzled about difficulties, but do you know half the difficulties in the Bible spring from a cold state of mind: but when the heart gets right, the head seems to get right too, in great measure. I remember a person puzzling himself fearfully with the passage in Scripture about Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. He went and looked at Dr. Gill about it, he went to Thomas Scott about it, and he went to Matthew Henry about it; and these godly divines all puzzled him as much as they could, but they did not seem to clear up the matter. The good man could not understand how Jesus Christ could say as he did, “How oft would I have gathered thee, but thou wouldest not!” One day he received more grace, and got a love for souls, and then the old skin of narrow mindedness which had been large enough for him once began to crack and break, and he went to the passage then, and said, “I can understand it now; I do not know how it is consistent with such and such doctrine, but it is very consistent with what I feel in my heart.” And I feel just the same. I used to be puzzled by that passage where Paul says that he could wish himself accursed from God for his brethren’s sake. No longer. Why, I have often felt the same, and now understand how a man can say in the exuberance of love to others, that he would be willing to perish himself if he could save them. Of course it never could be done, but such is the extravagance of a holy love for souls that it breaks through reason, and knows no bounds’ (Murray, *Spurgeon v. Hyper-Calvinism*, Banner of Truth Trust, 1995, pp. 93-96).

## **Discipleship**

The following is from Charlie Bailey:

“I am writing in response to your request for ‘Ideas for Evangelism.’ I believe the reason the Church is not reaching and reproducing into its communities in these last days is simply because ‘spiritual babies’ have a hard time reproducing in the same manner

that a physical baby would have trouble having a kid if it was only 5 or 6 years old. Our churches are caught up in programs and promotion rather than simply bringing the members of its local body to a spiritually mature point in which they are reproducing naturally on their own. That is what any decent parent does with physical children. They bring them to a point of maturity so that they can go have a family of their own. With spiritual babies running the show, no wonder the church is in the apostate condition that it is in today. Christians need to be grown into spiritual adulthood, so that their reproduction in this world happens naturally. That is EXACTLY what our Lord and Savior did with 12 men while he was here. He came to seek and save that which is lost, but invested his entire ministry into only 12 men! There is a discipleship ministry that is being started in our church that I think you ought to check out. The local church that I am a part of didn't originate this ministry. It was revealed from the pages of scripture to a church in Kansas City, Missouri. Check out [www.kcbt.org](http://www.kcbt.org). This is a fundamental Baptist church."

We received the following suggestion from Evangelist Chuck Cofty:

"I set this up in my last church and without any coaching I might add. I used to go to the home of a person that our church had won to the Lord and would present them with a Christian Life New Testament by Thomas Nelson (not to be confused with the Christian Workers New Testament). In the front are a series of outlines, and I would take a person with me who would actually be meeting with the new convert once each week for one hour. They would start going through the outlines that cover every basic doctrine of the Bible. Most often it would take several months to get through the outlines, which would result in 'contact' with that new convert every week. I would have the contact person call his/her new convert each week to see if they needed a ride and to wait near the door to greet them each week in church. This was very successful for my church and at the end of the first year we had 87%

of the new converts (47) baptized and in church. It has merit to try with teenagers.”

The following idea about using discipleship for evangelism is from Missionary Barry Barnell of Germany:

“The best evangelistic tool that we have found here in Germany is the ongoing discipleship class. We presently have two each week (Thursday and Friday evenings) and the locations rotate between four villages. The attendance in these classes ranges from 8 to 25 and they are ongoing. We have no series of lessons, we simply teach the Word of God as the Lord leads. I teach systematic theology as well and books of the Bible and important subjects dealing with all areas of the Christian life. It is usually clear what needs to be taught as the meetings progress. I try to let the man of the house handle prayer and the music and then he gives it to me to teach the Word of God. The lady of the house usually has a small snack with coffee afterwards. I am never in a hurry and have no end of these meetings in sight. I do all the teaching myself, but am trying to groom other men in separate meetings to help in this and other areas of the ministry. I usually give the people in these meetings opportunities to ask questions that have been burdening them and then we study the Word of God together. There have been times when I do nothing but answer questions the entire time. I come dressed casual and sit with my Bible in hand. I try to prepare a brochure for them with the main points as well as space in between the main points for notes. I know what I am teaching and control the entire meeting, but I do give them opportunity to ask questions or to tell how that text relates to their lives. This is where most of our conversions have originated. Our regular people bring family or friends to these meetings. My teaching usually lasts for about 45 minutes but the fellowship afterwards usually lasts about 1/2 hour. I make a special effort not to over do it for most are working people who have a schedule. For the Germans, it is also a neutral location where they can come without being harassed by family members for attending the

'cult' (most Catholics and Lutherans call our Baptist church a cult). I do not pressure them; I simply teach the Word of God and then trust the Lord to use that Word in bringing them to a saving knowledge of Christ. They usually make the decision to repent and trust Christ in their own homes after a number of visits to these meetings and after they have had time to make an intelligent decision to give their lives to Jesus Christ. As I understand the Bible, this was the Bible method practiced by Paul (Acts 2) as well as others. I have heard preachers who have criticized this type of ministry by saying it is not local church. I really don't know what in the world that means. I am an Independent Baptist and believe that the Lord has ordained the ministry of the local church, but does that mean that I cannot go to other villages around my church and disciple my own people and at the same time evangelize their lost friends and relatives? Or have I missed something? Of course these meetings are in addition to our regular church services."

## **Standards for Church Workers**

Another key to fruitful evangelism is the example and enthusiasm of the church workers. One reason a church must require godly, biblical standards for all church workers is that they set the spiritual tone and example for the entire congregation. It is important for the church to require that the workers have a God-given burden for souls and a zeal for spreading the Gospel. The example set by the church leaders and workers will be amplified throughout the congregation. If the leaders and workers are zealous for evangelism, the congregation will be. If the leaders and workers are lackadaisical in this matter, the congregation as a whole will be.

Not only so, but if a church member does not have enough spiritual zeal to motivate him or her to witness to the lost and especially to those under their own sphere of ministry (Sunday School teachers visiting the homes of

their students, etc.), they have no business representing the church in a ministry capacity.

If a church has a Sunday School, the teachers are extremely important. Many churches appear not to take the job of Sunday School teacher seriously. They appoint unqualified people to teach, people who do not have a respectable character, people who do not live a consistent Christian life during the week, people who are unfaithful, people who are not good teachers, people who are not knowledgeable in the Scriptures, people who make little or no attempt to grow the class and to win the unsaved.

A boring, ignorant, half-hearted, or worldly Sunday School teacher can greatly discourage young people from attending church and going on for the Lord. I remember how boring the Sunday School classes were in the church I grew up in. Furthermore, the Sunday School teachers were not spiritual men who sought to disciple us in the way of the Lord and they therefore did not have a positive spiritual influence in our lives. They were far more interested in things such as sports than in the things of Christ.

I am convinced it is better to have no Sunday School than to have Sunday School with the wrong teachers.

### **Use the Evangelists**

Another key to fruitful evangelism in the church is to encourage and use the evangelists.

There is a ministry gift of evangelism that is not given to every Christian (Eph. 4:11). While every Christian is responsible to spread the Gospel (Mark 16:15) and every preacher should do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim.

4:5), not every Christian is an evangelist. Philip is an example of an evangelist (Acts 21:8). He was a godly deacon in the church at Jerusalem (Acts 6:5) and he preached the gospel in Antioch and to the eunuch in the desert (Acts 8:5-8, 26-40) and in many other places.

Note that Philip was not a man who went from church to church preaching to the congregations. That is the occupation that is typically called an evangelist in North America today, but that is not what we see in the Scripture. The scriptural evangelist is a man given exclusively to preaching the gospel.

I have met many men and women who have the ministry gift of evangelism, and the churches should encourage them greatly and help them fulfill their calling. Wise pastors will also seek counsel from gifted evangelists about how to get out the gospel, because those with the gift of evangelism think about soul winning and often come up with good ideas about how to get the gospel out to the community.

When we went to Nepal in 1979 to start a church, my wife and I were all alone, but we prayed earnestly for the Lord to send us help. He answered that prayer by touching the hearts of two men who had the gift of evangelism to join us. One man was from India; the other, from Switzerland. We encouraged them to spend their time in evangelism, and the church grew rapidly through their efforts.

If I were pastoring in the States, I would pray earnestly for the Lord to send evangelists to the church; and I would then do everything possible to support them financially so they could give themselves wholly to their

calling. I would do this long before I would think about supporting a youth director or a music director.

## **Encourage the Exhorters**

A ministry that was practiced in some churches in past centuries but has gone out of common usage is that of the exhorter.

These are church members that have a special ability and burden to exhort visitors about salvation. They are individuals who are alert to the Lord's direction and who speak privately with unsaved visitors and try to follow-up on the preaching. Romans 12:8 and Hebrews 3:13 hint at such a ministry, both toward the unsaved and the saved.

We find an example of this in the membership of Charles Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon spoke of some who "made it their special work to 'watch for souls' in our great congregation, and to seek to bring to immediate decision those who appeared to be impressed under the preaching of the Word." Spurgeon described one of these as follows:

"One brother has earned for himself the title of my hunting dog, for he is always ready to pick up the wounded birds. One Monday night, at the prayer meeting, he was sitting near me on the platform; all at once I missed him, and presently I saw him right at the other end of the building. After the meeting, I asked why he went off so suddenly, and he said that the gas just shone on the face of a woman in the congregation, and she looked so sad that he walked round, and sat near her, in readiness to speak to her about the Saviour after the service" (C.H. Spurgeon, *The Full Harvest*, p. 76).

On the other hand, there are some church members who should be encouraged NOT to deal much with visitors, for the simple reason that they do not have good wisdom or they have abrasive personalities and they tend to create more problems than they solve, causing unnecessary offence, etc.!

## **Visitor Consciousness**

Most church members are not very conscious of the visitors. It is natural to get involved with one's friends and to be busy with various tasks and to forget to minister to visitors.

My wife and I have visited many churches where we did not feel very welcome. Oh, someone might shake your hand and the pastor might say something to you, but that is not enough to make a stranger want to come back.

Even a "you are welcome here" greeting time during the song service usually isn't very welcoming, in my experience. I have found that the large majority of church members ignore the visitors and just reach out to their friends. In fact, many don't even make the effort to move from their place in the pew! "I Shall Not Be Moved" is their favorite hymn. Even as a visiting preacher, I have often felt lonely and ignored during such times. Shouldn't those be times when the members specifically seek out every visitor and make an effort to let them know that they are loved and welcomed?

A real visitor greeting time during the song service is perhaps a tiny beginning, but there is much more to making a visitor feel welcome than even the warmest, friendliest hand-shaking time.

There needs to be a plan to greet visitors as they come into the parking lot or approach the church building to welcome them and show them where to go and such things. Friendly, personable church members need to be assigned to this task and they need to learn how to do it effectively.

I recall visiting a church with my wife and children on Sunday morning. We didn't know where to go for the Sunday School. Everyone was scurrying around or talking to their friends but no one paid any attention to us. We had to walk down halls and ask around and literally find our own way to the classes. No one invited us over for Sunday lunch or for a snack after the evening service. No one visited us. This has happened on many occasions when we have visited churches. In fact, I would say it is typical.

Lancaster Baptist Church in Lancaster, California, has a good policy in this regard. Every visitor is invited out for lunch at the home of one of the staff members. And they do many other things along this line, because they have a plan to make every visitor feel truly welcome and to bring them into the warmth of the church family. This should be the objective of every congregation no matter how large.

“There's a Welcome Here” ought to be much more than a little chorus we sing as a tradition.

We brought my wife's unsaved stepfather to church with us several times one winter, and as a rule, the members made no effort to befriend him beyond a few cursory handshakes and “thank you for coming's.” In one church, we even asked if there were men who would be willing to take him fishing (he was spending the winter with us

and he liked to fish) and befriend him and perhaps have an opportunity to talk with him about Christ, but even though we asked the pastor and some of the men about this and even though he visited that church off and on for about four months, not one man ever tried to befriend him.

It is important for the pastors to challenge and train the people to be visitor conscious. It is essential that the church not let visitors and new Christians slip through the cracks without personal attention.

It must be remembered that generally speaking it is a very difficult thing for a person to go to a new church where he or she does not know anyone. Unless the church members reach out to visitors and really make an effort to get to know them and to pray for them and to make contact with them during the week, it is likely that they will not come back.

1 Corinthians 14:23-26 describes a church service in which each member is prophesying, and as a result sinners are saved. This does not mean that all of the members stand up and preach. It means each church member is there to minister to others with his or her own particular gifts. The music can be a form of prophesying if it is done right (1 Chron. 25:1-3). Even hearty and spiritual participation in congregational singing is prophesying, as we are to “admonish one another” in song (Col. 3:16). Congregational singing that lacks in enthusiasm is evidence of spiritual lukewarmness.

Church services today, though, even in Bible-believing congregations, are more like entertainment programs. The average church member, it appears, does not come to the meetings to minister, but only to be entertained and

ministered to. The music might be very pleasant but it rarely if ever produces conviction and holiness. Everything is done ritualistically “by the bulletin,” and there is little or no spiritual power.

This should not be the case, and part of the problem is that people do not come to church for the right reason. Hebrews 10:25 says we are to come together in the assemblies to “exhort one another,” not merely to be exhorted.

The case of Philip Mauro reminds us of the importance of reaching out to visitors in the services. Mauro was a famous patent lawyer who argued many cases before the United States Supreme Court. He grew up Episcopalian, but by age 45 he was a skeptic in regard to religion. In the spring of 1903 he attended a church service almost by accident, and it changed his life. Following is the story in Mauro’s own words:

“Certainly I was thoroughly discontented, desperately unhappy, and becoming more and more easy prey to gloomy thoughts and vague, indefinable apprehensions. . . . Life had no meaning, advantage, purpose, or justification; and the powers of the much-vaunted intellect seemed unequal to the solution of the simplest mysteries. The prospect before me was unspeakably dark and forbidding.

“I strolled out in my usual unhappy frame of mind, intending to seek diversion at the theatre. This purpose carried me as far as the lobby of a theatre on Broadway and caused me to take my place in the line of ticket purchasers. But an unseen hand turned me aside, and the next thing that I remember was a very faint sound of singing which came to my ears amid the noises in Eighth Avenue, near 44th Street, fully a mile away from the theatre.

“There is no natural explanation of my being attracted by, and of my following up, that sound.

Nevertheless, I pushed my way into the building (a very plain, unattractive affair, bearing the sign 'Gospel Tabernacle') [pastored by A.B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance], whence the sound emanated, and found myself in a prayer-meeting. I took a seat and remained through the meeting.

"I was not much impressed by the exercise, and in fact was not at all in sympathy with what transpired. What did, however, make an impression upon me was the circumstance that, as I was making my way to the door after the meeting, several persons greeted me with a pleasant word and a shake of the hand, and one inquired about my spiritual state" (*The Story of Philip Mauro*, Gordon P. Gardiner).

Impressed with the friendliness of the people, Mauro returned to the church several times and was eventually born again. After his conversion Mauro became a bold Christian and wrote many books about the Bible. One of these was *Which Version?* in which he defended the King James Bible against the Westcott-Hort textual theories. He also wrote the legal brief that was used by William Jennings Bryan at the Scopes Trial to defend the Tennessee law prohibiting the teaching of evolution in the public schools. Because of his profession, Philip Mauro had opportunity to witness to many highly-placed individuals, including Thomas Edison.

Following are some suggestions in regard to dealing with visitors:

1. Have designated greeters.

It is a good idea to assign volunteers with a special task of greeting and befriending visitors and helping them in whatever needs they might have, such as finding the right Sunday School classes, finding the nursery, etc. These

people should be carefully selected by the pastor. Some church members are naturally gifted at making strangers feel comfortable, whereas others lack the tact and personality to be successful at this. Every effort should be made to make certain that the visitors do not get the impression that the “official greeters” are merely doing a job. It is a good idea to rotate greeters. It is also a good idea to use a husband-wife team as greeters. The wife can more properly help women visitors locate the nursery, bathrooms, etc.

2. The congregation must be taught and regularly reminded that it is an important responsibility of each church member to make visitors feel welcome. It is the pastor’s job to make the church “visitor conscious” and to work out practical ways to accomplish this.

3. The “hand shaking” time that many churches have during the services is not the best way to greet visitors. The following observation is very timely:

“One thing that is abused and overworked in some churches is a greeting time where they ask every one to turn around and greet someone and people wander all over the church. ... You cannot, and should not, legislate friendliness. Nothing forced is ever effective. Many people come to church with troublesome problems on their minds. They are there for comfort, to grieve, to pray, to seek solace and resent being told that they have to shake hands when they would rather be left alone. Church should always be programmed to be neighborly, but don’t legislate it. This time can be used to a much greater advantage in other ways” (Bob Hinds, *Double Your Church Attendance*, p. 42).

I agree with this observation. Through the years I have been in dozens and dozens of churches that have this practice, and as a visitor I usually feel self-conscious and

awkward. Rarely do the church members seek the visitors out. It is more common that they gather together in little bunches with their friends and ignore the visitors, and more often than not it has been left for me, the visitor, to go around the church and try to break into the little groups and shake hands. When people do shake your hands, you often feel that they are merely doing it because they have been told to do so. One large church we visited makes a big thing of their hand shaking time, and the people obediently go around and shake hands, but they do it in such a stilted fashion that it is obvious that it is not done with genuine friendliness. They say, "Hello, glad to have you, how are you," but they aren't even looking at you and don't stop even for a moment to hear the answer to the questions. None of this makes visitors feel welcome or want to return.

#### 4. Don't let them slip in and slip out.

Oftentimes visitors will come in just as the service is starting, sit in the back, and then to slip out quickly right after the service. The church needs to find a way to make contact with those who do this. Perhaps one or more members can volunteer or be assigned to sit in the back of the church and watch for such visitors, and then to greet them before they leave the church grounds. Perhaps the visitors can be asked if they would like to tour the church, or if they have any questions about the church, or would like someone to visit them, etc.

#### 5. Design the services with visitors in mind.

One evangelist warns churches about unnecessary things in the services that accomplish no good purpose but that simply irritate people.

“It seems that no one likes a church when they are constantly being asked to stand for something, to sing a song, to pay tribute to something, etc. ... People plan to get their exercise in other ways. Besides, it is extremely hard on elderly and crippled persons. Some churches that we’ve noticed have the congregation stand at the opening of the service for a few songs. It is felt that standing improves the singing and creates a more enthusiastic service. People generally cooperate, but it’s very obvious that many are disgruntled by having to stand. [Church leaders must remember that one of our main purposes is to win souls, and] it is hard to win a soul that is irritated. So it behooves us all to make the church service as enjoyable as possible for everyone. And if you take a poll you’ll find very few are for standing. Since it’s felt that people sing better if they are standing up, if the song leader can’t get the people to sing well enough sitting down, then change song leaders” (Hinds, *Double Your Church Attendance*, p. 52).

I agree with this observation. I absolutely love congregational singing, but it is very distracting and uncomfortable to have to stand through most of the songs. It is so much more pleasant to be able to sit down and sing to the Lord and meditate upon the wonderful words of the hymns. I have always thought it is strange for song leaders to force the people to stand and sing. On midweek services people have worked all day and are tired. Why can’t they come to church and sit down and relax while they sing the songs of Zion?

The following challenge about congregational singing was given by Henry Halley, author of the *Halley’s Bible Handbook*:

“The dearth of congregational singing is the greatest lack in the average Sunday morning church service. There ought to be ten times as much as there is. Omit some of the show-off stuff in the choir loft, and make time for it. A continuous song service is better than one that is continuously interrupted with

remarks by the leader, or the reading of a stanza, or by other parts of the service. That ruins the effect. Do nothing but sing, for twenty or thirty minutes, so as to give it a chance to make its impression.”

Some churches have a “David Cloud Song Service” in which they do exactly this!

6. The church’s ministry to visitors should not stop with the services.

It is important that every visitor be followed up, and those who show interest should be followed up repeatedly, with the goal of leading that person to Christ and/or discipling him. This will not happen unless a particular church member takes a special interest in the individual or family. Otherwise, the visitors will fall through the cracks. Some effective system must be worked out whereby the visitors are followed up. The pastor(s), of course, are involved in this, but it is important that many other church members become involved, as well.

# The Church Services

Bible-believing churches today need to think seriously about what they are doing in regard to the the services. Are we using the service times to the best advantage? Do the standard services allow sufficient time for enough teaching and fellowship and prayer so that the congregation can be strong in the Lord?

I am not saying we should entertain “church growth” philosophies that encourage congregations to adopt worldly programs in order to attract a carnal crowd. I am saying, simply, that we need to evaluate our traditional programs and meetings before the Lord and His Word with the objective of using our time to the greatest spiritual advantage. It is easy to get into a traditional rut, and fundamental Baptists are as guilty of this as Episcopalians.

The Sunday Schools in churches today, for example, are commonly an attempt to accomplish two completely different tasks (evangelizing the unsaved and edifying Christians) within a tiny 45-minute framework (that is also used for announcements, singing, offerings, and other things), and the result often is that not a lot is accomplished toward any one goal.

It might be a good idea to re-evaluate the Sunday School program. What is the goal of it? Is the goal being accomplished by the present method? Are there ways to accomplish the goal more effectively?

We must remember that things like Sunday Schools are simply methods used to obey the Bible’s commands. Sunday School itself is not found in the New Testament.

It is a program that can be used (or not used) as the Lord leads each individual congregation. The same is true for all of the services and programs.

It is evident that the early Christians met together regularly and they certainly had meetings on the Lord's Day, which is the first day of the week, the day Jesus rose from the dead. The New Testament, though, does not give specific instructions about how the churches are to meet. That is left for each church to determine before the Lord. Each church meeting should have a specific purpose or purposes, and every aspect of the meeting should be designed to meet those goals.

The typical Sunday School-Sunday/morning worship service of the average Baptist church today appears to be something that is done largely because "it is what we have always done," rather than something that has been carefully thought out and planned to effectively accomplish specific biblical goals.

Consider, for example, the typical 45-minute Sunday School followed by the typical 60-minute worship service, beginning at 10:00 a.m. and ending at 12 p.m. Everything is hurried. The prayers are rushed. The singing is rushed. The teaching and preaching is rushed. I don't know how many times I have sat in Sunday morning services during the past 38 years and thought to myself, "Is this merely a ritual we are going through like the Episcopalians?"

The actual teaching time in Sunday School is usually limited to 30 minutes or less. It is therefore usually very shallow and there can be little or no significant interaction between the teacher and the students. The preaching during the worship service is likewise limited

to 30-45 minutes or so because of the necessity of wrapping up the service in time for lunch. In that brief time the preacher attempts not only to build up the saints but also to evangelize the lost!

Following are some suggestions about how to change these things.

## **Afternoon Sunday Schools**

One possibility is to separate the evangelistic Sunday School from the regular Sunday School for church members. The original Sunday Schools were conducted in the afternoons following regular church services for the Christians. The goal was to gather together unsaved children and teach them the gospel of Jesus Christ and the basics of Christian discipleship. Since they were held in the afternoon, there was sufficient time for singing songs, teaching the Scriptures, and dealing individually with the children and young people without the pressure of having to finish quickly and get to the next service.

Sunday afternoons are a good time to have an evangelistic outreach to children and young people, because they are typically home from school and therefore more available than during the week. They can also be held on Saturdays.

The Fair Havens Baptist Church of Sardis, Ontario, operates its evangelistic bus ministry on Saturday afternoon.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England, conducts its large Sunday School outreach in the afternoons. The Sunday School and Young People's Bible Classes are at 3:00 p.m. The staff numbers over

100 workers, and a considerable fleet of private automobiles joins with the church's 15 minibuses and larger coaches to collect children. In addition to the classes that are held at the main church facility, there are branches in other parts of the city. Total afternoon Sunday School attendance is around 750.

Afternoon Sunday Schools can have several advantages over a typical Sunday morning bus ministry. One, more time can be spent with unsaved people in an afternoon setting. Some time could actually be spent answering questions and dealing more thoroughly with them. Two, the church people who work with the evangelistic Sunday School do not have to miss the regular teaching and preaching. Third, adult visitors to the Sunday morning services are not overwhelmed with Sunday School kids. Fourth, the church kids are not intermingled with visiting kids, and the regular Sunday School can focus on the needs of more thoroughly discipling church kids rather than having to try to meet the vastly different needs of such a varied group of young people.

### **Afternoon Preaching**

Some churches have added an afternoon service to their Sunday meetings. They meet sometime in the morning and go to noon, devoting that time to evangelism and Bible teaching, then they eat a meal together, during which they have time to fellowship and to get to know the visitors. After the meal, the church congregates for an afternoon service that is more relaxed and that includes more singing and preaching/teaching. This removes the pressure for people to have to rush home to eat, which is a problem with the standard Sunday morning service, or to have to get home early enough to get ready for the

Monday workday, which is a problem with Sunday evening services. Some churches have chosen to set up their Sunday services in this manner because they have a number of people who travel long distances.

The point is that churches should think seriously about what they are doing. Are we using the service times to the best advantage? Do the standard services allow sufficient time for enough teaching and fellowship and prayer so that the church can be strong in the Lord?

It is a good idea for pastors and mature church workers to get together and discuss these things, to evaluate each part of the church program, being willing to adopt changes which might increase the fruitfulness of God's house.

## Sunday Schools

Some of the following is summarized from the book *Effective Evangelistic Churches* by Thom Rainer:

Sunday Schools offer an excellent avenue for biblical instruction geared to specific ages and levels. Evangelistically minded churches have found that Sunday Schools are also one of the better means of evangelism and perhaps the best means for assimilation of converts into the church family.

Because of the small group setting, group fellowships, etc., Sunday Schools can often reach out to newcomers and the lost in a more personal way than the overall church can. As the pastor of one church related:

“The larger our church became, the more I believed that we also had to become smaller. As a result, we began to become more intentional about our small groups in our Sunday School classes. Those groups accounted for at least one-half of our conversion growth last year” (Rainer).

Spiritually healthy Sunday Schools have some commonly shared, basic “ingredients.” Of course, apart from reliance upon the Holy Spirit and a solid foundation of absolute trust in the inerrant Word of God, any “ingredients” or “keys to success” or whatever are purely man’s tactics. Divorced from God’s truth and leading, man’s methodologies are best left on the shelf. With this in mind, we share some thoughts on how to help make Sunday Schools more fruitful.

Prayer is absolutely vital to creating and maintaining effectiveness in Sunday Schools. Without a prayer-minded, burdened staff, the Sunday School is attempting to carry out spiritual warfare through natural means.

Therefore, it stands to reason that teachers should not be appointed to positions unless they have such a burden for that class that they will faithfully labor in intercession for each member of the class. If we were honest, this requirement alone would disqualify many of the teachers in our Bible-believing churches today.

This brings us to one major key for fruitful evangelistic Sunday Schools, which is godly, qualified, quality teachers. In Rainer's survey of fruitfully evangelistic churches the following was reported:

"The Sunday School teacher became a critical position when churches focused on quality. 'We realized that what they were teaching had eternal impact on children, youth, and adults,' a Virginia pastor observed. 'We could no longer be satisfied with just filling all the openings. We had too many square pegs in round holes.'"

As we have noted under the section on Vacation Bible Schools, churches too often assign teachers just because they are available with little or no concern as to whether they are capable, whether they are truly the right people for the job.

There are many qualifications a church needs to look for in those who would teach children and young people.

First of all, they must be godly, faithful Christian people. That seems almost too basic to mention, but all too often the teachers who are chosen to do such work lack even this basic trait. I know of many churches that allow people to teach even though they are not faithful to the services, don't dress modestly during the week, involve themselves in all sorts of worldly forms of entertainment, and in other ways are poor examples to the people they are teaching. This is spiritual insanity. A church cannot

necessarily require that all of its members live consistent Christian lives, but it can require that its teachers and leaders do so.

Secondly, the teachers must love the people they are teaching. Again, this is so basic it should not have to be mentioned, but SS teachers don't always exhibit this characteristic.

Also the teachers must be capable of opening up the Word of God to their students, of explaining and applying spiritual things on the level of their students. Not every godly Christian has the gift of teaching, and not every teacher has the ability to teach children and young people.

I also believe the teaching should be interesting. When I think back on the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School classes I attended as a boy, one word comes to mind: BORING! There were exceptions, but this was the rule. It was obvious that the teachers had neither the burden nor the ability to prepare interesting lessons that would hold our attention. Many of them just read from the Southern Baptist Quarterlies. Others taught way over our heads and were unable or unwilling to apply the Scriptures in a practical way to our young lives. These people might have been effective in teaching adults, but they were hopelessly ineffective in teaching children.

I believe it is a great sin to assign the wrong teachers to work with youth. If a person does not have the ability to teach the Bible to young people, and many do not, they should not teach young people! I am convinced that many young people leave churches for the simple reason that all they have ever experienced is boring or

misapplied Bible teaching that does not get down to “where the rubber meets the road” in their lives.

Another requirement should be that the teachers have a personal zeal to reach people with the gospel. Too many teachers in Baptist churches make little or no effort to reach the unsaved. They are perfectly content to teach whoever happens to attend their classes, but they do almost nothing to expand and build the class. Too many of them do not go out on soul winning visitation and don't give out tracts and try to make evangelistic contacts. Too many of them don't even visit their own students to minister to them outside of the classroom setting. That is a shame and a disgrace, and such people are not qualified to teach the Word of God.

Training was a major factor in Rainer's survey for Sunday School leadership. A combination of one to three different elements of training was apparent in many of the churches.

One method was teacher training, where a “master teacher” communicated key essentials to others. A second method provided means for teachers and leaders to attend conferences and seminars, watch videos, and read books. A third method of training was the apprentice method. A prospective teacher or leader would spend time observing and questioning a quality teacher or leader within the organization.

“Maintaining quality teachers and leaders in Sunday School is a struggle. Quality teachers are difficult to recruit and train, and poor teachers are often difficult to ‘retire.’ A few of the church leaders to whom we spoke would actually ask a teacher to step down if he or she was deemed unqualified by the pastor, staff, or Sunday School leadership.”

We are aware of one church that prayerfully reviews those in leadership positions each year to determine whether to keep them in the same position, move them to another, or remove them from a position altogether. This church is one of the most effective soul-winning churches we have ever seen.

Church leaders usually try to work around a less-than-competent teacher. For example, one situation involved a teacher who taught older baby boomers, but his class was dry and dull. Only six persons remained in the class, but those six were intensely loyal to their incompetent teacher. When it became apparent that “firing” the teacher would be divisive in the church, the leaders opted to create new classes led by new teachers, without disturbing the class in question. Within two years the class still had six persons while the two newer classes averaged twelve persons each in attendance.

“This focus on quality requires commitment of time and other resources well beyond the norm, yet these leaders told us that the hours of work and the tremendous energy expended is well worth the effort” (Rainer, pp. 94, 95).

Another key to effective Sunday Schools in many churches is accountability.

“‘Accountability is the major reason for our Sunday School’s success,’ said a Louisiana minister of education. ‘But we have to work constantly to keep the lines of communication open, and we have to motivate constantly to keep the people accountable to one another.’

“Accountability is engendered by high expectations. A church in West Virginia asks all of its Sunday School workers to sign a covenant each year. This covenant involves all aspects of the Sunday School: witnessing and outreach to others; ministry through

small groups; regular attendance; preparation of lessons; and a lengthy list of other expectations.

“We found a significant correlation between the level of expectations placed on Sunday School workers and the ability of the church to keep ongoing accountability among its volunteer workers. ‘When we first started asking Sunday School workers to sign a covenant,’ the West Virginia pastor told us, ‘we met a pretty high level of resistance. Some told us that we had no right to tell volunteers what to do.’ But the leaders persisted, though a few of the workers quit in protest. ‘Today,’ he said, ‘we see our accountability system as one of the best things that happened to our church. It was painful but it was worth it’” (Rainer, p. 95).

Regularly evaluating the spiritual effectiveness of each ministry is necessary to ensure that it is forward-moving, edifying, and fruitful. Too often persons are appointed to positions and five or ten years later remain in that same position even though no obvious spiritual effectiveness has taken place. This is not good stewardship of the resources and opportunities the Lord gives us.

Are the Bible classes reaching the lost? Are the Sunday School students growing spiritually, in biblical knowledge, and becoming involved in the ministry aspects of the church? Are a percentage of the young people going on into full-time Christian service and the adults getting excited about serving the Lord through the church? If not, something may be seriously wrong.

A fruitful Sunday School teacher will both bring in lost prospects and, by his or her example and leadership, lead his students in doing the same.

While it is acknowledged that many visitors first enter the church through the means of the worship service, one pastor relates:

“...the Sunday School is where accountability for inviting and evangelism takes place. And if that unchurched person does come to a few worship services, he or she will probably visit a Sunday School class. That is where the relationships have developed in our church, and that is where many people have been saved” (Rainer, pp. 96, 97).

In conclusion, it is of great importance that the Sunday School teachers (or any church workers, for that matter) be chosen through the prayerful leading of the Holy Spirit and because of their obvious walk with the Lord, gifts, and burden for the lost. The teaching should be both biblically sound and interesting. The class should be targeted toward reaching the lost as well as instructing and motivating the saved.

# Visitation Program

## Miscellaneous

An organized visitation program is an important part of a church's outreach, because it is the only means of systematically going house to house throughout the community with the gospel. It is not usually the most fruitful part of a church's evangelistic ministry, though, and should not be looked upon as the be-all, end-all of such. Door-to-door visitation is simply one more means of getting out the gospel and making new contacts.

In one independent Baptist church a study was done over a nine-year period and it was found that not one person was saved and assimilated into the church as a result of the visitation program, whereas some other methods of evangelism were fruitful.

Effective door-to-door visitation ministries divide the community into sections and carefully keep track of which areas have been covered.

Special care must be made to follow up on any contacts that express interest in the gospel. Visits should continue until contact can be made with someone in each home.

One plan that many churches have used is to distribute a copy of John/Romans to each home. Included with the John/Romans booklet can be an invitation to conduct a Bible study in the home or an invitation to take a correspondence course (or both). One church distributes a packet which describes its bus ministry, its services, and includes a John/Romans and an invitation to take a series of Bible study lessons either in the home or by mail. One pastor notes that by putting the phrase "Free

Bible Study” rather than “Home Bible Study” made a significant difference in the number of responses. This is an example of a small change that can make a real difference.

It is a good idea for the church to provide a nursery for children to make it easier for young couples to go out on visitation.

## **Visitation Night Outreach Stations**

It is important to gather the church members together regularly for a church-wide focus on evangelism.

The problem with the visitation night in many churches is that it focuses solely on door knocking, and it is not used to encourage all of the church members to get involved in evangelism in manifold ways.

The weekly evangelistic outreach can incorporate the following elements:

1. Challenge. It is good for the people to be challenged about the task at hand, but the visitation night(s) should not be the time to try to embark upon a lengthy training program. Such training should be done at some other time, so the visitation night itself is set free for actually carrying the gospel into the community. Any exhortation should therefore be simple and brief.
2. Prayer.
3. Organization of the visitation. — outreach stations, cards, etc.
4. Reporting back. It is important for the church’s soul winners to share their activities with one another and not

only with the pastor. This is commonly a missing element an evangelistic outreach.

The following is adapted from Pastor Billy Britt:

How can we get more people involved in outreach? What are some ideas that work in reaching people? I respond with one answer to both questions: "We use the Stations of Outreach." This outreach ministry is designed to use various outreach methods to involve as many people as possible in reaching and witnessing actions. Instead of limiting outreach only to those members who will visit lost people or prospects door-to-door, why not broaden the horizons of outreach? Before the regular visitation time, set up seven stations where adults can do some form of outreach. The stations can be set up throughout the church so that the various methods, such as making telephone calls or writing letters will not interfere with one another.

### **Some Suggested Outreach Stations**

#### **1. Prospect Visits Station**

Set up a table to hold prospect cards which bear the name, address, and other information about each prospect. These are people who have visited services, contacts made by church members, unsaved parents of children who attend Sunday School or other church events, etc. Outreachers who are willing to make a personal visit can pick up prospect cards here.

#### **2. Absentee Visits Station**

Ask class secretaries to compile a list of members who have been absent for two or three consecutive Sundays. Some people may feel more comfortable visiting someone who already is a member of the Sunday School. At this station, outreachers can pick up the name and address of an absentee who needs to receive a visit.

### 3. Letter Writing Outreach Station

Provide postcards, writing paper, envelopes, pens, stamps, and the names and addresses of prospects and absentees at this station. Some people who do not feel comfortable making a personal visit may be willing to write a note or a letter. Provide a box to collect the cards and letters to be mailed.

### 4. Telephone Outreach Station

Perhaps outreachers who are willing to call absentees and prospects can use a church telephone or a cell phone. If you have access to listings of new residents, allow outreachers to contact these persons and invite them to attend Sunday School. Calls can also perhaps be made to recent visitors expressing appreciation for their visit and encouraging them to attend again.

Some may be willing to get a list of names and phone numbers and make the calls from their homes.

### 5. Prayer Outreach Stations

Sunday School rooms can be designated as prayer rooms. These rooms should be located away from the other stations so that those praying will have a quiet place to pray for outreachers who are making visits as well as for the lost and unchurched persons the outreachers are visiting.

### 6. Pastoral Care Station

This is the term we use for ministry visits to persons who primarily would be unable to attend our church. Place here the names and addresses of persons who need a ministry or witnessing visit. Ask outreachers to visit

homebound or nursing home residents. When making visits to homebound persons, determine the need to schedule the visit ahead of time at the convenience of the person being visited.

## 7. Discipleship Station

Conduct follow-up visits with persons awaiting baptism or with new Christians who may have questions or need a word of encouragement. Discipleship is an important part of the Christian life. Do not neglect to continue supporting persons who have recently made decisions.

## 8. Door Knocking Station

This station is for those who are involved in covering parts of the community systematically by going door-to-door. This is the station that uses tools such as tracts, flyers, John/Romans, advertisements for home Bible studies, correspondence courses, etc., which have been described in other parts of these studies. Follow-up on interested contacts is crucial.

The Stations of Outreach plan provides alternate outreach methods and allows more people to use their gifts in outreach. You may discover other methods that work well for your church. The goal is to involve as many of the believers as possible in the outreach program.

## **Flexible Visitation Program**

The following is from Pastor Mark Bouslog, Bible Baptist Church, Bloomington, Illinois:

I am writing in response to your inquiry about fresh ideas for evangelism. I pastor in a white collar area. My members are engineers and executives who do not punch a time clock and do not have 'set' hours.

They are primarily management level employees who are responsible to 'stay until the job is done.' They do not have the same evenings free every week. In view of this I devised a visitation/soul winning program that would provide flexibility with accountability. Below is an outline of the program:

1. I appointed the deacons as "team" leaders.
2. A meeting was held for all who were interested in the program. All who attended were divided into teams with a Deacon as the leader.
3. My secretary prints out the calling cards and distributes them to the team leaders. The team leaders distribute the cards to their team members. The calling cards are geographically coordinated with the team members. The team members receive calls as close to their residence as possible. These prospects are provided by a local Civic Newcomer organization.
4. Upon making the calls, team members complete the comment portion of their calling card and return it to their team leader. The team leaders return the cards to my secretary and then I receive them and follow up.

This program came about as a result of seeing a lack of participation in our 'weekly' scheduled visitation. It has provided the flexibility that was needed and the results are fantastic.

## **Visitation Meal**

To encourage the people to come out on visitation and to help facilitate this, some churches have found that it is helpful to provide a meal for the soul winners.

This way it is possible for people to come to church right from work, and they do not have to worry about going home, eating supper, etc.

Another advantage is that while the people are eating, the leaders can begin the challenge and organizational part of the evening's evangelistic outreach. A meal was used in the great evangelistic program conducted by J. Frank Norris in the first half of the 20th century. He pastored two churches simultaneously from 1934 to 1947, First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, and Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan. Through the efforts of Norris and his co-worker, Dr. Louis Entzminger, the Sunday Schools of these two congregations became the largest in the world at that time (15,000 and 10,000 respectively). In his memoirs, Entzminger wrote: "From the human standpoint the secret of the growth of these churches may be summed up in one word 'Visitation'" (*The J. Frank Norris I Have Known for 34 Years*, p. 255).

The men went out on Monday evenings, coming directly to the church from work at 6 p.m., where they were served a warm supper prepared by the church ladies. At 6:30 they were given cards and went out to visit homes two by two. At 9 p.m. they would meet back at the church to give reports.

The women went out on Thursday mornings, gathering at the church at 9:30, visiting in homes until 12:30, then meeting back at the church for lunch and fellowship, followed by reports on the visitation and a short message by Norris.

Those two churches, in turn, produced dozens of other churches. By the year of Norris's death (1952), First Baptist of Fort Worth had established more than 20 churches in and around that one city alone. The same was true of Temple Baptist Church of Detroit.

## **Operation Saturation**

The following is from Evangelist Stacey Shiflett:

“There is a method called Operation Saturation where a church takes a small bag (similar to an Avon type package), and places a gospel tract, a John-Romans or a New Testament, a brochure about the church, and a flyer inviting them to come to a Home Missions Revival. I am preaching one for Bro. David Roth in June at the Faith Baptist Church in Cleveland, SC. We will spend two Saturdays canvassing the area, and promoting the revival. The entire purpose of the revival is evangelism with salvation messages preached each night. . . . Tracts and pamphlets are good, but if one can afford New Testaments or John-Romans, then that really seems to get their attention, and they will read it, sooner or later.”

## **New Move-Ins**

One of the means of finding church prospects is to use a list of new move-ins. Pastor James Hamilton of New Life Baptist Church of Amlin, Ohio, says seven to 10 families have come to his church through contacts they made with new move ins. He receives a monthly list of move-ins through the Community Survey Company for about \$100 per year. Four of the church men are involved in contacting the new move ins each week, and the pastor and other men follow up on those who express interest in the Gospel or the church. Pastor Hamilton emphasizes that time is of the essence in contacting the move-ins. They need to be contacted as soon as possible after they move into the neighborhood. If for some reason they are not able to contact all of the new move-ins during the month, they put those aside when the new list arrives and begin working on the new ones.

Pastor Donald Williams of Winona Lake, Indiana, writes:

“We use Computer Assisted Marketing which sends us a list of addresses each month of those who have moved into our community. It goes by the zip code. We send a greeting letter to each of these names along with a Gospel tract. Then, we attempt to go and make a personal visit to their home.”

## **Religious Survey**

Many churches have made good contacts by going door-to-door in the community taking a religious survey.

The questions proceed from general to more specific.

“Hello, I am Pastor \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ Church. We are taking a religious survey, and I wonder if you would be so kind as to answer some questions.”

After getting their name and address, the following types of questions are asked:

Do you go to church? How often? Of the great religious leaders in the world, whom do you consider to be the most important? According to your understanding, how does a person get to Heaven? If you died right now do you know for sure if you would go to Heaven? If they reply in the affirmative, you ask what is the basis on which they are basing their confidence.

The final question is, If you are not sure, would you be willing to look at the Bible and see what it says? Those who answer this in the affirmative are followed up by a visit.

## **Visitor Pies**

Pastor Doug Hammett, formerly of Leigh Valley Baptist Church in eastern Pennsylvania, wrote:

“We deliver a pie to first time visitors the week following their visit to the church. Just a friendly, brief visit to say ‘thank you for coming.’ I then follow up with a brief pastoral visit and try to enlist them in a Bible Study. This has had a great affect on bringing more visitors back for a second look at least.”

Another twist on this idea is to make pies and deliver them to new move-ins in the immediate church area, together with literature and an invitation to the church. This is a good summer project for teenage girls. They can go to the home of a godly lady church member each week, make the pies, pray together for the Lord’s blessing on the outreach, and have them ready for visitation. This could possibly get more people involved in evangelism, at least on the fringes, who otherwise would not be active. As they work and pray in this way, they start thinking about the visitors and the soul winning aspect of the church services.

# Pass It On Discipleship

The *ONE YEAR DISCIPLESHIP COURSE* can be used as a “pass it on” discipleship program in churches, whereby more mature church members are taught how to teach others. For this purpose, it’s not necessary to go through the entire course. Some of the 52 lessons can be selected if the discipleship training needs to be shorter than one year.

The program has the following objectives:

Discipleship. The first goal is to disciple every new church member.

Teacher Training. The third goal is to provide a forum for training new teachers and an opportunity to develop spiritual gifts. The program provides opportunities for serious ministry, including opportunities for the more mature young people. It takes some of the teaching workload off of the leaders. And it helps disciple the disciplers. Few things motivate and facilitate learning like teaching.

Fellowship. The fourth goal is to help develop close relationships between church members.

The “pass it on” discipleship program is set up in the following manner:

The first step is to select some church members who have grown in Christ and proven themselves faithful and that possess some basic ability to teach at a private level. These can include older teens that meet the standards. The basic requirements are that they have a good testimony, that they are faithful to church and submissive

to the leaders, that they agree with the church's doctrine and practice, and that they have read the Bible through at least once.

After the potential teachers have had an opportunity to study the material on their own, the church leaders set up some training sessions. They go through the course with the potential teachers, hitting the high points of the lessons and providing teaching tips. During the training sessions, the potential teachers get up one by one and present a portion of a lesson to the leaders and the other trainees, after which they are critiqued.

When the teachers are deemed ready, they are prayerfully assigned a student, females being assigned to a female teacher and males to a male teacher.

The next step is for the teachers to set up appointments with their students to meet privately with them and go through the material. The leaders should try to attend some of the first lessons to provide further training.

Another option is to appoint two-person teams for discipling. A more mature and knowledgeable Christian is teamed with a younger or newer Christian. Both team members participate in the teaching, but the older team member is responsible to help develop the newer one. As the second members of the teams mature, they can become the leaders in new teams.

The course *WON BY ONE* can also be used for basic "pass it on" discipleship, though it is much more shallow and less practical as far as Christian living. The first section has 13 lessons on Bible doctrines: the Scriptures, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the Devil, the Creation, Sin, Repentance, Faith, Salvation,

the Second Coming of Christ, Heaven, and Hell. The second section contains instructions for believers, and deals with things such as assurance of salvation, Christian victory, separation from the world and false teaching, the church, and the believer's witness for Christ. [Dye Printing Inc., 435 Wade Hampton Blvd., Greenville, S.C. 29609, 864-233-8646]

Pastor John Mincy, Antioch Baptist Church, Antioch, California, gives the following testimony:

“We have used the ‘Won By One’ Bible study booklet for years and have seen many saved and disciplined. It has been the most effective evangelistic tool, and the large majority of those who finish the course stay and serve in the local church.”

# Evangelistic Bible Studies

The more liberal denominations are using a program called Alpha to increase their membership. The Alpha course, “a short practical introduction to the Christian faith,” grew out of a study program started in the 1970s by Holy Trinity Brompton (HTB), one of the largest and most influential Anglican parishes. The program consists of 15 sessions and runs for ten weeks. It covers such basic topics as who is Jesus and why did He die, how and why should I read the Bible, why and how do I pray, how does God guide us, and what about the church? The course has been extremely successful among Anglican parishes, so much so that some churches that had been closed were reopened. In 1991, the Alpha program was revised by Nicky Gumbel, one of the pastors of HTB, for use in other churches. Since then Alpha has crossed denominational lines and has grown rapidly. Only 600 people attended the courses in 1991, but by 1996 that number had exploded to 250,000 per year. By 1997, it increased to 500,000 participants worldwide. There were 5,000 Alpha courses being conducted in the United Kingdom alone by 1997, and the materials had been translated into 14 languages.

While the Alpha program itself is dangerous because of its weak doctrinal content and its ecumenical/charismatic philosophy, and while we sound the loudest possible warning against participation in it (see our article “The Alpha Course” at the Evangelism section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life web site); at the same time, the underlying concept is interesting and could be used to good advantage by Bible-believing churches.

Call them “Basic Christianity Bible Studies,” or “Basic Bible Truths,” or whatever name is feasible. Evangelistic home Bible studies can be one of the most effective means for teaching the gospel in the careful, systematic way that is necessary for reaching and grounding people.

The basic concept of Alpha is to provide a series of studies on the gospel and basic Christianity in a context that is casual, that allows the teacher to build a relationship with the students and that allows the unsaved to relax and ask any questions that might be on their hearts.

The Alpha plan is described in the following information from a brochure that is used to advertise Alpha in England:

What Is Alpha? [an acrostic is formed with the first letter of the following sentences]

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Christian faith.

Learning and laughter. It is possible to learn about the Christian faith and have fun at the same time.

Pasta and pudding. Eating a meal together gives people an opportunity to get to know each other.

Helping one another. The small groups give you a chance to discuss issues raised in the talks.

Ask anything. Alpha is a place where no question is regarded as too simple or too hostile.

Who Is Alpha for?

Those wanting to investigate Christianity.

New Christians.

Those who feel that they have never really got going as a Christian.

Newcomers to the church.

Those who want to brush-up on the basics.

What's Involved?

The evening Alpha course begins at 7 p.m. with supper followed by a talk. We then divide into smaller groups for coffee and biscuits and discuss any questions raised from the talk, aiming to finish by 9:45 p.m.

The morning Alpha course begins at 10 a.m. with a talk followed by coffee and discussion groups, aiming to finish by 12 noon.

The Alpha brochure is attractive and colorful and is designed for mass distribution. It includes a tear-off form that can be mailed to the church by those who are interested.

While we don't agree with the Alpha philosophy in all points, as we have stated, we are MERELY POINTING OUT THAT ALPHA'S BASIC GOAL IS TO OFFER A SERIES OF BIBLE STUDIES IN A RELAXED ENVIRONMENT TO THOSE WHO DESIRE TO KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.

The liberal ecumenical churches are achieving great success with this approach, because many people do have questions about the Bible and are willing to attend the sessions. There is no reason why Bible-believing churches cannot take a similar tack but provide a truly sound, scriptural answer.

The details and logistics of the program can be approached in many different ways according to the desires of the leaders and the requirements of the particular situation.

Bible-believing churches can advertise a series of Bible studies conducted in homes or at the church or some other location. Any knowledgeable preacher could design a series of basic Bible studies that cover the gospel and other basic aspects of the Christian life, such as the Bible, prayer, and the church. It would not be difficult for a preacher to write his own series of basic lessons for the Bible studies, but there are also many courses that could be used for this.

One course for this purpose is called SALVATION BIBLE BASICS by Pastor Doug Hammett, [Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, <http://www.lvbaptist.org>] This consists of four in-depth lessons on Bible salvation. A strong foundation is laid by defining sin from God's perspective and helping the sinner to see his lost condition before God. In Lesson Four, Repentance and Faith are carefully explained. It is very unusual for an evangelistic Bible study to go into repentance as thoroughly as this one does. A simple chart helps illustrate the Bible truths.

Pastor Hammett writes:

“Our personal Bible Study, Bible Basics is the backbone of our evangelism. We approach visitors, friends and people in door to door outreach offering a four-week, one-hour-a-week personal Bible Study. Our statistics break down to 1/2 of those that complete the study get saved, 85% of those that get saved are baptized into the church, 90% of those are here one year later faithfully serving. That book is available through our church.”

Another possibility is BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS by Lester Hutson [Berean Baptist Church, Houston, TX, [www.berean-houston.org](http://www.berean-houston.org)]. This consists of six lessons that guide the seeker through the truths of the gospel. It

lacks a clear presentation of repentance, but this can be added by the teacher.

WON BY ONE is another course that can be used for evangelistic Bible studies, as well as for basic discipleship. The first section has 13 lessons on Bible doctrines: the Scriptures, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, the Devil, the Creation, Sin, Repentance, Faith, Salvation, the Second Coming of Christ, Heaven, and Hell. The second section contains instructions for believers, and deals with things such as assurance of salvation, Christian victory, separation from the world and false teaching, the church, and the believer's witness for Christ. [Bible Press, 6585 NW 6th Dr., Des Moines, IA 50313. 515-289-1090] Pastor John Mincy, Antioch Baptist Church, Antioch, California, gives the following testimony:

"We have used the 'Won By One' Bible study booklet for years and have seen many saved and discipled. It has been the most effective evangelistic tool, and the large majority of those who finish the course stay and serve in the local church."

The following are some of the ways that evangelistic Bible studies can be used:

1. Use the Bible studies as a focus for mass evangelism programs (house-to-house literature distribution, radio broadcasts, etc.). Include a brochure announcing "Basic Christianity Bible Studies" or "Learn Basic Bible Truths," or whatever. Instead of trying to pressure people into praying a prayer before they understand the gospel, focus instead to get interested people involved in a series of Bible studies where a relationship can be established and they can be dealt with carefully. This is what Paul did. He preached the gospel to the masses, then took the

interested ones aside and instructed them more carefully in the things of God (Acts 17:34; 18:5-11).

2. Use the Bible studies to reach out to specific neighborhoods. Bible studies can be conducted in many different neighborhoods simultaneously by various men and women in the church and thus greatly expand the outreach. The Bible studies can become the focus for the soul winning efforts in the various neighborhoods. These are not “cell groups,” but are evangelistic Bible studies with the goal of getting people saved and brought into the membership of the church (and incorporated into the full life of the church, including the regular services). The studies can also be used to provide basic discipleship for new Christians to establish them in the faith and to help the new Christians build close relationships with mature church members.

3. Use the Bible studies to target specific groups of people. Basic Christianity Bible studies can be geared to specific groups, such as women, teenagers, foreigners, professionals, uneducated, deaf, etc. By offering Bible studies for a particular group, the church can focus on their special needs in a way that cannot be done during regular church services.

For example, in American cities today there are large numbers of immigrants and visitors and students from other countries and cultures. They often need special consideration when the gospel is communicated to them. Oftentimes they do not speak English well. It is not uncommon for them to be completely ignorant of the gospel or even of the most basic facts of the Bible and Christianity. The typical “Romans Road” presentation that uses a few verses out of Romans will be insufficient.

They need to be taught the very basics of biblical truth, such as creation and the fall of man and the uniqueness of the Bible and the character of God, before they can understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All of this can be taught out of Romans, of course, because Romans itself begins with creation and the fall of man and the character of God, but this is not what most people do when they present the “Romans Road.”

Many people will not be familiar with any of the terms of the gospel, such as sin and repentance and grace and faith. Unless those terms are carefully explained, they will “hear” the gospel, but they will not understand it. Too much of the soul winning activity in North America is of this nature because it is simply too shallow and hurried.

Missionaries who work in other parts of the world often develop ways of teaching the gospel effectively to their people, but personal workers in North America typically approach foreigners without proper knowledge of how they think and how to reach them. They try to reach them exactly as they would someone who has grown up in the Bible-belt of the United States, and they wonder why it doesn't work.

Involving select groups of people in Bible studies that are geared to their needs and that are led by people who understand them can solve many of these problems.

A series of Bible studies designed for use with those who have no Bible background is “Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ” by New Tribes Mission. Though we do not recommend New Tribes as a mission, we do praise the Lord for their zeal to carry the gospel to those who

have not heard. “Firm Foundations” is available in English, Russian, Spanish, Albanian, and other languages. There are 50 lessons designed for a one-year course, but they also have a plan for teaching the material in a shorter period, which we believe is the better plan. The lessons begin with creation and follow God’s revelation of the gospel progressively through the Bible, highlighting important themes. The standard edition is designed for adults and teens. There is also a children’s edition for younger ages.

We do not recommend that the course be used as it is written, because it is very long and drawn out, but it illustrates the necessity of starting with Genesis and building a foundation of Bible knowledge. A shorter form of the course could be used effectively in North American churches as a Sunday School class for people from other parts of the world who speak English as a second language. Many of these people are open to hearing about the Bible and Jesus Christ, but they are confused by the standard preaching and teaching because they don’t understand even the basics of Bible truth.

4. Use the Bible studies to assist those who might not be able to attend church. There are people of certain religions who are not allowed to attend a church, but they might be able to attend a home Bible study. Some Catholics fear attending a Protestant or Baptist church. There are young people and wives who are not allowed by their parents to attend a church. The Bible studies can be a means of reaching these people with the gospel.

5. Use the Bible studies in conjunction with evangelistic revival meetings. It is said that only about 5% of people making professions at large (mass or city-wide) revivals

go on to become active church members. Of course, one would suppose the percentage to be higher in local church revivals. Still, the percentage of those who don't "stick" is appallingly high in all types of mass evangelistic programs today.

There are many reasons for this, one of the chief being that scores of those making professions do not truly understand the gospel and are, therefore, not fully committing themselves to Christ in biblical repentance and faith. It's one thing to say, "Yea, I'll go along with that; it sounds good," and quite another to be truly born again of the Spirit of God. If most of those coming forward in revivals were encouraged to commit themselves to a multiple-week Bible study course and if godly, mature church members faithfully taught the course, we can only imagine that the lasting fruit of our meetings would be ten-fold greater than would otherwise be the case.

The following is from Connie in Tucson, Arizona:

"Last summer you sent out an article on the Alpha Course and how that was drawing many in. Of course, it is way too compromised, but the idea to have a home Bible study was mentioned. Then you went on to say that the New Tribes missions material, 'Creation to Christ' was found to be sound by someone you knew, I think in Russia. I purchased the curriculum and made up brochures and started a group in last September. The group averages three ladies, all unbelievers at the start. It will end in late May. I have found the material to be very good! Now that we are coming up to the New Testament I want to get some new ladies that will commit for maybe six weeks and just study the lessons on Jesus Christ. Sometimes in the beginning of the study I would just read chapter after chapter without stopping and the ladies would follow along. Praise God for his Holy Spirit who leads and guides! Last

November I found a sound KJB preaching fundamental church in my area (Praise the Lord) and the Pastor's wife and I are thinking about doing an evening outreach for ladies only starting in the fall. To get people to come I just carry around a stack a brochures and hand them out as the Lord leads. Some that came dropped out and that is annoying but the ones that keep coming I am hoping will become followers of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and get saved."

### **The Bible's Amazing Story**

*The Bible's Amazing Story* is another example of material that can be used for evangelistic Bible studies. It is a summary of the Bible designed for soul winning. Beginning in Genesis and going through Revelation it includes excerpts from the Scriptures with 205 headings and 204 explanatory footnotes to enable the reader to see the unfolding story of the Bible and to understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The footnotes contain explanations of Bible words and events.

The Bible is a large book and to the uninitiated, it is complicated and difficult to understand. A teacher is required, as we see in Acts 8 in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch. He was a highly educated man, the treasurer of Ethiopia, and was reading the book of Isaiah; but when Philip the evangelist asked him if he understood what he read, he replied, "How can I, except some man should guide me?"

*The Bible's Amazing Story* is designed to assist those who are searching for the truth and who want to know what the Bible is all about.

It is also an excellent study book for new converts.

Missionaries might be interested in having this unique gospel tool translated into other languages. Currently it is available in English and in the Nepali language. [Way of Life Literature, <http://www.wayoflife.org>]

# Advertising

People need to know that a church exists and how it is different from other churches, and advertising can help accomplish this.

It continually amazes me that so many churches treat this with such carelessness.

Following are some of the common ways churches in free countries can advertise. There are also ideas about preaching the gospel through advertising.

1. Yellow pages. It used to be that the telephone yellow pages were one of the first places that people looked when they were trying to find a church. This is becoming old hat with the advent of the Internet, but it is still important for churches to advertise in the yellow pages, that they be listed under the right category, and that some basic information be included, such as times of services.

2. The church sign. One of the most basic forms of advertisement is the sign on the church property. This should, first of all, be attractive and well maintained. If the sign needs painting or if weeds are growing up around it, etc., it sends out a loud and very negative message to potential visitors. The sign should also contain all of the information that visitors need, such as a list of services, the times of services, the pastor's name, the church's phone number, and perhaps a few words about the church's distinctives. Many times I have visited a town and have driven by a church to get information about the services and have been amazed to see that the sign is not maintained properly and that it does not offer the desired information.

3. Church telephone message recorder. Churches must make it easy for people to contact them. If potential visitors or people seeking spiritual help for themselves or their loved ones are frustrated when they attempt to contact the church and the pastor, they will usually go somewhere else. A survey done by Barna Research Group in August 2000 found that it is very difficult to get in touch with pastors. They called 4,000 Protestant churches during normal business hours. “The callers connected with a human being on the first try only one-third of the time. Forty percent of the churches never connected the Barna callers with a human being, even though some churches were called 12 times” (Religion Today, August 24, 2000). George Barna rightly observed: “In a world where people are extremely busy and are suspicious of the practical value of churches, they are not likely to make three or four calls to a church before they get to speak to a human being. If churches really want to help people, they have to be accessible.” Churches not only should have an answering machine or voice mail but should return calls quickly. Callers should be encouraged to leave their phone number with the promise that someone will return the call quickly. It is essential that the phone messaging system be checked frequently and that calls be returned. If the pastor does not have a full-time secretary, he should seek volunteers who can help him on a part-time basis with important tasks like this.

4. Newspaper ads. Another very logical way to advertise the church and to preach the gospel is via local newspapers. Some papers in the States give churches free advertising space once per week. Some newspapers give pastors opportunity to write religious columns from time to time. Churches should take advantage of this and make the community aware of their existence. Special

meetings can be announced via newspaper ads. Churches in some countries have used large newspaper ads combined with correspondence courses effectively to preach the gospel.

5. Radio spots. Short advertisements on local radio stations can be an effective way for churches to make themselves known to the community. The advertisements can include a verse of Scripture and a short word from the pastor.

6. Posters. The Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England, which was made famous by Charles Spurgeon, is still an evangelistic church more than 100 years after his death. It is pastored today by Peter Masters. One of the ways the Tabernacle attracts visitors is through posters which are positioned on key London underground stations. The design is changed from time to time. The current posters depict various things that keep people from attending church to hear the gospel. The title at the top asks, "WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM HEARING THE GOSPEL?" Beneath are six common excuses people give for not attending church or giving attention to the Bible. These include "I didn't come to London to get religious," "Christianity is nothing but Hebrew myths, old people and hypocrites," and "What would my friends say if they knew where I'd been?" The posters briefly reply to these ideas and invite the reader to "come, hear, and decide for yourself" and to "FACE THE FACTS AT THE TABERNACLE NEXT SUNDAY AT 6:30 p.m." The *Sword & Trowel* notes: "These are seen by millions of people, and over the years many people who were first brought in by seeing a poster have been saved."

7. Church web site and e-mail. Another effective means of advertising the church today is the Internet. The Internet has become an integral part of most people's lives. Every church should have its own attractive, well-maintained web site and e-mail address. The web site should include all of the basic information that visitors would want to know about the church, such as description and times of services, doctrinal statement, brief church history, biographical sketches of the pastors, and description of the church programs. The site should include a map to the church. Many churches also use their web sites for evangelism and teaching. Some churches put their church papers on the web. There are endless ways for churches to communicate the Word of God via the Internet.

8. The Way of Life Literature Church Directory. Way of Life maintains a directory of select fundamental Baptist churches that have successfully filled out our questionnaire. This directory is used by people who are trying to locate a good church for themselves or for their friends and loved ones. See [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org).

# **Gospel Tracts**

Gospel tracts and pamphlets are very important tools in evangelism. The printing press is a wonderful gift from God and has been used greatly for the glory of Jesus Christ. The printed page can greatly multiply our efforts in the service of the Lord and tracts can oftentimes go places where we cannot go.

## **Be Careful about the Message**

The first consideration in the use of gospel tracts is to be certain that the content is scriptural.

There are three problems with the average gospel tract:

1. Many tracts do not contain a clear and biblical presentation of the gospel. Many refer to salvation in an unscriptural and confusing manner, such as “asking Jesus into your heart” or “giving your life to Christ.” Salvation is not giving one’s life to Christ; it is trusting the finished cross-work of Christ. Nowhere in the New Testament do we see the Lord Jesus or the apostles telling people to give their lives to Christ or to ask Jesus into their hearts. We need to follow the Bible in the terminology we use so that people are not confused about what salvation involves and so they do not make false professions of faith.

2. The second serious drawback is that most tracts do not deal with repentance. Most don’t even mention the word or even hint at the concept, yet the Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles preached repentance plainly and demanded it from those who would be saved. Salvation only comes by “repentance toward God, AND faith toward our Lord

Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Any presentation of the gospel should include the fact that God “now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). Whether or not the word “repentance” is used in a gospel tract, the *idea* should be. What is repentance? It is a change of mind that *results in* a change of life. It is a turning, a change of direction (1 Thess. 1:9). When I receive Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, I am turning my back to the old life.

3. Another problem is that many tracts simply do not give enough information. Large numbers of people in North America today are as ignorant of the true God of the Bible and of the basics of the gospel of Jesus Christ as any Hindu in darkest Asia. It is essential that we begin with the basics with these people, and that we explain biblical terms thoroughly, otherwise, when they hear terms such as “saved,” “believe,” “Christ,” “God,” “sin,” they won’t have the right idea of what we are talking about, and any “profession” they make will be empty.

Some gospel tracts that include repentance are the following:

“The Bridge to Eternal Life.” This full-color pamphlet is also illustrated. [Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, Majestic Media, 810-725-5800]

“Have You Considered This?” [Dennis Costella, Fundamental Evangelistic Association, 1476 W. Herndon, Suite 104 Fresno, CA 93711, 559-438-0080. Also available online at <http://www.feasite.org/Tracts/fbconsdr.htm>]

“I’m a Pretty Good Person” is one of the many tracts published by the Fellowship Tract League. It is a good

tract to show people that their good works and religion won't take them to heaven. [Fellowship Tract League, P.O. Box 164, Lebanon, OH 45036, 513-494-1075, <http://www.fellowshiptractleague.org/>]

“The Little Red Book.” This 12-page pamphlet is illustrated and has been effective. [Little Red Book, P.O. Box 341, N. Greece, NY 14515 or P.O. Box 7195, Greensboro, NC 27417, LRB@frontiernet.net, 585-225-0715]

“The Most Important Thing You Must Consider.” This tract is strong on God's holiness and just punishment of sin and the necessity of repentance. [Faith Baptist Church, 105-01 37th Avenue Corona, NY 11368, 718-457-5651, <http://www.studygodsword.com/fbcpress/tracts.html>]

“What Is Your Life?” This pamphlet is illustrated. [Operation Somebody Cares, 1131 Brentwood Drive Collinsville, VA 24078, 276-647-5328, <http://www.operationsomebodycares.com>]

“What Must I Do to Be Saved” by the late Evangelist John R. Rice. [Sword of the Lord, Box 1099, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. 800-247-9673, [booksales@swordofthelord.com](mailto:booksales@swordofthelord.com)]

“Why Should I Let You into My Heaven?” [Dean Myers, [deanmyers2@juno.com](mailto:deanmyers2@juno.com)]

Liberty Baptist Church in Greenville, Michigan, has a wide range of helpful Gospel tracts. [Pastor Mike Austin, Liberty Baptist Church, 11845 W. Carson City Road, Greenville, MI 48838. 616-754-7151,

pastor@libertygospeltracts.com, <http://www.libertygospeltracts.com/>

Mercy and Truth Ministries has some interesting small tracts. One is titled “You Can Get to Heaven from -----” and an edition can be obtained for each state in the U.S. [Mercy and Truth Ministries, Lawrence, KS 66049, 875-887-2203]

Moments with the Book has several tracts. One is the size of a business card and reads “The wages of sin is death” when held one way and “The gift of God is eternal life” when turned upside down. On the back is a brief gospel message. [Moments with the Book, P.O. Box 322, Bedford, PA 15522, 814-623-8737, gospel-lit@mwtb.org]

Pilgrim Fundamental Baptist Press publishes a tract that is designed to leave with a tip after a meal. On the outside it says, “Thank you and here are 2 tips for you!” On the inside it states that Tip #1 is a monetary token of appreciation for your service, and Tip #2 is a Gospel tract that explains how to be saved. It is large enough to hold a standard tract. [Pilgrim Fundamental Baptist Press, P.O. Box 1832, Elkton, MD 21922]

## **Things to Remember When Distributing Tracts**

Giving out tracts is something every born again believer can do, young or old.

1. Remember that it is each believer’s responsibility to give out the gospel (see Mat. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:45-48; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Phil. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:5).

2. Remember that by giving out the gospel you are offering the greatest gift in the world. When we give out the gospel we are offering dead people life; we are offering poor people riches; we are offering sick people healing; we are offering lost people salvation.

3. It is wise to read the tracts first yourself before giving them out to others. This way you will know exactly what it says and you can refer to it when you talk to people. Also, by first reading tracts before giving them away you can see if the tract contains something that is not true or leaves out something important such as repentance.

4. Make a commitment to give a tract to people you meet and also perhaps to give out a certain number of tracts each week.

5. Be flexible and use a variety of tracts. Don't get stuck in a rut. If you live in area where multiple major languages are common spoken, it is wise to carry languages in each of those languages.

6. Always be pleasant and polite. Remember that you are a complete stranger to the people you are approaching. Ask kindly, "May I give you something special to read?" or "I have some Good News for You" or "May I give you something that has been a blessing in my own life?" If they are busy ask them to put it in their pocket and read it later.

7. Keep in mind that the goal is not merely to give out tracts but to find opportunities to witness to people about the Lord Jesus Christ with the goal of leading them to salvation. Use the tracts to open the conversation, and when you find someone who is interested take the time to

talk further with him and try to get his contact information for follow up.

8. Don't get upset or discouraged if someone says something against Jesus and the Bible or they mock you and what you are doing. "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake" (Mat. 5:11-12; Jn. 15:20; Lk. 9:26; Phil. 1:29).

9. Give out tracts to those who look like they might be interested and to those who don't. We cannot look upon the hearts of men and we cannot know who God might be dealing with. Jesus said preach the gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15). Ecclesiastes says: "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good" (Ecc. 11:6). "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days" (Ecc. 11:1). This refers to the custom of casting seed on the marshy ground after a river such as the Nile had overflowed its banks, trusting that the seed would take root and bring forth a crop. "When the waters receded, the grain in the alluvial soil sprang up. 'Waters' express the seemingly hopeless character of the recipients of the charity; but it shall prove at last to have been not thrown away" (Jamieson, Fausset, Brown).

10. Be sure there is a name and address printed or stamped on each tract so that if someone is interested they have a contact for further help. A gospel correspondence course is a good way to follow up on tract distribution. See the section on correspondence courses in this book. This is more effective in some parts of the world than others, but we have seen much fruit by

this means in our missionary work. We must remember that it is not enough to give out tracts. The objective is to see people come to Christ and baptized and discipled (Matt. 28:19-20).

11. One of the most important things about tract distribution is faithfulness and persistence. Some tracts may be thrown away but they might be found by someone else. We have a man in our church who first got interested in Christ by reading a tract that was given to his friend. This has happened many times. God wants faithful workers. Don't get discouraged if nothing seems to be happening. We must do this work by faith, not by sight. Keep your eyes on the Lord and trust Him to accomplish His will and to give fruit and just continue to give out the gospel. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6). "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (1 Cor. 4:2).

12. Remember that our real enemy in tract distribution is not people but the devil. He is the god of this world who is blinding the minds of = unbelievers (2 Cor. 4:4). Thus we must have on the whole armor of God as we go about this important work (Eph. 6:11-12).

13. Pray much for your tract distribution, both before and after. Pray that God will open the eyes of the people so that they desire to know Him and that they will read and understand the tracts.

## **PLACES FOR TRACTS**

Anniversary cards  
Hospital calling

Christmas cards  
Waiting rooms  
Birthday cards  
Cars  
Bus Stations  
Laundromats  
Door to door  
Clerks  
With your tip  
Put up tract racks  
Put them in library books  
With invoices  
Campgrounds  
Paying bills  
Restrooms

Bulletin boards  
Gas Stations  
Your neighbor  
On vending machines  
Church visitation  
Vacations  
Zip Code books  
Strangers  
Pattern Books  
Sporting Events  
Flea Markets  
Fairs  
Waitresses  
Salesmen  
Stores  
Pay phones  
Post Offices  
In Letters

Doctor's offices

Copy machines

Newspaper machines

Airports

Shopping centers

Pray for new places!

## **Card Showers**

The following is from Chuck Taylor:

“One simple way that I found in evangelism is Card Showers. Out here in Nebraska, they seem to be pretty popular! They will come out in the paper and request a ‘card shower’ honoring someone for a birthday, anniversary, etc. As many as 4 or 5 a day in our small town I can find. These are people who may be within a 100-mile radius of the paper. I have written a congratulatory letter that I use and include a gospel tract and mail it to the address. The people are open to correspondence because that is what the ‘shower’ is based on.”

## **Personal Testimony Tracts**

Pastor Doug Hammett writes:

“We have our folks write their personal testimony and we include a picture of them on the front. We edit the tracts and prepare them for printing and then cover 1/2 of the cost to help get it printed. Inside the foyer we have the tracts of our members so visitors can read the story behind their life. Our folks can also give them out as they meet people that have a background similar to that member. We have a cassette tape and questionnaire to help a person put together their personal story available through the church” [Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, <http://www.lvbaptist.org>.]

## **Gospel Tract with Songs and Hymns**

One thing we have found profitable in our missionary work in South Asia is a gospel tract that also contains the lyrics to about 20 hymns and spiritual songs. We use these in evangelistic meetings and home Bible studies. It doubles as an inexpensive songbook as well as a gospel tract that people can take home.

## **Gospel Sermon CDs**

The following is from the Slice of Laodicea web site:

One thing I always carry with me are Gospel Sermon CD's to give to people who I meet throughout the day. Giving out CD's with good gospel sermons on is a great way to reach those who are perishing. They're relatively cheap to produce and a gospel message much longer than a gospel tract (I use them too), is easier for the receiver to hear.

People tend to keep hold of CD's, even if they don't listen to them straight away. There have also been many times like for instance a workman will be doing a quick job, and I have given him a CD, and explained what it is and they have replied "thanks, I'll listen to it in the car on my drive home.

You can give Gospel Sermon CD's to the post lady, gas meter readers, and door-to-door sales men. At Christmas, why not give a card with a gospel sermon CD inside, to everyone in your street, and post one to your friends and relatives.

They're also easy to carry and great to give away to the person on the counter at the petrol station, local shop, bank etc, and are wonderful to give to someone after you have had a witnessing conversation in the street.

# Students and Immigrants

## Campus Ministry

Helpful information about campus ministries is contained in the booklet *How to Start a Christian Club on Campus* by Daniel Kim. It focuses on high schools in America and contains legal tips and other matters. Not everything in this booklet is necessarily sound from a fundamentalist basis, but the section on students' legal rights is valuable in itself. [Citizens for Excellence in Education, P.O. Box 3200, Costa Mesa, CA 92628. 714-546-5931]

Creation Science is a subject that can create a lot of interest among students. There are lists of creation science organizations and resources elsewhere in this report.

Another approach is to invite students to a Comparative Religion presentation. A church in Singapore uses this approach with visiting Navy personnel. Church workers meet the Navy men at the ships and invite them on a tour which includes area temples. They are then shown a film on different religions, followed by a presentation of the gospel that points out the differences between other religions and Bible Christianity.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England, hosts a Saturday evening Student Focus meeting each month during school terms. It is evangelistic in character and is well attended. Some widely-advertised meetings have brought together more than 400 students. The church also has a "student tea" (a light meal) every Sunday afternoon, "partly because hostel students would otherwise miss a meal by coming to church."

Metropolitan also conducts a Sunday afternoon Doctrine Class to disciple young adults.

We received the following tips for working with students from Arun Ninan on April 15, 1999:

Thanks for your inquiry concerning college student outreach. The Lord saved me when I was a secular college student almost 8 years ago and called me to preach a few months later. I was immediately burdened to reach the college I came from and thus began my outreach.

If there is a specific university that the Lord is leading you to reach, I would begin by making up some posters, such as we've used here -- "FREE Christian Home Bible Study Course and Bible Literature" (white letters on black background). Several may call in response and we follow up by sending them the correspondence course and some tracts along with locations and times where we meet for Bible study. In a few weeks, we'll call them up and ask how things are going with the course and if they have any questions we can help with. We ask them if they would like to join us for a small group Bible study and remind them of where we meet. We also obtain a student directory from the local colleges, call up students and see if any are interested in our Bible course and literature.

Once students start coming to Bible studies and church (hopefully), we work with them until they are saved. If there are many interested students at a particular university, we start a campus organization with them. This gives us some extra privileges. We can obtain a room for free where we can meet weekly; we can put literature in all the student mailboxes on campus (especially in the dorms); we can put up posters for special series of meetings we hold on "Prophecy," "Creation/Evolution," "Which church did Jesus start?" "What happens when we take God out of the picture," etc. and other topics of interest to students. Next we begin a two-part series on New Evangelicalism called "Are we reaching the world God's way?" By these series, God will bring students who are searching for answers. We meet

them, befriend them and leave them with a welcome packet that tells them about our weekly activities--small group Bible studies, Friday night social activities, etc. We also put up posters that offer rides to church for students if they meet the vehicle at specific spots on campus at specified times. We come in a van, pick them up and drop them off after church.

Because of our campus organization privileges, we have booths set up in the student union (main hangout for students), with large signs and pictures of our activities. At the beginning of each semester, students come and sign up with us. We are then able to follow up and visit them. During the semester, we sit at these booths with "FREE" signs and offer tracts, Bible courses, etc. We tell them about the radio station and point out preaching programs they can listen to.

Another privilege we have as an organization is that we can obtain labels of every registered student and do a mailing to them with a response card. Several of these responses come in every semester and we follow up on them.

Thus the Lord has shown us many avenues of outreach, and every year He has saved several college students, many of whom He uses in various aspects in our church. Some of the men have been called to preach and we train them in our Bible Institute. We praise God for what He has done. Since the fall of 1993, He has brought about 50 into our church body through this means.

I have a good friend in Fayetteville, Arkansas (Pat Briney -- [bapcoll@comp.uark.edu](mailto:bapcoll@comp.uark.edu)) who is a missionary to college students (as I am). He goes around the nation and helps fundamental Baptist churches begin a ministry on their campuses. He came up here in the fall of 1993 and helped us a lot.

Through the methods I have mentioned, we come into contact with foreign students and there are several African students who are coming to church. It is also possible to arrange with the international student office on campus to host new students each

semester for dinner at your church. I would advise interested church families and singles to adopt a student and try to make them feel welcome and to help them adjust to America.

All our work is done exclusively by people in our church. We do not yoke up with others since we do not agree doctrinally with them.

## **Foreign Exchange and College Students**

Foreign Exchange Students are often lonely and neglected by the other students. My wife worked a couple of years as the community counselor to place exchange students in homes. One year after that she held an International Party for foreign exchange students. The public high school allowed her to distribute a flyer advertising the party. They were invited to “a get-together for Exchange students and their friends, to come eat, play games, have a bonfire, talk to their friends, make new friends. Boys will be taken home at 9:00. Girls are invited to spend the night at the Fellowship Hall and stay after Sunday morning breakfast for church (optional) and then lunch and a softball (volleyball) game afterwards.” A map was included. Nine exchange students showed up out of one high school, and they enjoyed themselves so much that they begged for more parties. It was held at the end of the year, but based on the enthusiastic response, such get togethers could have been held each month.

English lessons can be used to make contact with foreigners. An offer can be made to provide free lessons.

The curriculum *Passport to the World of English* is used by missionaries Ed and Dorothy Woods, the English as a Second Language representative of Continental Baptist Missions. The Woods help churches reach “the World at

Our Doorstep” in North America, and English language studies is one of their tools (Continental Baptist Mission, 5900 Alpine NW, Comstock Park, MI 49321).

One idea is to use the holiday seasons to make contacts with foreign college and university students with the goal of building an evangelistic relationship with them and their families. There are international student organizations on most campuses, and if approached properly they might either give the names of foreign students from a particular country or part of the world, or they might be willing to put you into contact with a representative.

To be most effective personal contact must be made with the students (as opposed, for example, merely posting a flyer, etc.). Whether or not this endeavor is effective will depend, first of all, upon the ingenuity and friendliness of the person or persons making the initial contacts. They can be invited to a “typical American home for a typical American Christmas.” A printed invitation could be used to describe the event.

Another idea is to contact the newly arrived foreign students and provide some basic instruction about life in America, and use this to establish a relationship with them for presenting the gospel.

Another idea is an International Dinner that could be the focus of attracting students to a gospel presentation. The foreign students can be invited to help prepare food from their individual countries. Those who are contacted to help prepare the meals can be encouraged to invite their friends. If there are Christian foreigners available, their testimonies at the Dinner might be very helpful.

## **Immigrants**

When people from other parts of the world immigrate to one's area, it is a wonderful opportunity to reach out to them with the gospel of Jesus Christ. More often than not, though, they are the neglected "mission field" at a church's doorstep.

Churches in metropolitan communities have a great opportunity to reach people from other countries. For example, Spanish is becoming so prominent in America that some Baptist preachers are learning the Spanish language so they can minister to these people.

It is essential that those involved in such outreach try to understand the mindset of the people. Oftentimes they have absolutely no Bible knowledge, so the gospel must be presented in such a manner that they understand the most basic Bible truths. A foundation must be carefully laid, beginning with the authority of the Bible, the nature of God, the lost condition of man, and the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

One means of providing this is to conduct an International Bible Class designed to meet the particular needs of foreigners. This could be held in homes or at the church. It could be a special Sunday School class. It is necessary to present the gospel carefully and to encourage the students to ask questions. The goal is not to hurry through a certain amount of material but to make sure that the people understand the gospel. The class needs to be informal to an extent, while being structured enough to accomplish the goal. The goal is to present the gospel on the level of the foreign visitors, to get them saved and grounded in the basics of the Christian faith.

At that time, they could “graduate” to the regular church services. See “Home Bible Studies” for more about this.

## **Virtual English Classes**

The following idea came from Christina Breault:

“I have developed a web site (in Portuguese, since I’m from Brazil — I have lived in the US for 14 years — and that’s my native language) where I do web evangelism through an English class for the Brazilian community here in the US and all over the world, mainly in Brazil, using texts from the Bible only. <http://www.christinawebsite.org/inglesvirtual.htm> It started out as a personal web publication sharing my testimony, some pamphlets that I translated, articles and other Christian materials. Then the idea of a Christian English Virtual Class popped in my head. I felt that I could help brothers and sisters assisting them in learning the English language as well as reach non-Christians with the Gospel through their interest in learning English. To my surprise the web class has been a success and I have an average of 250 visitors everyday, mainly students at Brazilian universities and government agencies. People enjoy the class very much as they write telling me about it. So, through my English virtual class I make non-Christians read the Word of God as I use biblical texts to teach them English. I thought this was a good evangelism idea. I also expose a lot of the heresies going on in churches today (particularly the charismatic churches, which are epidemic in Brazil) and that has created a lot of controversies in my web site. People just don’t want/like to hear the truth.”

# Children

We plan to include more about children's evangelism in a future edition of *Ideas of Evangelism*, if the Lord makes that possible. Until then, we offer the following few tips in addition to those already included in other sections of this book (particularly those on Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, and Youth).

Lee Perrine wrote the following challenge about reaching children for Jesus Christ:

"I still believe that 'reaching the children' is a great way to evangelize. I have seen it too many times, even in my own walk with the Lord. When you reach the children, you sooner or later get the parents, grandparents, and relatives. It works domino effect. I have already experienced it, and have seen family members saved in Jesus Christ. It is wonderful to see this. People sort of hide out in today's world. They want to go to church but are afraid of not being accepted. When they see that people care and accept their children, they begin to see that for themselves and feel freer to ease up those tensions. Families are really hurting out there today, and it is a blessing to them to see people wanting to give love and concern to their children. Then they begin to see Jesus Christ in those people."

A book which gives information on leading children to salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ is *How Can I Except Some Man Should Guide Me?* written by Pastor Kerry James Allen, Fox River Baptist Church, Oswego, Illinois, it contains helpful instruction in the challenging and weighty business of leading children to Christ.

Chapters include the following—

"The Earlier, the Better" (this is an excellent overview of the biblical method of child discipline)

“Is There Not a Cause?” (the urgency of training children properly and leading them to Christ)

“What Constitutes Conversion?” (a study of the conversion of the Ethiopian eunuch)

“The Memory Maze” (suggestions on how memory works, and how to memorize effectively)

“Keeping Kids Motivated” (suggestions for motivating children to memorize Scripture)

“Who Are the ‘Many’?” (reasons why many sincere people will be lost)

The book is accompanied by a set of 150 large memory cards for Scripture memory work. The memorization plan is divided into seven topics: Doctrine, Defilement, Detection, Destination, Deliverer, Delay, and Duty. The verses are carefully selected to be effective in leading a child to salvation and sanctification in Jesus Christ. By memorizing one verse per week, the child can memorize the 150 verses in three years.

The memorization plan is well thought out and could be used effectively with teenagers and adults.

We are thankful to see that Pastor Allen does not promote the “easy prayerism” method of evangelism that is so prevalent and destructive today. Consider the following excerpt from his book:

“Never tell your children they are saved, even after they make a decision. You don’t know that for a fact. Many a well-meaning parent has told a child what a child did, when the child doesn’t even know what the child did! Be patient! Many a young person has been convinced of their conversion by a well-meaning parent, when the young person himself is not totally convinced. Allow the Holy Spirit to give assurance; that is one of His functions. Never try to lead them in prayer if they do not understand, are not under conviction, and are just not ready. You can’t beg,

arm wrestle, or shove someone into the Kingdom of God. Give God and His Word a chance, and allow Him to work. He promised He will!" (How Can I Except Some Man Should Guide Me?, p. 47).

Order *How Can I Except Some Man Should Guide Me* from Fox River Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1094, Oswego, Illinois 60543.

Another helpful book about child evangelism is *How to Succeed in Winning Children to Christ* by George Eager. [The Mailbox Club, <http://www.mailboxclub.org>]

Bible Visuals. Illustrated Bible and stories in 60 languages. [<http://www.biblevisuals.org>]

## Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School can be an effective outreach ministry. However, effectively winning children to the Lord and assimilating them into the church (i.e. discipling them) doesn't "just happen" because a church has a VBS. Truly evangelistic VBS's must be planned well in advance with a concerted emphasis on advertising and repeatedly encouraging the congregation to go into the highways and hedges and compel the lost to come in. Add to this the following and the potential for lasting fruit will be greatly increased:

1. An effective VBS requires dedicated teachers who have already demonstrated a burden and love for the ages with whom they will be working. Churches too often assign teachers just because they are available with little or no concern as to whether they are capable, whether they are truly the right people for the job. There are many qualifications a church needs to look for in those who would teach children and young people. First of all, they must be godly, faithful Christian people. That seems too basic to mention, but all too often the teachers who are chosen to do such work lack even this basic trait. Secondly, the teachers must genuinely love young people. Thirdly, the teachers must be capable of opening up the Word of God to their students, of explaining and applying spiritual things on the level of their students. Another requirement should be that the teachers have a personal zeal to reach people with the gospel.

2. The VBS curriculum should consist of interesting, biblically-sound lessons with the double goal of strengthening and challenging the saved and of introducing the lost to Christ. The teachers must

understand these clear goals. I recall a VBS in which the man who taught the teens did not clearly give the gospel even though unsaved young people were in attendance.

3. Well planned out, interesting programs, crafts, games, songs, etc. can enhance good VBS's. Ongoing contests can encourage children to return the next day. These, however, should never detract from the spiritual goals nor become an end in themselves nor cheapen the atmosphere of the church.

4. It is important that the invitations be very carefully presented. All of us have heard of scores being saved in VBS's. All too often, however, the fruit was picked too soon. It's easy to get professions from children, but we are not commanded to do this. We are commanded to bring forth fruit that remains. With this goal in mind, some churches only extend an invitation after having carefully laid and built upon a solid foundation of gospel teaching. When we attempt to reap ahead of the Holy Spirit's working in a heart, we often get a false profession. Far better to have three children solidly converted and disciplined than to have thirty professions of faith with no evidence of any real, lasting change. Our goal should be the same as that of the Apostle Paul "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20).

5. Most churches, probably better than 90%, end VBS on the last day of VBS. What does that mean? They have no plan or program to follow up and disciple those who were saved or whose hearts had begun to be moved during VBS. No concerted plan is in place to reach the families of visitors who attended VBS. One church we know of is located in a very small, rural community.

During their VBS, fourteen children and young people made professions of faith. After VBS they continued having a weekly Bible study/discipleship course with those who had made professions. Seven of those young people were baptized and became faithful in church. Eventually, some of their families agreed for the pastor to come in and teach a home Bible study. Is it any wonder that that church has grown by about 30% a year since the present pastor assumed leadership? There are many things that can be done to follow up on the VBS, such as home Bible studies, Bible correspondence courses. See those sections of the book.

6. In connection with the previous point, it is important to make plans to reach those who attend VBS but who are already “churched” in the community. In many areas a VBS will draw in children from cultish, liberal, and apostate churches. Do we not have just as much obligation to reach them as we do to reach any other lost person? Careful planning for follow-up (Bible studies, sending the children to good camps, inviting them to youth activities. etc.) can ensure an on-going relationship with and even discipling of those we would not normally be able to minister to through church and Sunday School. In some cases the VBS teacher (or pastor) of one making a profession can go to the child’s or young person’s parents with the line, “I’d like to set up a time to explain fully to you just what decision your child made at our VBS.” Then set up a time to meet with them once or several times for an in-depth gospel presentation. Some homes that will not be reached through regular church services may be reached in this manner.



# Youth

We plan to include more about youth evangelism in a future edition of *Ideas of Evangelism*, if the Lord makes that possible. Until then, we offer the following few tips in addition to those already included in other sections of this book (particularly those on Vacation Bible School and Sunday School).

## Youth Ministry

The church's job is not to entertain young people, but to train them in the Word of God and in the service of Jesus Christ. A church youth group that constantly segregates the youth from their elders and that merely entertains the youth is worse than useless. That is not the pattern we see in the Word of God. Young people need close interaction with adults. They don't need to learn how to be sports enthusiasts; they need to learn how to devote their lives for the work of Christ.

Following are some ideas for involving young people in service to Christ:

Scripture printing or binding ministry. A church can get involved in printing Scriptures or binding Scriptures that are printed at other churches. This is a great thing for young people to be involved with. The Hephzibah House in Winona Lake, Indiana, produces many New Testaments and Scripture portions each year in this manner.

Camps. Young people can be challenged to bring unsaved friends to camp, and they can also be used as counselors and helpers in camp ministries. The Heritage

Baptist Church in Troy, Missouri, and three other area churches are conducting a summer camp just for bus kids and other unsaved youth in 2001. The theme is creation science. Pastor Jamison of Heritage Baptist told me that they plan to show videos by Kent Hovind and have Bible studies that deal with man's origins in the book of Genesis, with the goal of removing obstacles and doubts that have been created by the humanistic instruction in the public school system, and laying a foundation of truth so the young people can be saved. Brother Jamison has worked in bus ministries for 15 years, and he has witnessed a change in the attitude and thinking of young people and children. Many of them today don't even believe in God, whereas in decades past even unsaved young people in most parts of America had at least a basic belief in the Bible. Thus there is a need to go back to the basics of Bible truth, beginning with Genesis.

During summer or school holidays young people can put together evangelistic Bible skits or dramas and seek for places to present them. There are many possibilities: nursing homes, parks, factories, businesses, etc.

## **Youth Sports**

Many contacts can be made through youth sports. Coaching can be a means of making strong contacts with people. One of our friends coached a Little League baseball team in Oak Harbor, Washington, and was able to preach the gospel to several young men. Those involved in such ministries must think of ways to build personal relationships with the youth and their families.

The following testimony is by Linda Cloud:

One year, when our teenage son was on a Little League baseball team, we held a birthday party for him after practice on the baseball field. A friend and I provided food, sodas, and games for the team, then sat the boys down while our youth director shared the gospel with them. The next year, with many of the same boys on the team, we invited them to our son's birthday party that was held at our church after a youth rally. The entire team came and thereby heard the gospel.

For two years the Lord allowed me to be 'Team Mom' on that same Little League baseball team. I took every opportunity to reach out in love to those boys, having hotdog roasts and dinners on the field before games, providing extra drinks, etc. After each game different parents were assigned to provide snacks for the team members. When my turn came, I put snacks and drinks in brown paper bags and included a very interesting gospel tape aimed especially at teens. One boy on the team was really touched by the tape, came to us with more questions, and was saved a few weeks later.

I began to realize that these boys' love of baseball, along with boredom during the summer months, could be capitalized upon for the sake of the gospel. Therefore, with our pastor's permission we began having regular baseball games every Friday afternoon at a local park. I provided as much of the equipment as I could, though most boys had their own bats and mitts. Providing drinks and snacks was a bit expensive but very much appreciated by the boys. Usually I would call as many boys as I could on Thursday evening to encourage a good turnout for Friday, though the second year we did this I didn't find it as necessary to call the boys. They were eager to come! Each week a man from our church would come and, about the middle of the game, we would sit them down in the dugout as the gospel was shared with them. The Lord blessed one year with a very mature fifteen-year-old Christian boy who was able to share the gospel several times with the others. They really listened as one of their peers spoke to them. During these times we didn't seek to get professions, merely to plant seeds and to water.

We were aiming toward the revival meetings at our church each August for the real spiritual harvest.

Every year, near the end of summer vacation, our church held a revival. Two years in a row we invited all the baseball Little League boys we could to come have a challenging game, followed by a dinner (which I provided at the church), followed by attending a service at the revival. We did not make revival service seem pressured by us in doing it this way. The first year we did this my son's Little League coach attended the service and made a profession of faith in Christ, as did a boy from the team. A few days later the boy's parents both received the Lord and went on to become faithful and active in the church.

The second year, after having the weekly baseball games at the park for the boys, we challenged men from a local Navy base to come and play against the Little League boys before the revival service at our church. We had around fifty unsaved men and boys for baseball and dinner. While most of the Navy men left before the services, it was a good opportunity for our church people to get to know them and witness to them. Many of the Little League boys attended the service that night and seven made professions of faith!

NOTE: Much to my initial surprise, it really was not that difficult to get twenty to thirty lost teenage boys together each week with the open opportunity of sharing testimonies and the gospel with them. On days when we really pushed, we could get up to fifty together and had three baseball games going at once. These outreaches could have potentially been much more effective if men from the church had taken a real, personal interest in investing time, prayer, teaching, etc. in the lives of these boys.

# Starting New Churches

An important part of evangelism and fulfilling the Lord's Great Commission is starting new churches.

We are instructed to preach the gospel to every soul throughout the earth (Mark 16:15), beginning in our own communities (Acts 1:8), and to baptize and disciple those who believe (Mat. 28:18-20), which is done by planting churches, because it is the church which is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). The church is the discipleship center, the preacher/teacher training center, the headquarters for world missions.

So churches must start churches. This is the wonderful pattern for world missions that the Spirit of God gave us in Acts 13-14.

Too many churches are content to exist year after year, decade after decade, without reproducing themselves, and too often they don't reproduce themselves because they simply don't have the vision and objective of doing so.

"The Southern Baptists have said that only 4 percent of the churches in America will plant a daughter church. That means that 96 percent of the conventional churches in America will never give birth. ... We need a new form of church that can be fruitful and multiply" (*Organic Church*, Kindle location 1249).

Those statistics sound right in our own experience, and in a sense we do need a new form of church that can be fruitful and multiply, but it is not a "house church" so to speak; it is a New Testament church that is not complacent, a New Testament church with a burden to

reproduce itself and to bear fruit for the glory of Christ (John 15).

It is typical that the older church gets, the less fruitful it becomes as a body.

“Fuller Theological Seminary did a research study that found that if a church is 10 or more years old, it takes 85 people to lead 1 person to Christ. If the church is between 4 and 7 years old, it takes 7 people to lead 1 person to Christ. If a church is less than 3 years old, it takes only 3 people to lead 1 person to Christ” (*Starting a House Church*, Kindle location 266).

Again, this is probably true in general, and it reminds us that planting new churches is an important and necessary means of reaching more people with the gospel.

Overseas, on the “mission field,” churches typically want to start new churches and are earnestly geared toward that objective, but in the States this is often not the case. But why should the fulfillment of the Great Commission be different in one part of the world than it is from other parts? I know that as a missionary to South Asia, it is our passion to plant churches that reproduce themselves. We are not content to plant one church and merely see it grow numerically. We have a passion to disciple the people so that each member is busy in the Lord’s Harvest according to his individual gifts and to train preachers and missionaries who can plant new churches under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

This should be the objective of every church in every place. There are never enough truly Bible-believing churches, and this is truer today than ever, and the house church movement can be a challenge to be purposeful about the matter of planting new churches.

“If you want to see churches planted, then you must set out to plant churches. The same axiom can be taken a step further to say, ‘If you want to see reproducing churches planted, then you must set out to plant reproducing churches’” (David Garrison, Church Planting Movements).

## Friendship Evangelism

“Friendship evangelism” has a bad name among some fundamentalists, but the fact is that Jesus was a friend of sinners and Paul was always out among the people.

We are not talking about “lifestyle evangelism” in the sense of trying to win people by our lives without the gospel.

And we are not saying that evangelism can *only* be done by befriending people. Jesus commanded us to preach the gospel to every person (Mark 16:15) and there is no way that the believers are going to truly befriend every lost sinner. There is a definite place for mass tract distribution and systematically covering a community door to door and for gospel radio broadcasts and whatever other methods we can find to get the gospel to the greatest number of people possible.

But the fact remains that friendships are important when it comes to evangelism. We are simply talking about getting to know people so that we can demonstrate Christian grace and neighborliness and communicate the gospel to them.

The way to make contacts is to get out among the unsaved and befriend them.

Some people get saved “cold turkey” through door knocking and tract distribution (which are fine in themselves), but more tend to come to Christ through a relationship with a saved relative, neighbor, friend, or co-worker. So believers need to set out to build more relationships with the lost.

Consider the following statements by house church leaders:

“We spend so much time building nice barns with padded pews, air-conditioned halls, and state-of-the-art sound systems, yet we have neglected the fields. We are as foolish as the farmer who builds a barn and then stands in the doorway calling all the crops to come in and make themselves at home. It is time for the Church to get her hands dirty in the soil of lost people’s lives” (Neil Cole, *Organic Church*, Kindle location 613).

“The great commission is not a ‘take it or leave it’ option for Christians. Many of us live in self-made Christian ghettos, never developing meaningful relationships with unbelievers. We believe that friendship with people in the world will somehow contaminate us. We avoid relationships of any depth with people outside the church and often are so busy with Christian activities that we have no time for others. It gets to the stage where we don’t know how to relate with non-Christians other than inviting them to a meeting” (Felicity Dale, *An Army of Ordinary People*, Kindle location 1026).

By no means do we recommend Neil Cole or Felicity Dale or their writings or their movement, but they and their house church friends are right in this matter, at least as a general principle. Bible-believing churches do need to get their hands dirty in the soil of lost people’s lives, not in the sense of sinning with lost people or putting our own children in danger of being negatively influenced, but in the sense of building relationships with spiritual wisdom and in the sense of loving our neighbors as Christ taught us so that we can be light and salt in this needy world.

At the same time, we *should* be fearful of “contamination” because the Bible teaches us to have such a fear (1 Cor. 15:33). The emerging church often

mocks the dangers that are inherent in hanging around with unbelievers, but the dangers are very real. The believer always needs to be in control of the situation to make sure that he is not lured into sin or weakened in his Christian life and witness.

I think of a Christian friend who was saved out of a rough Harley biker lifestyle and became a bold witness for Christ. When he was invited to go hunting with some of his old drinking buddies, he went, wanting to witness to them. It backfired, though, because like Peter, who lost his testimony while warming himself at the fire of Christ's enemies, my friend lost his testimony on that trip. He began cussing and drinking again!

The danger is even greater for young people. It is doubtless true that more believing young people have been corrupted by hanging around unbelievers than unbelievers have been won to Christ by that means.

Yet there are ways to get to know the unsaved evangelistically without being contaminated by their sin, and that is what we need to do.

There are countless ways to do this, and each church member should be challenged to pray about ways that he or she can make contact with and build wholesome relationships with a growing number of unsaved people in order to be more fruitful for Christ.

Some can visit people in jails; some, in nursing homes. Some can visit shut-ins. There are lots of lonely people who are homebound for health reasons, and there are believers who can befriend them and try to win them to Christ. Some are in a position to reach high school students; others, college students. Some can befriend

mechanics; others, hunters, drunks, druggies, divorcees, single moms, retirees, bankers, lawyers, military personnel, truck drivers.....

The question that needs to be asked by every believer is “who can I make contact with and who can I befriend for the gospel’s sake?”

One lady has a gospel baking ministry.

“My wife, Sally, is the chocolate-chip-cookie-baker queen of all time and she gives the cookies she bakes to all the shopkeepers in our neighborhood--from the dry-cleaner to the gasoline station owner. She exercises her gift of encouragement through praying for people and giving gifts to them. ... Sally, in her quiet way, had made many more contacts--not through overt evangelism but through friendship” (*Starting a House Church*, Kindle location 864).

A Christian friend makes contacts through the gun permit classes he teaches in North Carolina. He gives the gospel to each class of gun totters and tries to make personal contacts for Christ’s sake.

Another friend reaches out to men who work on ships that dock in his city.

Another makes contact with foreigners who live in or visit his area and has them over for meals and games and Bible studies. He opens his house for this purpose, and the foreigners appreciate it because it isn’t easy to make friends in a strange country and expatriates are often lonely.

## Using the Home for Evangelism

The house church movement can be a challenge to churches to encourage their families to be evangelistic by using the home to reach the unsaved.

One point that is frequently made in house church writings is that the unsaved are often more willing to attend a relaxed gathering in a home setting than to attend a church service.

“People who would never think to step inside a traditional church will accept an invitation for a meal in your home, a picnic at a park or coffee at a cafe” (Kreider and McClung, *Starting a House Church*, Kindle location 902).

This is true, and it is an important truth, but you don’t need a “house church” to do evangelism in homes; you simply need families in churches that are willing to open their homes for evangelism.

Churches should encourage their families to do this by trying to meet their neighbors and to make contacts with the unsaved by other means and then invite them to the home to share the gospel with them.

The following testimony describes the things a family can accomplish when the husband and wife determine to dedicate their home both to holiness and to Christ’s Great Commission. This testimony teaches us that you don’t have to be emerging in philosophy and you don’t have to be a “rock & roll Christian” to “think outside the box” a bit.

Before we married, my husband and I decided we would never have a TV in our home. We stuck by this until our oldest children neared their teen years.

Then, in order that they not seek entertainment from worldly influences in our church, or outside of the home, we decided to buy a TV JUST to watch an occasional Christian video. We felt that by setting strict guidelines we could control the box. Boy, were we wrong!

First of all we found, besides watching only acceptable videos, we began watching the news. In the beginning we only watched really important news and didn't watch on a daily basis. Then came elections and we spent a few nights watching that. Soon we discovered an 'innocent' black and white 50's series and found ourselves devoting 'just' a half hour a night with that. The weather was added to our acceptable list of what could be watched and occasionally another thing or two would creep in. Still, we felt totally in control and no red flags were waving before us regarding our TV watching habits.

Then one night when all but my husband were in bed, he wanted to check to see what the weather would be the next day, as we had a family picnic planned at a nearby lake. Half an hour later my husband came into the bedroom, dropped to his knees beside the bed and began to weep. I was alarmed, but didn't want to disturb him as he silently wept and prayed. After a long time he climbed into bed, embraced me, and began to sob uncontrollably. He explained that he'd turned on the TV and while flipping to check the weather had come across something totally unacceptable but that grabbed his attention. He then confessed that he had allowed himself to be drawn into lust and asked my forgiveness. He was so distraught over whatever he'd watched that for two or three days he could hardly eat and spent a lot of time in prayer. Meanwhile, our TV stayed off.

Shortly after this, while I was out shopping with our three younger children, my husband came home early from work unexpectedly to find our oldest watching (against the rules) a very worldly program obviously aimed at drawing the hearts and minds of teens into sin. Again my husband wept and that evening we had a major family conference. My husband took us through many Bible passages, both

those which would warn against evil and about keeping our hearts, separation, holy living, etc., AND those regarding our duties to preach the gospel to every creature. He asked our forgiveness for allowing a TV into our home and gave pretty graphic details as to why he felt he had done wrong. Our children were somber and we couldn't tell what was going on in their minds.

The next evening, after supper my husband sat us all down and again confessed his wrong doing in regards to the TV. Again he spoke of our duty to tell our fellow man about the Lord. He brought an excellent lesson to us all about hell and then outlined in great detail different ways we could begin to reach out to others to share the gospel to them. Then he threw it open to debate, asking the children what we should do. Do we keep the TV and continue to drift further and further from the Lord and from carrying out the Great Commission, or do we throw out the TV and earnestly seek to bring others to Christ? I knew my husband had fasted the last two days and that he had experienced a tremendous revival in his heart, but I was wondering how our children would respond. The response was far more wonderful than I can describe. Our second daughter began to weep and explained that she'd been praying we would get rid of the TV as she knew it was causing stumbling in her life and she wasn't as close to the Lord as she had been before. Our oldest son said basically the same. In fact, all of our children without exception displayed a desire to get rid of the TV and to come closer as a family to the Lord.

The next day we all took the TV to the dump. It had only been in our home six months, but we had all noticed the difference it had made.

That night we began memorizing Scriptures together as a family. We have continued this practice nearly every night since and can recite all of 1 Peter, 1 John, and major portions of Romans and the Gospel of John. But that's only one tiny fruit of our 'sacrifice' of the TV.

We invested in a nice Bar-B-Q grill, and began praying for our lost relatives and neighbors. The next thing we did was to quit Thursday night visitation. This was done after much prayer and talking to our pastor. We simply did not find it effective and wanted to bring forth fruit that would remain, rather than simply knock doors because it is 'the way it is done.' We began to invite neighbors over for dinner, sometimes on Thursday nights but also on Fridays or Saturdays as this seemed to fit into their schedules better. True, many neighbors were busy, but we found that if we kept at it we can get various ones to come over. After having them over for food and sometimes games, we would begin witnessing to them. Sometimes we watch a Creation Science DVD or a good Christian film with them. Other times we have a Bible study. We've gone on picnics, and with more interested ones, even on overnight campouts. Near Christmas, because we have a lot of snow in our area, we have a big snowman building contest. For this I cook huge pots of chili, make homemade cornbread, pies, apple cider, etc. We try to award nice gifts for the family that makes the best snowman within one half hour. Each year the competition has gotten stiffer and the snowmen more creative. This has been very popular and we often have ten or more families involved. We find that doing something like this in the winter causes even the immodest neighborhood girls to come fully covered, and in this way we can include a few families we would otherwise not be able to invite. After this we gather around a huge bonfire while my husband shares the real meaning of Christmas with these lost neighbors. We always take this time to invite the people to a special Christmas cantata at our church and many of them come.

I could go on and on about the creative ways my husband has come up with to share the gospel with our neighbors. But methods aren't the end in themselves and our family has a monthly day of fasting and prayer for those to whom we are presenting the gospel. We encourage our children to allow the Lord to lay some particular person on their hearts and to especially pray for that person's salvation. EVERY evening we pray for these outreaches. We have tried to keep two things before

our children in this, the first being that we are to be SERVANTS and the next that we are to be SOUL WINNERS. Of course our Christian walk comes first, but these are the things we've emphasized beyond that.

There are so many different ways we have shared the gospel through the years since we banned the TV, and our children truly have grown up with a burden for others. They are soul winners! We live a fishbowl life and invite others into our family to see our walk with the Lord and to learn of Him for themselves. The result is that three neighbor families, two older ladies, and a teen have been saved since we cast out the TV! And we have others for whom we are praying and hope that soon they, too, will embrace the Saviour. From one of the first families we led to the Lord the oldest boy has gone to Bible College to prepare to serve the Lord as a missionary!

As for missions, we have challenged each of our children to adopt a missionary and to faithfully pray for that family or individual every day. Not only that but they are encouraged to work all year long and to send at least one offering a year to that missionary. One of our children cut grass all summer for three different families and was able to send over \$700 to his missionary at the end of the summer. This was all of his own accord but it set an example for the others and they are (in fun) trying to compete and to see who can raise the most for his/her missionary family this next year. We really emphasize prayer and even fasting for those missionaries and are often blessed to have them in our home on their furloughs. What a special time that is as we hear stories in more detail of those for whom we'd been praying.

Twice a year we participate in a special program at a local mission (for homeless) in town. This gives our children more exposure to what happens when people become entrapped in drugs, sin, slothfulness, etc. It also fills their hearts with love as they reach out to these people. We go to nursing homes often, but most of our outreach is within the confines of our home. As a result our girls have had

to learn to cook delicious meals and desserts, because we often have neighbors or visitors to our church over for dinner. Our boys have learned to reach out of themselves and to value the knowledge of the Scriptures as they and my husband deal with the many questions brought up by the lost visiting in our homes. Our children are active in Sunday School teaching and all but one has had the joy of leading at least one child to Christ through this. Two of our boys have been asked to preach not only at our church but in others as well. (I attribute this, in part, to my husband encouraging them to memorize at least one of Spurgeon's sermons each year.) Three of our children play instruments and these talents are sometimes used in our outreaches. We've tried not to 'show off' our children to others, but to keep it in the context of glorifying the Lord.

I might add that both my husband and I fear that the Internet has even more potential for evil than the TV. Thus we've adopted a code of ethics for Internet use at our home. First of all, the Internet cannot be opened without a password. Our password consists of eight letters, four of which are known only to my husband and four only to me. Therefore, neither I nor my husband nor anyone else can open the Internet by himself. Our computer is in plain sight in the living room, so anyone using it can be held accountable at any time by others. We have found we seldom take time for Internet, though sometimes it has proven very useful. We call missionaries through Skype, as well as far off relatives and I have even won a cousin to the Lord by repeated conversations through Skype. We limit our use of the Internet to 'necessary information' and have good filters installed to prevent accidentally viewing something evil.

We have decided as a family not to spend time at the TV and little at the Internet, but rather in Bible training, Bible memorizing, prayer and fasting, and gospel outreach. We could spend our evenings playing games but seldom do unless with a neighboring family or individual as an outreach.

However, I doubt any family can match the wonderful times we have together in the above

activities, nor the love that exists between us. All of our children have a great desire to serve the Lord the rest of their lives, and we are confident we will see this happen if the Lord tarries (excerpted from *Keeping the Kids: How to Keep Our Children from Falling Prey to the World*).

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The thing that impresses me about this family is their commitment both to separation FROM the world and separation UNTO Christ. We see the father taking an aggressive role in godly leadership, starting with purifying his own life and testimony. We see the mother acting as a godly help meet. Together they make an invincible team because they are in the center of God's will. These parents are wholly dedicated to the task of godly child training but they are not committed to isolation. They are dedicated to Christ's Great Commission and they are praying and THINKING! They are finding creative ways to use their family to reach the lost and are discipling their children at the same time. They are in proper affiliation with a New Testament church and are submissive to pastoral authority, but it is obvious, too, that they have a somewhat unusual pastor. They are not merely plowing the same old Independent Baptist rut a little deeper!

Not every family is geared toward and able to do what the previous family is doing. But each family can pray together about ways to be fruitful evangelistically. Each family can try to befriend their neighbors to some extent for Christ's sake.

(For more about the house churches see *The House Church Movement*, which is available in print and eBook editions from Way of Life - [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org))

## **Apologetics Evangelism**

We are instructed to be ready to give an answer to the unbeliever (1 Peter 3:15). Paul believed in giving a defense of his faith in Christ (Philippians 1:7, 17). His practice was to dispute with both Jews and Gentile (Acts 17:17). He reasoned and persuaded (Acts 18:4). His message on Mars Hill in Athens was a masterly example of the use of biblical apologetics in evangelism (Acts 17:18-34).

We live in a needy world. And apologetics can prepare the soil of the unbeliever's heart so that he or she will listen to God's Word.

That is what happened to the first friend God gave me after I was saved. Richard Tedder had grown up in a skeptical environment and was educated at a secular state university. He assumed evolution is true. It was only after he read a booklet exposing some of the scientific errors of evolution that he began to rethink his philosophy of life. He decided to read the Bible, and there he found truth and salvation. The exposure of evolution was a step in his conversion.

Dr. Carl Werner was an evolutionist when he was in medical school, and through the challenge of a fellow student he decided to investigate evolution to see if it is true. Through that process he became a creationist.

Dr. Jobe Martin, who was once an evolutionist, became a creationist after some of his students challenged him to study the design of nature.

Arguments against evolution are effective for those willing to listen. The book *Icons of Evolution* by

Jonathan Wells (who has a Ph.D. in religion and a Ph.D. in cell biology) which was published in 2000, has changed the thinking of many highly educated people, including those who have gone on to become Christians as well as those who have adopted some type of Intelligent Design or theistic evolution position.

## **An Unshakeable Faith**

*An Unshakeable Faith* is a major apologetics package which is also a course in evangelism.

The course is built upon nearly 40 years of serious Bible study and apologetics writing. Research was done in the author's 6,000-volume library plus in major museums and other locations in America, England, Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East.

The package consists of a 385-page apologetics course (available in both print and eBook editions) plus a series of 18 PowerPoint/Keynote presentations. (Keynote is the Apple version of PowerPoint.) The professional PowerPoint presentations consist of 1,850 slides deal with archaeology, evolution/creation science, and the prophecies pertaining to Israel's history.

The majority of the photos in the PowerPoint slides were taken on location with a Nikon D700 prosumer digital Single Lens Reflect (SLR) camera.

The material is extensive, and the teacher can decide whether to use all of it or to select only some portion of it for his particular class and situation.

After each section there are review questions and summaries as teaching aids and to help the students focus

on the most important points. Selections can be made from the review questions for sectional and final tests.

There is also a summary of the entire course, which emphasizes the major points that the students should master so well that they can use them effectively in apologetic and evangelistic situations.

There is a major section “Soul Winning and Apologetics.”

The course can be used for private study as well as in a classroom setting.

It has been reviewed by pastors, youth pastors, and scientists.

### *CONTENTS OF THE COURSE*

The Bible Critics Were Wrong

Introduction

The Bible

The Bible’s Nature

The Bible’s Proof

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Bible’s Difficulties

Jesus Christ

Historical Evidence for Jesus

Evidence for Jesus’ Resurrection

Israel in Prophecy

Archaeology

    Introduction to Archaeology

    Important Old Testament Dates

    Archaeological Treasures Confirming the Bible

Evolution

    Introduction to Evolution

    History of Evolution

Icons of Evolution  
Icons of Creation  
Predictions  
Summary of Evidence against Evolution  
Noah's Ark and the Flood  
Miscellaneous Questions Answered  
Soul Winning and Apologetics

The soul winning section is an extensive practical section that can be used as an evangelism course.

*TITLES OF THE POWERPOINT/KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS*

Archaeology 1 Introduction and Writing  
Archaeology 2 Ur of the Chaldees  
Archaeology 3 Egypt  
Archaeology 4 Babylon  
Archaeology 5 Assyria  
Archaeology 6 Medo-Persia  
Archaeology 7 Israel  
Archaeology 8 Luke's Writings (Luke and Acts)  
Israel in Prophecy  
Icons of Evolution 1 - Intro, Natural Selection, Mutations  
Icons of Evolution 2 - Fossil Record  
Icons of Evolution 3 - Homology, Peppered Moth, Fruit Fly  
Icons of Evolution 4 - Lucy Laetoli  
Icons of Evolution 5 - Vestigial Embryo  
Icons of Evolution 6 - Miller Experiment  
Icons of Evolution 7 - Horse Whale Bird  
Icons of Evolution 8 - Billions of Years

*ENDORSEMENTS*

“This is an excellent resource for every Bible Student and the slide presentations are excellent! The material is pertinent to the young and the mature in the faith and is effective for equipping all Christians. The course content is neither too shallow nor too deep and is engaging and absorbing. I went through some of the slide presentations with my twelve year old son and sixteen year old daughter, and they found them fascinating. I believe that the format would be easily teachable.” -- Shem Dharampaul, M.D., radiologist

“The material and the layout are tremendous. I like the way it flows and how it leads you from the truth of the Bible all the way to the foolishness of evolution. It gives the teacher a definite direction to pursue. The course is not too shallow or deep and can be taught easily, and the powerpoint presentations enforce the teaching. It is so vital that every Christian know this type of thing. I have seen young people leaving in droves, because they don't have any real Biblical knowledge to stand on. A course like this gives the scriptural base they can build on and hopefully make it through this life untarnished and unshaken.” -- Pastor Kent Black

“I believe you have hit the right level for introducing this material to young people. You have done your usual thorough job in research. Outstanding pics, diagrams, reasoned arguments. It's a wonderful compilation of relevant quotes. As a nonscientist, you have done a wonderful job synthesizing the relevant arguments and translating them for an apologetics presentation. Great job overall and on the photography for the butterfly/trilobite presentation [in the *Icons of Creation* powerpoint.] The section on birdsong is worth the price of the course all by itself! I hope that many iBaptists

order your course. There is a woeful lack of education on this subject in the IFB churches.” -- David Stone, Ph.D. physics

“The entire set up is excellent!! The PowerPoints are an excellent compliment and I believe will be effective in adding the visual aspect that so many are accustomed to today. I would use and recommend the course without reservation. I respect and frankly admire the time and energy it took to produce an endeavor like this.” -- Pastor Dave Gilbert

*AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH* is available from Way of Life Literature -- [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org).

## **Creation Science Videos**

Following are some video presentations on the subject of creation science that are useful for evangelism and education. None of these is merely a lecture. Each features excellent visual graphics and is presented in a manner that will be interesting to a wide variety of audiences. The six most interesting and effective for evangelism and general viewing, in my estimation, are *A Question of Origins*, *From Evolution to Creation*, *The God of Wonders*, *Incredible Creatures that Defy Evolution I*, *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*, and *Where Does the Evidence Lead*.

Let me emphasize that in recommending these video presentations we are not thereby recommending the organizations that produce them, which to our knowledge are New Evangelical at best. They refuse to earnestly contend for the *whole* faith of the Word of God. Instead, they pick a few things to stand for and treat the rest as “peripheral” and unnecessarily divisive to “the body of

Christ” and restrictive to their cause. If the faith once delivered to saints were likened to a 12-string guitar, these New Evangelical organizations pluck only some of the strings, though with great vigor. They protest, “We are not churches,” but I don’t see anywhere in God’s Word that some believers are exempt to earnestly contend for “the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Which part of the faith? All of it and particularly that part of it that happens to be under attack at any particular time. (See “Creation Science Ministries: Why the New Evangelical Principle Is Dangerous” at the Way of Life web site -- [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org).)

***DARWIN’S DEADLY LEGACY.*** This video documents the social legacy of Darwinian evolution or “the survival of the fittest.” It traces Darwin’s views to Nazi Germany, Communist Russia, and Humanistic America. It includes interviews with Dr. Jonathan Wells, author of *Icons of Evolution*, Dr. Phillip Johnson, author of *Darwin on Trial*, Dr. Michael Behe, author of *Darwin’s Black Box*, and Ian Taylor, author of *In the Minds of Men*. It concludes with the powerful personal testimony of Dr. Richard Lumsden, former professor of biology and dean of the graduate school at Tulane University and Medical School, who was converted from Darwinian evolution to Jesus Christ. Coral Ridge Ministries, 800-988-7884, [www.coralridge.org](http://www.coralridge.org)

***EVOLUTION: THE GRAND EXPERIMENT.*** This powerful video presents evidence against some of the chief icons of Darwinian evolution, such as the fossil record, the evolution of the bird from a reptile, and the evolution of the whale. The video contains interviews with evolutionary scientists who admit that they lack evidence for their theories. One icon that is debunked is

the evolution of the whale. The *Rodhocetus*, a supposed missing link in whale evolution, is depicted in museums and textbooks as a creature that has some whale-like features such as a long whalish snout, a whalish tale or fluke, and flippers but with four legs, two short ones in the back and longer ones in the front. The legs were alleged to have flippers. While filming for this documentary, the executive producer noticed a discrepancy between drawings of *Rodhocetus* and the actual fossils, as there are no fossils for the fluke or for the flippers, the very things that are used as evidence that this creature is a missing link. An on-screen interview with Dr. Phil Gingerich, the scientist responsible for the discovery and reconstruction of *Rodhocetus*, confirmed that the reconstruction and drawings are mere speculation. He said, “We don’t have the tail in *Rodhocetus*. We don’t know for certain whether it had a ball vertebrae indicating a fluke or not. So I speculated that it might have had a fluke.” Gingerich also acknowledged that the flippers were drawn without fossil evidence, and it is no longer believed that *Rodhocetus* had flippers. Gingerich’s answers on camera were surprising, since the museum’s drawings have flippers on the creature. This first class documentary is about one hour in length and has an accompanying book and teacher’s manual. Produced by Audio Visual Consultants and New Leaf Press, executive producer Dr. Carl Werner, [www.thegrandexperiment.com](http://www.thegrandexperiment.com)

**EXPULSED: NO INTELLIGENCE ALLOWED** by Ben Stein. This fascinating documentary exposes the gross discrimination of the evolutionary community (in the fields of scientific research, education, journalism, etc.) toward anyone that proposes that the world is the product of an intelligent designer. The latter are

blacklisted, shunned, and ridiculed. The documentary ends with an amazing interview with the Oxford atheist Richard Dawkins, who shares his suspicion that this world might have been seeded by aliens from outer space. [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

***FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE*** by Answers in Genesis. This video delves into the marvelous process of the growth of the baby in the womb. It deals with fertilization, implantation, embryonic development, and birth. The presenter is Dr. David Menton, who has a Ph.D. in cell biology from Brown University, and it is illustrated with powerful photographic and video clips. Answers in Genesis, P.O. Box 6330, Florence, KY 41022. 800-778-3390, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

***FROM A FROG TO A PRINCE*** by Answers in Genesis. This video refutes the Darwinian theory of natural selection, showing that it can only account for small changes within species and not for life itself and the great difference that exists between kinds of plants and creatures. It can, for example, account for different kinds of beaks within the finch population, but it cannot account for the finch itself. The Darwinian position is stated by Richard Dawkins, a zoologist at Oxford University, who claims that the selective accumulation of lucky mutations can explain life. The counter position is expressed by Dr. Lee Spetner, biophysicist in Israel, Dr. Michael Denton, molecular biologist, Professor Werner Gitt, information scientist in Germany, and Dr. Don Batten, an Australian biologist. These scientists explain that in the process of “natural selection” within kinds, genetic information is either lost (as with a breed of dog that has only long hair) or is corrupted (as in harmful

mutations); but new genetic information is never added. When asked for an example of an advance in natural selection that adds information, Dawkins was unable to reply. Answers in Genesis, P.O. Box 6330, Florence, KY 41022. 800-778-3390, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

***FROM EVOLUTION TO CREATION*** by Dr. Gary Parker. This video contains Dr. Parker's excellent and interesting testimony of how God turned him from evolution to creation. Dr. Parker has a doctorate in biology and has authored textbooks on that subject. He describes some of the evidences in biology and geography that convinced him of the truth of the Bible. Answers in Genesis. P.O. Box 6330, Florence, KY 41022. 800-778-3390, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

***THE GOD OF WONDERS***. This excellent video explores the wonders of creation and man's conscience. It contains the testimonies of scientists and amazing facts from creation, including the vast starry universe, DNA, seeds, plants, birds, and fish. The photography is spectacular. Eternal Productions, 877-370-7770, [www.eternal-productions.org](http://www.eternal-productions.org)

***THE IMAGE OF GOD; HUMAN ORIGINS CREATION OR EVOLUTION?*** by David Aikman. This presentation looks at the skeletal artifacts, such as the Piltdown Man, used by Darwinian evolutionists to "prove" that man evolved from ape-like creatures. Creation scientists are interviewed for their perspective on the same artifacts, and they show that the evidence does not prove Darwinianism, that the supposed "ape-men" are either true humans or extinct apes. Answers in Genesis, 800-778-3390, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).

***INCREDIBLE CREATURES THAT DEFY EVOLUTION I, II, III*** by Dr. Jobe Martin. The first video in this series contains Dr. Martin's testimony of how he converted from evolution to creationism over a four-year period. The three volumes give some of the evidences from the complex design of the animal kingdom that convinced him of creation, including amazing facts about the bombardier beetle, the hummingbird, the giraffe, the gecko, the horse, bird migration, fireflies and glowworms, whales, and the ostrich. [ExplorationFilms.com](http://ExplorationFilms.com), 800-964-0439.

***INHERENTLY WIND: A HOLLYWOOD HISTORY OF THE SCOPES TRIAL***. Dr. David Menton compares excerpts from the movie "Inherit the Wind" with the historic facts of the Scopes trial to show that Hollywood has viciously misrepresented Christians and the biblical point of view. In spite of its gross historic inaccuracy, *Inherit the Wind* is shown today in public school classrooms to impressionable students who are not aware that it is nothing more than anti-Christian propaganda. Answers in Genesis. P.O. Box 6330, Florence, KY 41022. 800-778-3390, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

***METAMORPHOSIS***. This fascinating video presentation looks at the metamorphosis life cycle of the monarch butterfly as an icon of intelligent design. The following quotation summarizes the evidence. "By its very nature, metamorphosis is an all or nothing proposition. And throughout biological history, its success has hinged upon the immediate availability of a full set of instructions, including genes, proteins, and the developmental program required to integrate them. It all has to be in place ahead of time. It needs to have the genes in place, the regulatory elements that are going to

turn the genes on and off; it has to have all the cells preprogrammed to do what they are going to do so they respond to the signals they get in the right way. The larval cells have to know they are going to die. ... [The process] has to happen rapidly and in a coordinated fashion. Once you're committed to the chrysalis stage, there is no going back. You have to complete the transition. A caterpillar that is equipped to go 10 percent, 25 percent through metamorphosis is no way through metamorphosis. Part way in a process that requires getting out the other side as a fully formed adult doesn't work. You have to recreate adult legs, adult antennae, adult eyes; you have to change the shape of the brain and the connections to the organs; you have to reformat the gut so that it switches from eating plant material to eating nectar. How many mutations does it take? And how do you coordinate all of that? If you get the eyes right but the gut wrong it's a failure as a butterfly. If you get the wings right and the legs right but the muscles don't attach, that butterfly is going nowhere. It's dead. You begin to see the depths of the problem. So for evolution to have created this sort of pathway, gradually, it would take a miracle. Metamorphosis, if it came into existence at all by an undirected process, had to have done so in one fell swoop. Natural selection, by definition, cannot build that kind of process. To create a process like metamorphosis, you'd need a totally different type of cause, something that could see a distant target, keep that target in focus, and provide all the resources necessary to hit the bull's eye on the first shot. The only cause that could accomplish that is an intelligent agent." Illustra Media, 2011, [www.illustramedia.com](http://www.illustramedia.com)

***MOUNT ST. HELENS: EXPLOSIVE EVIDENCE FOR CATASTROPHE.*** In this video Dr. Steve Austin

gives the results of his research on Mount St. Helens after its 1980 explosion. The presentation describes the explosion in some detail and then examines the geological phenomena that occurred, such as the formation of canyons, strata, and log deposits. Austin demonstrates that the evolutionary model requiring thousands or millions of years does not fit the reality of what has occurred right before our eyes in modern times on this mountain. Institute for Creation Research, P.O. Box 2667, El Cajon, CA 92021, 800-628-7640, [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)

***NOAH'S ARK: THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX*** by Tim Lovett, John Whitcomb, and Ken Ham. In this interesting video presentation, Tim Lovett, a mechanical engineer, demonstrates how that ancient ship-building technology was sufficient to make the Ark strong enough to withstand the conditions it faced during the flood. This video debunks the attempt by British Broadcasting Corporation to discredit the biblical account of the Ark. Answers in Genesis. P.O. Box 6330, Florence, KY 41022. 800-778-3390, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

***A QUESTION OF ORIGINS.*** This excellent video presentation answers the following questions: Did the solar system evolve out of the Big Bang? Can chemical compounds spontaneously evolve into life? Does evolution explain the great variety of life on earth? The graphics are exceptional, and there are many brief interviews with scientists, such as Dr. Gary Parker. The video comes with soundtracks in eight languages: English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Polish, Serbian, and Slovakian. Eternal Productions, 877-370-7770, [www.eternal-productions.org](http://www.eternal-productions.org)

***RAGING WATERS***, narrated by David Aikman. This video presentation gives evidence for a worldwide biblical flood from geological studies in Australia. Geologists Andrew Snelling, Graeme Watmuffand, and Philip Hohnen present evidence that Uluru, that rises up the heart of the red desert, was formed rapidly and recently in torrential flooding. Folded strata, ripple marks, marine fossils in high mountain ranges, and the rapid formation of coal, mineral ores and opals all point to a recent cataclysm, when Australia was swept by raging waters. Answers in Genesis, 800-778-3390, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org)

***UNLOCKING THE MYSTERY OF LIFE***. This presentation argues for the intelligent design of creation from a scientific viewpoint. The scientists who are interviewed are not all Bible-believing Christians, but they argue that the complexity of life requires some sort of Higher Intelligence. One of the evidences featured in the presentation is the amazing flagella molecule, which is actually a complex microscopic rotary motor that spins at 100,000 rpm and drives a propeller-like tail. Another of the evidences is the DNA code that is more complex than any computer network. The presentation features astonishing high-quality graphics depicting the operation of molecules and cells. This is a very interesting, very convincing video. Illustra Media, [www.illustramedia.com](http://www.illustramedia.com)

***WHERE DOES THE EVIDENCE LEAD?*** This presentation features excellent graphics and interviews with scientists to prove that life did not evolve according to Darwinian processes. It deals with molecular machines, DNA, the possibility of life evolving from non-life, and scientific evidence for intelligent design. Illustra Media, [www.illustramedia.com](http://www.illustramedia.com)

# Miscellaneous Ideas

## Evangelistic Prayer List

Prayer is a necessary part of evangelism, and one great tool is an evangelistic prayer list. Each church member should be encouraged to keep such a list. It contains the names of lost people that I am praying for regularly and trying to reach for Christ. If I am not willing to pray for the person and try to reach him, I should not add him or her to the list.

The prayer list naturally begins with relatives, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances.

But the idea is to add to the list as I make new contacts with unbelievers during my daily activities, through tract distribution, etc.

I need to be on the lookout for people who show an interest in the gospel so that I can pray for them and work with them. I need to try to get their phone numbers as well as their names.

*What is done with the list?*

Pray for the people on the list every day or at least regularly and ask God to open their hearts and to grant me wisdom in reaching them.

Call the people from time to time to tell them I am praying and to ask if they have any special needs that I can pray for.

Invite the people on the list to gospel meetings. It is not enough to pray for people's salvation. They must hear the gospel and come to understand it.

Personally visit those who are showing interest.

If I meet a person from out of town and add them to my list, I try to find a church in that area that will make contact with the individual. There is a directory of churches at the Way of Life web site that can be helpful in this regard.

## **Neighborhood Walks**

One way to meet the unsaved is by walking around a neighborhood praying for the lost and looking for opportunities to meet them, learning about their lives and seeking occasion to be a blessing. This is a good way for husbands and wives to work together in evangelism. They meet people, seek to befriend them and be neighborly, tell them that they are praying for them, inquire about their needs and help them when occasion arises, invite them over for coffee or a meal, etc.

Consider the following testimony about a house church couple:

"A couple of evenings later, Elizabeth and Scott made their first prayer-walk in the mobile home park. ... Sometimes they prayed out loud for their neighbors; other times they prayed quietly to themselves. Sometimes the Lord stirred their hearts to pray for things they knew were going on in the various homes. ... Scott and Elizabeth were completing their circuit of the park when someone called out, 'Hi, Scott!' There, in a carpeted carport, sat a neighbor. Janet was relaxing in a chair with a bottle of beer in her hand. ... 'Sit down, sit down! Visit with me.' ... The Lord started to lead Scott and

Elizabeth to others. Several times, at the Lord's leading, they knocked on a person's door and when the door opened would greet the one who answered with, 'Hello, I'm your neighbor!' Other times as they were walking around the mobile home park, Elizabeth and Scott saw people watering their yards and they would stop and talk with them. They greeted whomever they met at the mailbox. Whenever the opportunity arose, they invited neighbors over for dinner" (*An Army of Ordinary People*, Kindle location 933).

We hasten to say that charismatic "prayer walks" are not something for Bible-believers to emulate in the sense of trying to "bind" territorial spirits and claim "kingdom authority" and such things. The house church movement represented by the author of *An Army of Ordinary People* is rife with error.

Yet it is wise and scriptural to pray for one's neighbors and to beseech God to work in one's neighborhood and to try to make evangelistic contacts with the unsaved.

The following thoughts were sent to me by someone who identified herself only as Lee:

"One way is just hugging and loving the ones we already have inside the church structure. Many never hear a word from any one until Wednesday night service and Sunday. Sick or troubled people remain distant. Most seem afraid to reach out a helping hand or just a friendly ear. Usually the troubled or the sick get blamed for being out of God's will. Friendliness and showing love and kindness has never gone out of style for Christian people, yet it seems we are the coldest and most distant. Please, don't tell me this is not true for I have seen it for years; it never changes.

"Personally, every where I do business, small or large, I try to say 'thank you' in many little ways. For instance, one gas station that is always polite and service is good, I stop by at mid day with a box of

goodies from our health style bakery and I write a nice 'thank you' on the box with a Bible Scripture. . . . It does something when we let our lights shine for Christ, even in small ways such as these. I also invited my dog's groomer to my house at Christmas with her three children and we had treats and then went to my church to sing carols. This may not be much but there are many ways to evangelize on Christ's behalf. People have grown cold and uncaring, but Christians should never be found this way because we have Jesus Christ in residence in our hearts, in our very being! Our lights can shine brightly for Him, on His behalf."

The following testimony that further reminds us of the power of old-fashioned Christian kindness was sent to me by Pastor Jay Weaver of Cardington, Ohio:

"Here is something that a man in my church does. He owns his own concrete and construction business. Whenever one of his lost neighbors needs something done, he takes his equipment over and does the work for free. While he is there he has one thing on his mind, 'Tell this man about Jesus.' On one occasion he had an atheist neighbor that needed a septic tank installed. Brother Morgan went over and gave three full days of work for free and put the man's septic system in totally free of charge. The whole time he was there he would tell him about Jesus. When the rest of the house was finished the man invited him to a house-warming meal. Brother Morgan said he would come if he would be allowed to turn thanks. The atheist neighbor told him that would be OK. He went over and continued to witness to him. He listened with tears streaming down his face but did not get saved that day. A few days later Brother Morgan's pastor visited the man and was able to lead him to the Lord. Sometimes just being old-fashioned neighborly works. I'm afraid to say that in this hectic rat race that we run, we often forget simple courtesies that could make a world of difference in people's lives and even eternities."

## **Trying to Reach every Segment of Society**

Jesus commanded His disciples to preach the gospel to every soul (Mark 16:15), and people tend to congregate together into various “groups” in a society. There are old people and young, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, drunkards and druggies and homeless, farmers, businessmen, housewives and career women, single young people, newly married, students, gang members, artists, philosophers, witches, homosexuals, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Atheists, New Agers, you name it.

Each church should try to figure out how to get the gospel to every individual in the community and beyond as far as possible by God’s enablement. Going house to house to meet people who answer the door is good and necessary, but that is only the beginning, because that alone doesn’t present the gospel to every person.

I read of a young man who was saved out of a druggie lifestyle and started a Bible study on Wednesday mornings at 3am in a supermarket parking lot. The reason is that while working late shifts as a security guard he met people who were interested in Christ but since they worked at night and slept in the day they couldn’t attend regular church services. He didn’t just invite these people to church and wait in vain for them to come; he took church to them!

That’s a great idea. That’s thinking outside of the box. That’s being wise in evangelism.

## **Church Papers**

Many churches send out a paper to the community on a monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or bi-annual basis. The Haven Baptist Church in Nepean, Ontario, distributes their church paper on a quarterly basis. It contains simple gospel messages and Bible studies geared for the community, as well as announcements of church events. Pastor Johnson says they have gotten a number of visitors because of the paper.

Pastor Donald Williams, Believers Baptist Church, Winona Lake, Indiana, adds: “We send out an evangelistic paper that is Baptist in theology called Fellowship. This gets sent out every other month to the mail carrier routes that we choose. This paper also prints our church name and info on the back of it for people to respond.”

## **Correspondence Courses**

Evangelistic correspondence courses can be a very effective and fruitful church outreach if used correctly; and many churches have found this to be true, not only in North America but also in many other parts of the world.

They are especially helpful with people who might not be open to attending church, such as wives whose husbands do not want them to attend, or young people whose parents will not allow them to attend a church, or members of religions such as Islam or Hinduism or Roman Catholicism whose relatives would hinder them from attending a Bible believing church.

The courses are mailed or carried to those who request them and instructions are included about what to do with the completed course.

We have used gospel correspondence courses in our missionary work in Asia and preached the gospel to many hundreds of people by that means. In fact, the man we eventually ordained as the pastor of the first church we started was saved through the correspondence course ministry and has been serving Jesus Christ for 30 years.

An advantage to the correspondence courses is that they can cover the gospel systematically and thoroughly, whereas a gospel tract is very limited in its scope. When people complete our seven-lesson correspondence course in Nepal, we sent them a New Testament and other literature and try to make personal contact with them.

### **Tips for Using Gospel Correspondence Courses Effectively**

*1. Promote the correspondence course ministry to the church people.*

For a correspondence course ministry to be effective, the church people must understand its potential, get excited about it, and be diligent in advertising it. The role of the pastors is very important in this. It is helpful to give regular reports to the church about the results of the correspondence course ministry, so the people can see the effects of that outreach.

*2. Personalize the correspondence course distribution.*

Assign each person in the church or ministry a number that he can write on every tract that he or she distributes to advertise the course. The church member writes his or

her number on the back of the tract on the section that is torn out and mailed in to request the courses. Thus, when responses come back with that number, the individual will know that the response is from his efforts. This is a very encouraging thing, and it motivates people to be more diligent in distribution and more earnest in prayer. God has made us in such a way that we desire to see fruit from our labors, and the Bible tells us that this is God's desire as well (John 15:8).

### *3. Advertise the course widely.*

People are going to respond only if they know that the course is available. The announcement needs to get out to as many people in as many ways as possible. Pamphlets describing the course can be printed and distributed door-to-door, mailed to homes, and in other ways gotten out to people who might be interested. The course can be advertised in all of the tracts and gospel literature distributed by the church. The correspondence course can be advertised in newspapers. In some parts of the world, thousands of people have responded to ads for gospel correspondence courses placed in secular publications. In some places, posters advertising the correspondence course can be effective. We also advertise the correspondence course via radio ads.

### *4. Pray much for the correspondence course outreach.*

Prayer brings the power of God into any spiritual ministry. Don't forget to pray for the correspondence course ministry during the church prayer meetings. That is also a good time to give a little report about any responses that are coming. The members should add the correspondence ministry to their daily prayers.

*5. Assign the right people to answer the mail.*

The key to making the correspondence course ministry effective is to communicate personally with the subscribers and to develop a trusting relationship with them so that eventually personal contact can be made and they can be brought to the church. It is thus important that the right people be involved in replying to the subscribers. They must be people who have the Lord's blessing to be able to deal effectively with the unsaved. They must, of course, be mature and knowledgeable Christians who have a good personal testimony. If there is a large response to the correspondence courses, several people in the church can get involved in answering the letters and sending out new lessons to the subscribers. Perhaps ladies can reply to the females who subscribe to the courses, and men can reply to the males. If subscriptions come from teenagers, perhaps some mature teens in the church can be assigned to reply to them and to correspond with them.

*6. Conclude the courses with a gift.*

The gift can be a New Testament or a copy of John/Romans or "The Amazing Story of the Bible" (available from Way of Life Literature).

*7. Invite the subscribers to a home Bible study in the area, if the church offers these.*

See the section on "Evangelistic Bible Studies."

*8. Distribute bilingual correspondence courses among those who are studying English as a second language.*

English is very popular in many parts of the world outside of North America, and multitudes young people,

in particular, are eager to try out their newly acquired English skills. A bilingual correspondence course is very attractive in such areas, as well as among foreign visitors in the States.

### **Some Sources for Gospel Correspondence Courses:**

Source of Light has evangelistic and basic discipleship correspondence courses. [Source of Light, [www.sourceoflight.org](http://www.sourceoflight.org)]

Christian Home Bible Course [Fargo Baptist Church, <http://www.fargobaptist.org/chbc.htm>]

The Mailbox Club offers 15 Bible courses for use with children, youth, and adults. [The Mailbox Club, <http://www.mailboxclub.org>]

Churches and individuals are encouraged to use the Mailbox Club lessons in their own evangelistic outreaches. George Eager, founder of the Mailbox Club, explains how he started this ministry:

Many years ago I was spending some time in North Carolina, Each afternoon I went walking in the mountains. One afternoon I saw a group of children playing by the side of the road. The next day they were there again. The third day I had my back pocket full of Mailbox Club lessons. I asked the children, 'Have you ever heard of The Mailbox Club?' They had not, so I explained the club to them and asked if they would like to have a lesson.

The children received the lessons eagerly! Shortly thereafter, one of these children, a little girl, went to a boarding school nearby. Several weeks later I received a letter from a housemother at this school.

Mrs. Long wrote, 'I am the housemother for twenty-four girls. One of my girls is receiving Bible lessons from you, and she shares them with me. I think they

are very good and I wonder if I might get Mailbox Club lessons for all my girls!.'

The next day lessons were in the mail for the girls and a set for Mrs. Long as well. In about a week we received another letter from Mrs. Long. She was so excited that she could hardly contain herself! She said, 'When I received the lessons, I gave one to each of the girls and told them that we would not have a Bible story tonight, but I wanted them to read the Mailbox Club lesson for their devotional.'

Mrs. Long said, 'I went to my room. Soon there was a knock at my door. When I opened the door there was a little girl, with her lesson in her hand and tears in her eyes. She said, "Mrs. Long, I want to take Jesus as my Savior. Will you help me?" It seemed like little girls were coming to my room all night! Before it was over eighteen girls had prayed to receive Jesus as their Savior!'

Liberty Baptist Church of Greenville, Michigan publishes a series of Bible courses [<http://www.libertygospeltracts.com>]

The Middletown Bible Church of Middletown, Connecticut publishes two courses that could be used for correspondence, one on John and one on Romans. [<http://www.middletownbiblechurch.org>]

The Emmaus Correspondence School has correspondence courses. This is a Brethren organization. [[www.emmaus.edu](http://www.emmaus.edu)]

Following is the testimony of a pastor who uses the Emmaus Courses:

"Beside doing door to door witnessing, we use correspondence courses from Emmaus Bible College and call it Bible Courses International. I have printed up a post card for people to fill out and return to a post office box. We stuff all our Gospel tracts with these cards and it has been amazing how

many responses we have received back not only from our own community but from across the country as our people leave them everywhere they go. I have written a disclaimer on the courses that I use from Emmaus because they don't always stick to the King James. I put a label on the front of each course and encourage the individual to use the King James as they go through the courses. Doctrinally, I have found the courses to be very sound. To use the courses for evangelism, Emmaus has you apply to be an Associate Instructor and then you can order as many courses as you need, along with the score keys" (Pastor Donald Williams, Believer's Baptist Church, Winona Lake, Indiana).

## **Adopt A Bus Kid**

It is a wonderful thing to bring unchurched kids to Sunday School on a bus, but to have the greatest impact in their lives, the church must get involved in one-on-one discipling.

The kids are usually from broken homes and are in the public school system and they are bombarded with evil all week long. A couple of hours in church on Sunday morning is rarely enough to redeem them from such a wicked environment.

One way to do more for them is the "Adopt a Bus Kid" program. The church takes a photograph of each bus person and adds various pieces of information about their lives, and then urges the church members to adopt one of the children or teenagers. This involves paying special attention to the young person, doing special things for him such as sending him birthday cards, taking them out to eat, playing games, taking him to special church meetings, etc. The more involved the members become in the lives of the young people, the better.

A church in Michigan encourages its young men and women (older serious teens and young adults) to adopt one or more of the bus kids and then to do things with them with the goal of befriending and discipling them. When I preached at a Bible conference there several years ago on a Thursday and Friday evening, a 12-year-old boy was saved. Ordinarily the boy wouldn't have been at the special meeting, but he and his older teenage brother were brought to the meeting by one of the young male adult church members who had been playing basketball and doing other things with them. The brothers came to Christ and are growing in the Lord through faithful church attendance and Bible study and the personal loving attention being given them by the church member.

## **Testimony Gospel Recordings**

The following is from Pastor Jamie Coley, Blessed Hope Independent Baptist Church, Fort Mill, South Carolina:

“One way that our Church reaches out to the community is that I put my personal testimony on tape along with a clear presentation of the Gospel and we go out and pass them out. We have found that many people will take a tape to listen to in their car, or stereo at home. I let them know where our Church is located and the Lord has really used this to touch lives. We do not charge a penny for the tapes; they are distributed free of charge. This is just one simple thing that others may want to try.”

## **Street Evangelism**

Steve Schneider sent us the following testimony about a church in a large city:

“The church which I attend (Bethel Baptist Fellowship in Brooklyn, New York) encourages the

membership to evangelize by going out on the streets and subways of NYC EVERY SUNDAY after the services. We get filled with God's Word in the morning, and then give it out in the afternoon. The pastors of the church always go out with us and thus set the tone for the importance of the outreach. The outreach, called the 'S.W.A.T. Team,' is always published FIRST in the church bulletin and announced by the pastor from the pulpit every Sunday morning. I know that this is not a 'fancy' idea, but it is certainly effective since I have never before been in a church here in NYC that has so many people go to give out the Gospel on the streets."

## **Tragedy Outreach**

The following testimony is by Linda Cloud:

"A little seven-year-old bus girl who attended a Sunday School class I worked in was kidnapped from near her home one morning. Five days later her body was found. Since this happened in a small rural town, the entire town was visibly affected. Emotions were running high and surrounding media attention was focused on our community. As an outreach, we decided to make a cassette tape dedicated to the memory of this little girl, with songs by her Sunday School class, a story with a strong gospel message (aimed at elementary age children), and a song written especially in memory of the slain girl. (The emergence of the song is a story in itself. I had called a visiting missionary whom I knew wrote songs. I told her the story of the little girl and asked her to write a song – words, and music – and have it all complete within twenty-four hours. She boldly told me it was impossible but I urged her to try anyway. After one hour she called back to tell me the Lord had given her the song and it was completed — music and all! She sang that song before five hundred people at the funeral and snippets of it were broadcast on evening news stations all over the state. Later she was televised singing it again, and was also live on a radio program where she sang it and gave a brief testimony).

“With our pastor’s permission we then semi-professionally recorded our songs, interspersed with a dramatised gospel story, which we had written. We were given special permission by the superintendent of public schools to distribute flyers advertising the tape in all local public schools! Many local stores and banks agreed to sell the tape for us and collect the money, which we then used part of to buy Christian books for the library of the public elementary school which the little girl had attended. Also, we were able to make a donation to that library with remaining funds. Although we only sold about 400 tapes altogether, a witness also went out through the media as different television stations from Seattle interviewed us and, displaying our church address, encouraged people to order the tape. Several newspapers carried repeated stories about the tape, including a picture of the children in our Sunday School class. Nearly a year later, we had the privilege of leading this little girl’s mother to Christ!

“About two years later, the Columbine killings occurred. Immediately the Lord brought to our minds the tape we had made and how well it was received by the lost community. Feeling it was of the Lord, we called Youth Pastor Jason Janz, in Denver, Colorado, and conveyed the idea of making a tape somehow related to the slain students at Columbine. He asked me to call my missionary friend and have her write a song for them—immediately. I did, she did, and the song was arranged into four parts and recorded by the youth choir...all within three days! The tape made for Columbine was done mainly by the church youth group. Each victim’s name was given; a short message of condolence was addressed to the family members, followed by a very brief testimony of a church young person, and a Bible verse of comfort. At the end of the tape the pastor gave a brief gospel message. Another song had been written for the event and was sung by a soloist. Shortly after the tapes were made nearly 2,000 were distributed, without charge, at a memorial service. The next day Columbine High school called and asked for 1,800 of the tapes. Altogether, 23,000 tapes were freely distributed!

Most of it was paid for by unsolicited donations from the lost community!

“Another thing we did in response to a local tragedy is as follows: Three persons were horribly burned to death following an automobile accident. One was a member of our church. Footage of the burning vehicle was shown on the evening news and the community was quite shaken over this. As the persons who died were all in civil service, a memorial service was planned at a nearby base chapel. We called the chaplain and asked if our church could distribute copies of John and Romans with a cover specially printed in memory of those who had died. On the phone he was very enthusiastic about it, so a young man in our church worked long and hard to produce the covers and compile the booklets for the memorial service the next morning. (Each book was supposed to have a coupon advertising a free, in-home Bible study. However, and I will always feel this was a tragedy, through mis-communication, the coupons were omitted.) We had children from our church distribute copies at the doors after the memorial service and all of us were absolutely amazed at the eagerness with which they were accepted by all five hundred of those in attendance. I feel that in nearly any local tragedy, this is a good way to get the gospel into the hands of lost people, though I would strongly encourage some sort of coupon for follow-up (Bible study, visit from pastor, free gospel tape, etc.) be included.”

## **Ministry to Military Personnel**

The military is an especially fruitful mission field. People are away from their homes and families. They are often lonely and discouraged. They are often involved in sinful things and are guilt-ridden. When military personnel get saved, they often make solid Christians because they understand discipline and authority better than non-military people.

One idea is to have a meal after the Sunday Service and invite the single servicemen to stay behind for the food and fellowship. I have known of several churches that do this and many military men have been saved because of it. Families in the church volunteer each Sunday to bring the food. The pastor and the families providing the food and those who are working with the military personnel stay for the meal and spend time with the service men and women.

A church can also have special Bible studies for military personnel. Invite them to homes and provide refreshments and let them see a godly home environment as well as hear the gospel. Be sure, though, that the homes that provide the activities are truly godly and are not filled with worldly things (such as unwholesome videos and music) that will confuse those attending.

A church can also have special meetings for military personnel. Permission can usually be obtained to post flyers on the base about church activities. The church can provide transportation to and from the services for military personnel.

*Military Evangelism is The Local Church Reaching the Military* is one resource for military evangelism. [Armed Forces Baptist Mission, 3252 Taylor Rd., Chesapeake, VA 23321. 757-488-1799] The book emphasizes the need for churches to have a qualified Director to oversee the military ministry. It contains various suggestions for reaching the military with the gospel and discipling new converts. It emphasizes the need for church families to open their homes to military personnel. The Armed Forces Baptist Mission can sometimes provide a

missionary to help churches establish ministries to the military.

Following is an excerpt from *Military Evangelism*:

“The answer [for reaching the military with the gospel] needs to start with the church. It’s not the responsibility of a missionary, a mission organization, or a retired military person in the church assigned the responsibility; but, it is the church’s care and responsibility. The church must come up with a plan of action to reach and win service members. Appointing one person to do all the work will not suffice; it must be a ‘TEAM’ effort by the church. Make it a church project. ... The team approach should free the pastor of a burdensome load of another project. He should remain the approving agency over the team. The team should have a director who will act as the supervisor or coordinator of the team and who will keep the pastor informed and to coordinate all major activities for the pastor’s approval. ...

“The single military person makes up approximately 65% of the total military. Therefore any military evangelization that overlooks this field is failing to teach the majority of our young men and women in uniform. In establishing an outreach program to this group there are several factors to consider. First, the single serviceman is mobile in today’s world. Most have their own vehicles. Second, though most of them would disagree with this, they are relatively well-paid and have money to spend. Third, they are active. They will find things to do and places to spend their money. Therefore, they need activities. Fourth, they are away from home and greatly appreciate the comfort, care and home-cooked meals found only in a home. Fifth, in our current society there are very few single service men and women who come from intact families. They need to see and experience the love and devotion of a true Christian home.

“It is recommended that at least monthly activities be planned and promoted. Make them challenging, exciting, varied, interesting, and inexpensive.

Provide all the food and drinks and include that in the cost of the activity. Activities have the primary goals of (1) Making new contacts on the base, (2) Getting the young men/ladies off the base and into an environment where the word of God can penetrate their hearts, (3) Reaching the lost with the Gospel, (4) Edifying the believers in the faith, and (5) Providing something other than worldly activities for them” (*Military Evangelism*, pp. 2,3,21).

We would make a final comment about the director of a military ministry. It is crucial that it be the right person and not merely someone who is available and willing. I recall one church that assigned the oversight of the military ministry to a man who was very friendly but was also very worldly. Though he graciously opened his home to single military personnel and had Bible studies, he also showed R-rated videos! The man’s daughters were immoral and at least one got pregnant out of wedlock, and his son went to prison. It is very unwise to assign such a person to head up a spiritual ministry.

## **Seven Questions Campaign**

A missionary in Spain described their Seven Questions Campaign as follows:

“We started the fall campaign aimed at answering ‘Seven Common Questions’ of our day. Many times we have been asked one of these questions DOES GOD EXIST? IS THE BIBLE TRUSTWORTHY? DOES GOD KNOW WHO I AM? WHAT IS MY PURPOSE? WHAT IF EVERYTHING THAT I BELIEVE IS WRONG? IS THERE A JUDGMENT AFTER DEATH? WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

“Each week we passed out 2000 flyers for the upcoming Sunday service along with the posters that are displayed on the front of the building. We finished the campaign on 23 December with a message on ‘Who is Jesus Christ’ and a Christmas program. We also displayed posters on the front

window of our building. We have thought about in the future taking one month of Sundays to answer three of these questions (and having it run three months) so that we can hit them much more in depth.”

## **Catholic Evangelism**

One good resource for evangelism of Roman Catholics is Christians Evangelizing Catholics. They have some excellent materials. Christians Evangelizing Catholics, <http://www.angelfire.com/ky/dodone/>]

## **Gospel Meetings**

Gospel meetings should be preceded by much prayer and even with fasting. Cottage prayer meetings that prepared the way for special gospel or revival services are something that were once very common, but they are rare in churches today. All too often, churches have revival or gospel meetings with very little prayer preceding them and with very little zeal to get the unsaved to the meetings. The results are predictably meager.

Just as essential as the preparation and the message itself is effective personal work with those who express interest during the meetings. It is common that a very low percentage of those who make professions of faith in gospel meetings continue on with the Lord. Largely the problem is attempting to get people to pray a prayer before they really understand what they are doing and before they are under conviction by the Holy Spirit.

A good plan is to invite those who come forward and who show interest in the gospel to attend a series of evangelistic Bible studies. Two possible courses for this purpose are *Basic Bible Truths* by Lester Hutson and

*Salvation Bible Basics* by Pastor Doug Hammett. Hutson's booklet consists of six lessons that carefully and systemically guide the seeker through the truths of the gospel. It lacks a clear presentation of repentance, but this could be added by the teacher. Pastor Hammett's is strong on repentance.

## **Homeless Lunches**

The following is from Pastor Thomas Bowlin:

"We have a Christian school, grades K5-12. Every Christmas season our high school students bring in (out of their own homes & pocket) enough food supplies to make up say 100 sack lunches. They then go into downtown Honolulu and distribute them to the homeless people there, invite them to our church and also witness to them."

## **Fair Ministry**

Gospel ministries at county fairs can be very effective if operated scripturally. The Amazing Grace Mission specializes in these. They set up a booth offering a variety of gospel pamphlets and attempt to make as many personal contacts as possible with those who express interest. They invite people to the back part of the booth and present the gospel to them. My wife and I visited one of these booths in Oklahoma City about 10 years ago and we were amazed at how many people expressed an interest in something that was openly evangelistic. While we were standing there, many people stopped to read the tracts and talk with the personal workers.

One church in Alaska put up a tent at the local fair and showed Moody Science films. A banner could be put up advertising "Free movies, popcorn, and lemonade." Music can be played to attract people.

As with any gospel effort, the method of presentation and the follow up is most crucial. In 1999 we followed up on the “decisions” made through Amazing Grace Ministries. We were given a stack of cards with the names and addresses of those who had “prayed to receive Christ” and had been counted in prayer reports as salvations. We couldn’t find one that was even interested in learning more. Some pastors we called to request that they visit people from their areas who had filled out the cards at the fair explained to us that they had followed up on the fair “salvations” before and had found them to be empty. A pastor friend in Kentucky followed up on the more than 100 “salvation decisions” that were made at a county fair ministry in Kentucky in 2011, and he did not find one soul who was even interested enough in Christ to attend church.

The idea of setting up a gospel booth at country fairs is excellent, but instead of trying to push strangers into a quick salvation prayer after a brief gospel presentation, the effort could be coordinated with churches in the area. Those who show interest in the things of Christ could be invited to attend a series of Bible studies that carefully present the plan of salvation, and during that time the people’s questions can be answered and they can be dealt with properly.

For contacts that are from outside the area, a correspondence course can be offered. An effort can also be made to get the names of these into the hands of sound churches in their home area.

## **Bookstalls**

Literature tables and bookstalls in public areas can be a fruitful way to get the gospel out to the unsaved.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England, maintains a weekly Saturday bookstall in the Elephant & Castle shopping area that surrounds the church. There is a main entrance to the London Underground right across the street from the Tabernacle. The bookstall offers Bibles and literature both for the unsaved and for Christians and prominently displays posters with statements such as “Answers to Questions Everyone Asks about Religion.” It is staffed by volunteers.

## **Drive-in Movies**

One church rents a local drive-in movie theater once a year and invites the public to view a free movie. They show evangelistic films and follow up with a gospel message by the pastor and an invitation to learn more about Christ.

## **Elevator Ministry**

A Christian woman in Seoul, Korea, had a novel idea to reach people living in one of the high rise apartment buildings. Only the occupants and their visitors can enter the building, and “solicitors” are not allowed to go door to door. She rented an apartment in the complex and then began to ride the elevator in her spare time, witnessing to those that she met. By this means she was invited into some of the apartments to witness and when some of these came to Christ, she taught the new converts to assist in her “elevator ministry”!

## Preaching in Trailer Parks

I received the following from Ronnie Meindl on April 19, 2000:

“A young preacher friend and myself approached our Pastor with this idea. As a matter of fact we are going to hold our first meeting April 29. We are going into a trailer park that Saturday morning armed with Bible tracts and literature about our local assembly. We are inviting the whole park down to a picnic area for free hotdogs and gospel music, (and when I say gospel, I mean gospel, not this new age stuff). But most of all we have two Fundamental Bible-believing preachers ready to proclaim God’s word. This mobile home park contains about 275 trailers. If it averages three per household, that’s 825 souls that could hear the gospel. We have sent out a flyer to each home inviting them out.”

In May, Brother Meindl sent us this update:

“It went well. Nobody got saved, but we planted a whole lot of seed. We had two main goals, when we started praying about this. #1, that the Lord Jesus Christ be exalted and God’s Word go out. #2, that the congregation of our local assembly come together in unity, one mind and one accord, willing to serve God. It’s been a long time in our church since people have really been excited about something. It was a blessing to see the people get excited. Men, women, boys and girls, people who have never thought of knocking on doors, showed up. We sent a letter of introduction into each trailer a week ahead of time. But that Saturday we went in armed with Bible tracts, and we set out to invite all we could personally down for hotdogs. There weren’t as many as we would like actually come down, but what I did notice was the people outside the camp listening in. We set our sound system up on a flatbed trailer. As I got up to preach I didn’t see anybody but our people in the congregation, but when I got up high I could see out and people were standing back in the distance listening, trailer windows were wide open. I was told later there were people sitting in their cars in the parking lot behind us. God’s Word definitely

went out. We had about 75 people with us. We were able to minister personally to a couple of people during the meeting, and picked up two bus kids. The people in the trailer park knew we were there. But what they don't know is we are coming back in the fall. We have people willing to work the park between now and then, and we are praying about where to go next. We are planning a meeting the first of next week to discuss what we need, or need not do, to be more productive in this ministry."

## **Bookstores**

A well-run Christian bookstore can be a very fruitful evangelistic ministry, as well as an important ministry to the saints. Few towns, even in America, have a sound Christian bookstore. Most of them are ecumenical and charismatic, carrying all sorts of unsound literature as well as selling corrupt Bibles and Contemporary Christian Music.

There are exceptions, of course. One is Gullion's Christian Supply in North Carolina. The Gullion's stores don't carry Christian rock music, but they do have a wide variety of sound music. (Gullion's carries a lot of Southern gospel, some of which we would not recommend.) These stores refuse to handle ecumenical-charismatic literature, but they do stock books and pamphlets that edify God's people from a fundamentalist standpoint. In the case of Gullion's they don't even carry the corrupt modern Bible versions.

Several churches have established their own bookstores that are a ministry not only to the church members but to the community as well.

At the Way of Life Literature web site we maintain a list of publishers of fundamentalist Bible-believing literature

that churches or individuals can use to order stocks of materials. See “Recommended Materials for Church Bookstores at [wayoflife.org](http://wayoflife.org).

“My dream is to open a non-profit book store in my neighborhood selling only fundamental Christian literature, King James Bibles, old-time gospel music, greeting cards, etc. I would call it ‘Baptist Bible Bookstore.’ There’s a huge catholic church in my neighborhood and right now there’s an open store for rent right across the street from it, unfortunately I don’t have the funds for starting up this ministry now. All profits would go to keeping the store running and the remainder would go to my church. I’m a fireman, (off every other four days) so I’d work there for free on my off days and would use volunteers from my church to staff it when I can’t. In the window would be a sign, ‘Free Bibles,’ and I would have a large quantity of inexpensive KJV Bibles for anyone that asked for one for free. Tracts would also be free” (Gene Geiger, Crescentville Baptist Church, Philadelphia).

## **Jewish Evangelism**

The International Board of Jewish Missions has many materials and suggestions for reaching Jews for Christ. [International Board of Jewish Missions, <http://www.ibjm.org>]

A tool for reaching Jews with the gospel is the booklet *Prophecy Unveiled* from The Hope of Israel Publications. This 63-page publication explains the coming of the Messiah from the Old Testament and authoritative Jewish writings. [Hope of Israel, P.O. Box 911, Powder Springs, GA 30127]

Another helpful tool for evangelizing Jews is the movie *Messiah in the Passover*. This quality 50-minute presentation gives a clear and powerful gospel message in the context of a Jewish family in first century Israel.

The eldest son accepts Jesus as his Messiah and presents Him to the rest of the family, some of whom are very resistant, by explaining the true meaning of the Jewish Passover. The photography and acting are first rate, and the message is scriptural. [Kingdom Entertainment, <http://www.kingdomentertainment.tv>]

# Reviving a Church That Is Lukewarm Toward Evangelism

It is a sad but common thing for churches to grow lukewarm in their zeal for bringing the unsaved to Jesus Christ. The church at Laodicea was already lukewarm before the death of its apostolic founders (Revelation 3). We should not be surprised when we find a church in a spiritual decline, but we also should not be lethargic about it. Fruitful church life requires continual spiritual revival, and the Lord Jesus Christ is ready and able to revive His people.

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Revelation 2:5).

"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:19).

What can a pastor do if he finds that his church has become lukewarm in the matter of soul winning?

We are focusing on the pastor's role because he alone has the authority and position necessary to bring church-wide changes. This is not to say that pastors alone are responsible for the evangelistic zeal of a church. The responsibility is upon the shoulder's of every born again Christian. After reviewing this article, one pastor offered this wise observation: "The pastor must have the cooperation of the people to do his job. If they realized they have a HUGE impact on how we [pastors] feel and act, more people would do a better job!"

The following are some suggestions for pastors who desire to help revive their congregations in evangelism:

1. The pastor must revive himself about evangelism and provide the leadership in word and deed.

He cannot effectively demand that the people do something that he is not doing himself. He must provide the leadership in evangelism. It can also be helpful to repent publicly before the church if his own lack of zeal in this area has contributed to the overall decline.

2. The pastor needs to make the people understand that this is a serious matter.

He can do this in many ways. One is by preaching on evangelism and using it in his applications. If he focuses on this and really makes an issue of it, the people that love the Lord will usually come around.

Another way the pastor can make the church understand the seriousness of evangelism is by requiring that the workers be involved. A general church member cannot necessarily be forced to participate in visitation or to dress properly during the week or to separate from worldly music or such things, but a church can certainly require that its workers be examples of what God requires of His people. The workers set the tone for the whole church. They set the tone for what new converts will eventually become. If the pastor does not require that the workers be examples of what he preaches from the Word of God, he is undercutting the preaching.

Another way the pastor can impress the people with the importance of evangelism is by emphasizing it frequently, during announcements, etc.

Another way is by demonstrating before the congregation that evangelism is at least as important as the many other programs and activities the church pursues.

Bethel Baptist Fellowship of Brooklyn, New York, goes out on the streets of New York every Sunday afternoon for evangelism. Steve Schneider wrote to describe this to us, and emphasized the leadership role played by the pastors as follows:

“The pastors of the church always go out with us and thus set the tone for the importance of the outreach. The outreach, called the ‘S.W.A.T. Team,’ is always published FIRST in the church bulletin and announced by the pastor from the pulpit every Sunday morning.”

3. The pastor should set up a training program to educate and challenge the people--young and old--in evangelism.

4. The pastor should develop a program of evangelism that will encourage the largest number of people to get involved.

A good start would be to set up the "Visitation Night Stations" which are described under the section on "The Visitation Program" in this book. This encourages people to get involved in evangelism in a variety of ways and does not try to force everyone to do the same thing.

This is only a start, though. The goal should be to get every church member, young and old, involved in fruitful evangelism.

5. The pastor should evaluate the existing evangelistic activities with the goal of making them more fruitful.

Even many churches that are not very aggressive about soul winning usually have some traditional evangelistic

programs, such as Sunday School and Vacation Bible School. These are good places to start in evaluating and reworking a church's ministry. The pastor needs to ask himself how these can be made more fruitful.

A Vacation Bible School, for example, can simply be a part of the church's traditional program, something that is carried out without much enthusiasm and without much fruit, or it can be a true soul winning endeavor that is carried out with great zeal and potentially much fruit.

I recall one particular church that has a Vacation Bible School each year, but little or nothing is done to advertise it in the community, no special prayer proceeds it, no effort is made to train and challenge the people to fill their private automobiles with children and young people and adult visitors to bring them to the VBS, no thought is given to possibly running the church bus each day to bring people to the program, etc. All the pastor does is organize the actual VBS activities and then put up a sign in front of the church, apparently hoping that some unsaved people will show up.

Another example of this is summer camp. Many churches participate in these, and they can be very fruitful if the church has the necessary vision and zeal. But again, too often the church invests a great deal of money and time into a summer camp with very little attention given to making it evangelistically fruitful. To do this, the church must seek out unsaved young people and make it possible for them to attend camp, even if that means paying their way. The church must stop thinking only about its own young people, meaning the young people who are members of the church, and have an outward vision toward the needs of the vast number of

unsaved children and young people who are in the community and who will not have an opportunity to hear the gospel and be saved unless the church somehow reaches out to them. Their parents are unsaved, and they certainly cannot be expected to care about the spiritual welfare of their children.

Another example of this is with special evangelistic or revival services. It is not uncommon for churches to have these and yet to do little or nothing in preparation for them, apart from choosing the speaker and preparing for the meals. A revival service that is accompanied by earnest prayer and by special visitation in the community to invite the unsaved will be much more fruitful than one that is simply conducted as a tradition.

6. The pastor should seek ideas and suggestions from the church members.

Toward the goal of getting everyone involved and creating effective evangelistic outreach, it is wise to find out what the church people think. I know of very few pastors who do this, and I do not understand why they don't. It is wise for pastors to get feedback and ideas from the people.

Get together with the whole church or with various groups within the church and invite candid discussion on the subject of evangelism. Try to find out what hinders people from being involved. Find out what they think of the current evangelistic efforts. Ask them to analyze each part of the church's program and to give feedback about how to make things more fruitful. Challenge them to think of new ideas or new ways of doing the old things. The pastor has to encourage the people that he is open to their ideas and suggestions. He should especially focus

on any church members who are burdened to carry the gospel to lost souls. It is likely that they are already thinking about these things and have ideas. In fact, in many cases it is certain burdened church members who earnestly pray that the Lord will touch the pastor's heart that he might wake up and lead the congregation in evangelism. In such cases, some of the church members might be far ahead of the pastor, and if so, they can be a great help if the pastor is wise enough to use them.

7. The pastor needs to stir up much prayer support for the church's evangelism efforts.

Prayer is essential for spiritual revival, for removing demonic barriers, and for breaking the stony hearts of the unsaved. There are many ways a pastor can lead in the matter of prayer. He can work to make the mid-week prayer meeting more focused on evangelism. He can start new prayer meetings, such as before the preaching services, as Charles Spurgeon did. He can organize prayer meetings in the homes of the church members. He can perhaps start an evangelism prayer chain. Many churches have prayer chains for medical emergencies and other urgent requests. One member calls another member who calls another, and in this way the prayer request is quickly passed through the entire membership. Why not have an evangelistic prayer chain, so that urgent prayer requests about salvation are passed around the church? This type of thing helps focus the people's attention on evangelism.

The Baptist churches in Ireland in the 17th century established a special time of prayer and fasting on the first Wednesday of every month for the purpose of confessing their spiritual slothfulness and backsliding

and seeking the power of God (Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, I, p. 248). God hasn't changed. If our churches today will take spiritual slothfulness and backsliding this seriously; if we will truly humble ourselves before God and confess our sins and earnestly seek His mercy, power, and blessing, the spiritual deadness will fall away.

The problem is that we are not treating the sins of omission as the great sins that they are before God. Disobedience to the plain commandments of God is treated casually. The average member of the average Bible-believing church does not seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and cares far more about the things of this world than about fulfilling the Great Commission. This is a great sin and it should be treated as such.

8. The pastor needs to evaluate his own activities and the church's activities in light of the Great Commission.

It is a simple fact that many Christians are too busy with other church programs, which might be good in themselves, to have time for evangelism. And this is often true of the pastors themselves. The suggestions we have given for reviving a church that has lost its evangelistic zeal all require time. It takes time to have effective prayer meetings. It takes time to seek the lost. All of the methods of evangelism discussed in this book require time. If a church is too busy with other things, it is impossible for it to do everything that should be done for evangelism.

A Christian School ministry, for example, can be a serious drain on a church. It is common for pastors who have Christian schools to be heavily involved in

attending sports programs, music programs, awards ceremonies, lunches, etc., that are not directly part of his biblical calling and responsibilities before God. As a result, the true calling is hindered. Thom Rainer, who has done extensive research into churches and evangelism, warns that "weekday ministries" such as Christian schools and day care, can be an actual hindrance to evangelism.

"Our respondents indicated that evangelistic growth rarely occurred as a result of these ministries. What are the reasons for the disparity? Further questioning revealed some fascinating attitudes about weekday ministries. First, the church leaders indicated that such ministries can be effective for church growth but rarely for conversion growth. The programs tend to attract other Christians, but their evangelistic value is questionable. Some pastors, a sizable minority, told us that their churches' weekday ministries actually detracted from evangelistic emphases. One pastor lamented, 'We spend so much time putting out fires in two of these ministries that we take away valuable resources that could be used to reach the lost. They really drain our resources.' Another staff member, whose responsibility includes the coordination of the weekday ministries, commented, 'I don't doubt the value of what we do. Many Christians truly benefit from our ministries. But it is really time consuming. We struggle to know the right balance between ministering to Christians and evangelizing the lost'" (*Effective Evangelistic Churches*, pp. 40, 41).

Rainer adds that in a large survey of churches, only 11 percent of the respondents indicated that weekday ministries were a contributing factor in their evangelistic effectiveness.

Pastor Doug Hammett of Lehigh Valley Baptist Church in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, reviewed this article prior to its publication and observed: ‘

“I would suggest you consider camping a little more on the problem of putting out fires for other ministries as well as the drain that schools, etc., have on the overall ability to get the folks moving toward evangelism. I am convinced most pastors want evangelistic churches but are tied up in so many other ministries to keep people happy that the evangelism is left out in the cold.”

We must not forget the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. He explained the priority of His earthly ministry in these words: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The Lord urged the priority of evangelism in the repetition of the Great Commission (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:44-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8) and in the example He put before us in the ministries of the apostles as recorded in the book of Acts. A church that doesn't have time for fruitful evangelism is sinning against the Lord of the Harvest and will doubtless give account at the Judgment Seat of Christ for becoming sidetracked.

9. The pastor must be consistent and persistent in pursuing evangelism with the church.

It frequently happens that the pastor will get a burden to start or restart something in the church and will emphasize it for a short time, but then he will drop it before there has been time for the Lord to work in people's hearts.

An example is a church in central Florida that had declined in membership for 20 consecutive years. In 1980 the church called a new pastor, and he immediately sought to revive an evangelistic fervor. It took years, though, for this to happen. Following is the testimony of a deacon:

“Our pastor did not just tell us to be evangelistic. He lived it! It took his example and leadership over five years before the church caught on. But we eventually got excited about sharing Jesus.” Rainer says, “The church has grown consistently for over a decade, with a significant part of the growth from conversion”*s* (*Effective Evangelistic Churches*, p. 43).

I recall a kind and godly pastor who had allowed his church's visitation program to die. The reason he did so was lack of concern on the part of the people. Just prior to canceling the Thursday night visitation program, several weeks had passed with only he and his wife at visitation. No other church members cared enough to attend. He was torn between a fear of forcing the people to do things out of a mere sense of duty to him instead of a heart-love for their Savior, and his responsibility before God to command the people to obey the Great Commission. Caught in this dilemma, he allowed the organized visitation to stop. After a year or so of inactivity, though, he announced to the church that he was deeply concerned about the matter and was convicted that he had not done the right thing in stopping the visitation program. For several services he told the people that the organized visitation would start again and that he wanted large participation. In several sermons he preached boldly that it is wrong for deacons and Sunday School teachers or choir members, etc., never to visit the unsaved. He had meetings with his deacons and told them that he wanted all of them to participate in the organized visitation.

After a few weeks of this he started up the visitation program again on a Thursday night. Only a handful of people showed up. There were no deacons or Sunday School teachers there. After a few weeks of this, with

little or no noticeable increase in the number of church members who came out for visitation, he let the subject drop almost back to its previous priority.

He kept up the visitation program in a low-key manner, but he did very little to push it and he almost completely stopped rebuking or challenging the people.

In fact, even though most of the men refused to come out on visitation, he let them start up a new inter-church softball league for Saturday evenings just a few weeks after starting the new visitation program. He promoted the softball league with almost as much enthusiasm as he had devoted to evangelism and he spent even more time announcing this than he had for evangelism.

Through all of this the people received a loud message: “The pastor will preach about some things that might make you uncomfortable once in a while, but you don’t have to take it seriously. If you simply ignore him he will eventually let it slide and things will be back to normal.”

Would it not have been more glorifying to the Lord if this pastor had used the softball league suggestion to face the men plainly with their misplaced priorities? Would it not have made a strong impression on the people if he had stood before them and said:

“It has been suggested that we start a men’s softball league. I have considered this prayerfully, and I don’t think we have time for such a thing when it is obvious that most of our church members are already too busy to give even two hours out of their weekly schedule for soul winning visitation. The Lord Jesus Christ does not command us to play softball, but He does command us to preach the gospel to every creature. Until we obey His express commands to reach the unsaved, I believe it would

be presumptuous for us to start another form of entertainment for the saints.”

I have sympathy for this pastor and for the countless others who are in similar situations. He is trying to lead the people in evangelism, but for the most part they refuse to follow. At the same time, there are many other things this pastor could do to bring a change in the hearts of the congregation. If he has done all he can and they still refuse to obey the Lord, he can still impress them with their disobedience and not act like it is business as usual when the church is spiritually slothful.

## What's Wrong with Most Soul Winning Programs

Since attending Bible School in the 1970s, I have gone through several evangelistic courses and they contain many helpful things. Yet something is wrong with the standard technique, because all too often they produce a host of empty professions, and hopefully we know that an empty profession of faith that doesn't change the life is *not* biblical salvation.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4).

I read about a pastor who reported 4,000 professions in five years of ministry, but the church only grew from 98 to 100.

I read about a first-year missionary who reported over 700 professions of faith and 25 baptisms.

One evangelist comments: "How could you even pen those words without asking yourself if there isn't something wrong with that picture? I seem to remember 3,000 saved at Pentecost, and 3,000 baptized! The most refreshing missionary that I have heard in a long time gave his update to our church recently. He has been in Poland for 14 years and to date knows of only five people who have been saved under his ministry. Just like at Pentecost, he only counts the ones who have been saved, baptized, and are in the church. Most of our 'one, two, three, pray after me' fellows would have dropped

his support a long time ago! Myself, I would drop the guy with 738 saved and 25 baptized and shift the support to the fellow from Poland!”

After I graduated from school and moved back to my home town before we started missionary deputation, my pastor asked us (my wife and me) to follow-up on the church’s Foster Club outreach. Each week the ladies would report a good number of salvations, but no one was following up the “decisions.” We were given a stack of cards and began our follow up, but we quickly found that these “saved people” wanted nothing to do with us and had no interest in the church in particular or the things of Christ in general. Most wouldn’t even let us into the home. I thought to myself, that is not the type of salvation I got.

When we were given the “decision” cards for follow up on a county fair ministry in Oklahoma in 1999, of the hundreds of professions that were recorded we could not find even one person who gave any evidence of salvation or was even interested in attending church. A pastor friend followed up on the more than 100 “salvation decisions” that were made at a county fair ministry in Kentucky in 2011, and he did not find one soul who was even interested enough in Christ to attend church.

While visiting a large fundamental Baptist church in California, a friend went on visitation with the most notable soul winner in the church. A lady answered the bell at one house and stood impatiently behind the screen door while the soul winner went hastily through the plan of salvation. She wanted to attend to her child, who was fussing in the background, but he begged her to listen to the presentation. During the entire time, she was looking

back into the house, severely distracted. At the end of his presentation, he demanded that she open the door partially and take his hand. She seemed shocked by this request, but she cautiously did as he said. He then asked her if she wanted to go to Heaven when she died. When she answered in the affirmative, he asked her to pray after him the sinner's prayer, which she did. He announced her gloriously saved, and she immediately closed the door and went about her business.

This lady, and millions like her, have prayed the sinner's prayer without Holy Spirit conviction of sin, clear understanding of the gospel, or repentance toward God. Such empty "decisions" are the sad products of a faulty soul-winning technique.

The churches that have adopted this method of evangelism have produced millions of false professions. There are many churches that can show only a handful of new creatures in Christ for every hundred converts they claim. There is something extremely wrong about that picture. It is a great confusion.

For nearly 40 years I have observed the sad fruit of this technique: multitudes of false professions, confusion about salvation, indifference to biblical truth, agnosticism, reprobate living, weakened churches, and blasphemy against God. In many communities across the land a large percentage of the population has prayed a sinner's prayer under the ministry of churches practicing quick prayerism. Vast numbers of these have never been born again and they are now almost inoculated to biblical salvation. When challenged about their lifeless spiritual condition, they commonly reply, "I have done that," meaning they have prayed a prayer and have been given

assurance of eternal life. They are assured that they have a ticket to Heaven. Those who observe these things are made to think that salvation means little or nothing in relation to one's manner of life, and Christianity appears foolish and powerless. This technique also tends to populate churches with unregenerate people who are trying to act right without having experienced genuine spiritual conversion.

There are many helpful things in the standard soul-winning programs, but they are missing some very important things and they are wrong about some things, and I believe that if the following changes were made we would see fewer empty professions and far less confusion and more genuine eternal fruit to the glory of Jesus Christ.

The following points would add scriptural correction and balance to the typical soul winning program.

**1. The typical soul-winning program neglects repentance.**

2. The typical soul-winning program emphasizes heaven too much.

3. The typical soul-winning program doesn't plow the ground properly.

4. The typical soul-winning program doesn't emphasize the importance of patience and thoroughness.

5. The typical soul-winning program doesn't emphasize the importance of answering sincere questions.

6. The typical soul-winning program is too formulaic.

7. The typical soul-winning program uses human psychology and salesmanship.

8. The typical soul-winning program doesn't depend on God enough and isn't geared to looking for God's working.

9. The typical soul-winning program promotes the error of immediately giving assurance.

10. The typical soul-winning program is geared to not doubting the reality of empty professions.

### **1. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM NEGLECTS REPENTANCE (Acts 20:21).**

Repentance was preached by John, by Jesus, and by Peter. It appears 68 times in New Testament, 10 times in the book of Acts alone.

Repentance was a major part of Paul's message (Acts 17:30; 20:21; 26:19-20).

The Bible teaches that repentance is not same as believing (Acts 20:21). Sometimes repentance is emphasized (Luke 5:32; 13:3,5; 24:47; Acts 3:19; 5:31; 17:11; 26:20; 2 Peter 3:9); sometimes faith is emphasized (John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31; etc.); and sometimes both are mentioned together (Acts 20:21; Hebrews 6:1).

Repentance is not a change of life; it is a change of mind that *results in* a change of life (Acts 26:20). It is a surrender (1 Thess. 1:9). "Believing" without surrender is not salvation.

Repentance is an assassin laying down the knife. Evangelist James Stewart wrote: "The hand that clutches

the assassin's knife must open 'ere it can grasp the gift its intended victim proffers; and opening that hand, though a single act, has a double aspect and purpose. Accepting the gift implies a turning from the crime the heart was bent on, and it was the gift itself that worked the change. Faith is the open hand, relatively to the gift; repentance is the same hand, relatively, not only to the gift but more especially to the dagger that is flung from it" (Stewart, *Evangelism*, pp. 48, 49).

Repentance is the thief returning the stolen property. The late Lester Roloff said:

"I believe we ought to make right what we can make right. What if I was staying with a group of preachers and one of them stole my wallet while I was sleeping? The next day he comes up to me and tells me he is terribly sorry and asks me to forgive him. I would be glad to hear that he is sorry for stealing my wallet, but I would certainly want and expect more than that from a repentant thief. I would want my wallet back! I don't believe he has really repented unless he brings my billfold back. I DON'T BELIEVE YOU HAVE REPENTED UNTIL YOU GET RIGHT AND SAY, 'LORD, I'M GOING TO LIVE DIFFERENT FROM NOW ON,' AND BY THE GRACE OF GOD YOU WILL LIVE DIFFERENT" (Roloff, *Repent or Perish*).

The question is how do we use repentance in soul winning?

**First, we must not skip over it.** We should explain that the individual must be ready to surrender to God, and not give him the idea that it is possible to be saved without this (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30). Of course, we explain that God will do the changing, but the sinner must be ready to accept God's working. If the individual is not ready to do this, he is not ready to be saved. I have dealt with many people who understood and believed that Christ died for

their sins and that faith in Christ is the only way of salvation, but they simply were not ready to surrender to God. They refuse to repent.

This is often the case with people who grow up in Christian homes. Repentance was the thing that was missing in my life as I grew up in a Baptist church. I don't recall a time when I did not believe in Christ. I had no doubt that He died on the cross for my sin. I made a public profession of faith at about age 10, but it was empty because I had no intention of surrendering my life to Christ. Bowing before Him as Lord was the farthest thing from my mind. The course of my life did not change one iota.

When my wife and I first began our missionary work in South Asia in 1979, our landlord began coming to our house to have Bible studies. He was a wealthy middle-aged Hindu and had a concubine with whom he spent most of his time, though he was married and had grown children. After we went through the gospel a few times, he told me he felt that he understood what I was teaching and that he was interested in receiving Christ, but he wanted to know what he would have to do about two specific things in his life--his shady business practices and his illicit relationship with the concubine. I could have said, "Don't worry about those things. Just pray to receive Christ and those things will work themselves out later." That's the method I was taught in Bible School, but I don't believe it would have been scriptural counsel. I don't believe he could receive Christ and be saved unless he repented of his immorality and his dishonesty. Salvation requires surrendering. I explained to him that if he would turn to Christ, God would change his life and he would have different desires, but he didn't want that.

The power to change one's life is from God, but the sinner must surrender to God's working.

Dealing with sinners according to repentance is often neglected today. There was an Independent Baptist church campaign in Maine a few years ago in which the people were taught to go house to house and say, "If I were to tell you today that you can be saved and go to heaven and you won't have to change anything, would you be interested?"

That is not biblical soul winning or biblical gospel preaching. That is cheap religious salesmanship.

Consider Christ's dealings with the woman at the well in John 4. He faced her squarely with the immorality that had controlled her life. He also faced the Rich Young Ruler with his sin of self-righteousness and covetousness (Luke 18).

This is the way God always deals with people, and this is the way we must deal with them, too, if we want to follow the Bible in our gospel work. To preach repentance means to deal with glaring sins that people are holding onto and to tell them plainly that they must repent of sinning against God; they must yield their lives to Him; they must change directions; they must surrender. God will do a new work in their lives but they must be ready for that to happen. They must have a change of mind about God and sin that will result in a change of life.

It appears that many soul-winning programs try to "slip the gospel by the sinner" and get him saved before he really knows what is happening! That is not possible. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye

repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). There is no salvation without repentance, and it is a Holy Spirit-wrought change of mind that results in a change of life.

To tell sinners that God demands that they repent might cut down on the “decision” statistics, but it is the only honest and scriptural path. God has commanded that they repent and Jesus said they can’t be saved without it, so how can we fail to tell them this?

One afternoon I accompanied a pastor to knock doors in a part of a city that was populated with university students. A few times in one afternoon he shared a five-minute Romans Road plan (i.e., all have sinned against God, the wages of sin is death, and Jesus died for our sin and those who believe can be saved) and then immediately asked three questions: “Does that make sense to you?” (All of them said it made sense.) “Do you have any questions?” (None of them did, because they didn’t appear the least bit interested.) And “Would you pray to receive Christ right now?” (None of them did.) Not only was the program “quick,” to say the least,” the pastor didn’t even hint to the people that there would need to be a change in the direction of their life, a turning, a surrender to God.

This is not a pastor who is into the numbers racket or who is trying to impress some preacher’s fellowship or perhaps get his name in a national magazine. He is a man that I respect, a mature Christian leader who has been in the ministry for many years and who has taken a scriptural stand on some unpopular issues. I believe the problem is that he is simply following a program of soul-winning that he has been taught and that is standard fare

for a large percentage of fundamental Baptists. The program simply isn't questioned.

***Second, it is not necessarily the word "repentance" that always has to be used; it is the concept and meaning that the soul winner must get across.*** We must make the individual understand that God requires surrender.

***Third, we need to deal with each case individually.*** Paul preached repentance directly and forcefully to the Athenians because they needed to be confronted with God's requirement (Acts 17:30). On the other hand, he didn't have to preach repentance to the Philippian jailer, because the Spirit of God had already done a great work in his heart and he was ready to do whatever is necessary for salvation (Acts 16:30-31).

## **2. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM EMPHASIZES HEAVEN TOO MUCH.**

It is very common for soul-winning programs to emphasize "going to Heaven when you die." The course entitled *In the Highways and Hedges*, published by First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana, takes this approach.

This soul-winning plan instructs the evangelist to begin by asking the individual, "If you were to die today, are you 100 percent sure you would go to Heaven?"

When the individual replies, "No," the soul-winner is instructed to give a simple little Romans Road presentation (you can know that you have eternal life, you are a sinner and under God's condemnation, Jesus died for your sin, salvation is a gift that you can receive today).

After the very brief presentation using a few isolated verses, the soul-winner is instructed to say the following:

“Now, John, if you will trust Jesus to take you to Heaven when you die, just bow your head and close your eyes with me right now. If you mean this with all your heart, pray this prayer after me: ‘Dear Jesus, forgive me of my sins. I trust You today. Jesus, and only You, to take me to Heaven when I die. Thank You for saving me. Amen.’”

It’s all about “going to Heaven when you die.”

There is absolutely nothing like this in Scripture. Never did Jesus or the apostles and preachers in the early churches approach someone and ask if they wanted to go to Heaven when they died. Who doesn’t! But salvation is not a mere ticket to Heaven. It is a saving, life-changing relationship with the living God through Jesus Christ in the here and now.

The “do you want to go to Heaven when you die” approach was used by Jack Hyles on May 3, 1998, when he claimed that more people were saved then than on the day of Pentecost. Hyles preached a message titled “A Place Called Heaven.” His text was John 14:1-6, which, of course, is addressed to believers, not unbelievers. After preaching on Heaven, he told the crowd, “If you have the least desire to go to Heaven, if there’s just a little bit of a desire to go to Heaven, then this morning, you trust Jesus as your Saviour.”

Heaven is a wonderful subject, but the gospel is not about Heaven. The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sin.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye

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

Heaven is definitely a product of salvation, but why is it that none of the apostles preached on Heaven when they were presenting the gospel? Why are the sermons recorded in the book of Acts so different from the one Hyles preached?

Consider the sermon Paul preached on Mars Hills to the idolatrous pagans in Acts 17. Paul did not preach on Heaven; he preached on God and His righteous judgment so that the idolaters would understand their sin and turn to Christ for redemption. The average person in North America today is very similar to those idolatrous pagans, and North Americans need the same type of preaching. An idolatrous and apostate people need sermons on Hell more than sermons on Heaven. They need sermons on the law more than sermons on grace, because biblical grace is only understood in the context of the law. No one can understand and appreciate God’s grace unless they first understand His holiness and justice. This is how Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. He didn’t ask the Jews if they wanted to go to Heaven.

We need to follow the Bible rather than some man today or a modern soul-winning program. The emphasis of the Bible is on telling people that God is holy and just and a judge of sin, that they are lost and undone, and that God demands that they surrender to His authority (repent) and receive Christ AND BECOME DISCIPLES OF CHRIST IN THIS PRESENT WORLD rather than think

they can get some sort of cheap ticket to Heaven through a religious ritual (e.g., saying a prayer). Not one person in the book of Acts received the gospel as a mere ticket to Heaven and when his way unchanged. Each one of the conversions recorded in Acts was of a dramatic, life-changing sort in which the individual not only trusted Christ but also surrendered to Christ.

One of the clearest examples of biblical salvation is the church at Thessalonica. They didn't pray a little prayer so they could go to Heaven one day. They "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God" (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

### **3. THE TYPICAL SOUL WINNING PROGRAM DOESN'T PLOW THE GROND PROPERLY.**

No individual will cast himself upon Christ in a saving way unless he first is convinced that he is a lost sinner with no hope apart from Christ. Most soul-winning programs pass over this fact far too lightly. They teach you to quote a verse or two about sin and then ask the individual, "Do you believe you are a sinner?" Many people will answer this in the affirmative but that does not mean they understand and believe what the Bible says.

Most people will admit that they aren't perfect, but they also think of themselves as good. They think that their good outweighs the bad they do. They know they have done wrong, but they don't think of themselves as truly deserving of hell. In their minds, they typically redefine "sin" to be a lack of perfection or a lack self-esteem or (if Catholics) they divide sin into "categories" of big and small or some such thing. They do not believe that were

sinner from conception and that even their very righteousness is as filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6).

To be saved I have to acknowledge that I am the sinner that the Bible says I am, that I am such a sinner before God that I deserve Hell, that I have wickedly broken God's holy laws. To confess that I am sinner in a biblical, saving fashion means that I stop making excuses for my sin and blaming others.

For this to happen, the ground of the soul has to be properly plowed and the divinely-ordained plow is the Law (Gal. 3:24). It is God's Law that exposes man's sinful condition by showing what God requires and how far man has fallen. It is the Law which takes away man's excuses and stops him from judging himself by human standards and comparing himself to other men and makes him stand guilty before God (Romans 3:19).

This is why the Bible is two-thirds law before we come to the New Testament with its gospel of grace. The Old Testament is the preparation for the New.

Consider Romans 1-3. This is the true Romans Road. Paul spent the better part of three chapters establishing the fact of God's holiness and His righteous judgment upon sinful mankind (Romans 1:18 - 3:23) before he preached salvation through the grace of Christ (Romans 3:24 - 4:25). The love of God isn't mentioned until chapter 5. This is the true Romans Road. This is how Peter preached to the Jews on the day of Pentecost and how Paul preached to the pagans on Mars Hill.

The Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17 can be used effectively toward this end, beginning with the first commandment. Ask the individual if he has always put

God absolutely first in his life. The sincere answer, obviously, will be no. Ask if he has always honored and obeyed his father and mother, whether he has ever stolen, ever lied, ever coveted that which belonged to someone else.

Go further and show that God requires that we keep His laws from the heart. External obedience is not enough. Thus, lusting after a woman is likened to adultery (Mat. 5:28) and hating someone is likened to murder (Mat. 7:21-22).

Show that “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

This establishes the fact that all men are sinners who constantly break God’s laws and deserve God’s punishment. It means that all men are under God’s judgment and will be punished with eternal punishment, because we can never pay the full amount that God’s law demands. Thus the wages of sin is not only physical death but also eternal torment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

This type of plowing of the ground of the soul is what the Spirit of God uses to bring proper conviction to the heart and to remove the sinner’s false sense of hope and compels him to fervently want to know what he can do to be saved.

#### **4. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM DOESN’T EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF PATIENCE AND THOROUGHNESS.**

The typical soul-winning plan is far too hasty and shallow. We need to deal with people more carefully,

more thoroughly, and more patiently so that they understand the gospel and are able to make a proper Spirit-led decision.

Consider the previous example of giving a quick Romans Road presentation to a stranger at the door and then actually expecting him to be ready to be saved and encouraging him to pray a sinner's prayer.

On one visitation outing in Oklahoma City, my soul-winning partner knocked on a door and it was answered by a woman from South America who could only speak a few words of English. She invited us into the house (her teenage children were there) and told us that she was Roman Catholic. Though it was obvious that she couldn't understand English sufficiently, my partner went quickly through the Roman's Road and then asked her if she wanted to pray. At that point I intervened and suggested that we find someone from the church who spoke her language and send them by to visit with her and also that we try to get her a Bible in her own language. How could an individual possibly understand the gospel and be saved when they are being dealt with in a language they don't understand? Further, as a Roman Catholic, it appeared to me that what little she did understand she was re-interpreting in light of her false religion.

This is an example of failing to deal with an individual properly.

My partner that day was a humble, sincere man of God. He was not trying to make a name for himself; he simply wanted to win people to Christ, but he had been influenced by the standard soul-winning program and had not thought beyond it.

Many people in America today are as Bible ignorant as the Hindus in South Asia. Many are steeped in humanism and believe in evolution, and evolution is as far-fetched as any Hindu myth. If we tried to use the aforementioned soul-winning technique in South Asia, we could get half the people to pray a sinner's prayer "so they could go to Heaven one day." But in the vast majority of cases, what they would be doing would be adding Jesus to their other gods, which, typically, is the first thing a Hindu tries to do. It is quite another thing for the Hindu to turn to Jesus Christ ALONE as Lord and Savior and to turn FROM all of his other gods, as we see in 1 Thessalonians 1:9: "*For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*" But this, and this alone, is biblical salvation.

I have never met a Hindu who understood the gospel the first time he heard it. There probably has been some, but in the 20 years I have been a missionary among them I have not experienced it or even heard of it.

We have found that in the vast majority of cases, the Hindu has to hear the gospel over a period of time. He must be dealt with very carefully and very patiently.

Someone might argue that people in the Bible got saved the first time they heard. Yes, some did. The Philippian jailer is an example, but he had also been listening to Paul and Barnabas' preaching and we don't know what other preparation he had received before that night.

## **Some Important Scriptures about Being Careful in Gospel Presentation**

In light of dealing with sinners in a patient and thorough manner, consider the following Scriptures:

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40).

Though we know that 3,000 were saved on the day of Pentecost, it is also important to observe that they weren't saved on the basis of a five-minute gospel presentation. Further, these were Jews that were already steeped in Scripture and had a foundation of spiritual and religious knowledge that most people don't have today. They knew about the true God. They understood the concept of the fall of man and sin. They had the testimony of the sacrificial system. They had the Messianic prophecies. And many of them had heard the preaching of Christ Himself.

Consider another passage:

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few” (Acts 17:11-12).

The conversion of the Bereans did not involve a five-minute Romans Road presentation. It occurred over a period of time during which they heard Paul's teaching and searched the Scriptures.

Consider two more Scriptures:

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and

to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you” (Romans 6:17).

In these passages Paul describes salvation as coming to the knowledge of the truth and as believing a form of doctrine. Salvation requires knowledge. This does not mean that the sinner must learn systematic theology. It means that he must know and understand the content of the gospel. He must know what it means when the Bible says that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scripture, that he died, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scripture (1 Cor. 15:1-4). He must know what sin is and recognize himself as the type of sinner that the Bible says he is. He must understand who Jesus is and the significance of His death. He must understand what saving faith is.

In light of this, it is obvious that the soul winner must patiently teach sinners these things and try to make sure that they understand.

### **Don't Forget the Law of Sowing and Reaping**

Consider the fact that soul-winning is likened to sowing and reaping. Typically, these two aspects of farming don't happen at the same time. There is sowing, following by watering, fertilizing, weeding, etc., then there is reaping.

Soul-winning programs too often create the expectation that the sowing and reaping will occur at the same time. But when this does seem to happen, it is usually because the sowing had already been done, perhaps by godly

parents, perhaps by a co-worker or friend, perhaps by personal Bible reading.

### **The Preparatory Work of the Law**

In light of dealing with sinners properly, consider the make up of the Bible. The reason why such a large percentage of Scripture is devoted to presenting the Law is to prepare the way for the gospel. The Law is the schoolmaster that leads sinners to Christ (Gal. 3:24). The Law shows man how holy God is and how sinful man is. Until a person understands his great guilt before God, he will not flee to Christ in a scriptural sense (Heb. 6:18).

Preachers used to understand that the ground of the human heart must be plowed up with the Law before it can bear the sweet fruit of the gospel. Some of the old evangelists would hold meetings and not even preach the gospel for the first few days, preparing the way by preaching hard on sin and judgment. In the 1960s Oliver B. Greene preached 25 radio messages in a row on the wrath of God. I doubt he could even get away with that on any of the national Christian radio stations today.

Everything is quick and shallow today, and we have all been affected by the spirit of the times.

### **The Sinner Typically Reinterprets the Gospel according to His Religious Background**

Furthermore, it is important to be careful and thorough in presenting the gospel because people tend to interpret it in light of their religious background. When a Roman Catholic first hears about being born again, for example, he naturally thinks about baptism. When he hears about “receiving Christ,” he thinks that it is something that is

done repeatedly through the sacraments. When he hears about sin, he thinks that there are different categories of sin and that only certain types of sin have eternal consequences. He might tell the soul winner that he understands these things and he might say that he has no questions about what has been presented, but in reality he doesn't understand at all because of his previous false training.

This is why ecumenical evangelistic crusades are so insufficient. When Billy Graham or Luis Palau preach to Roman Catholics, they might preach a sound gospel message, but that message is interpreted wrongly by their Catholic hearers, and the ecumenical evangelists refuse to make things plain by preaching AGAINST false doctrine. To be understood, the truth must often be contrasted plainly with error.

A course that carefully presents the gospel is called *SALVATION BIBLE BASICS* by Doug Hammett, Lehigh Valley Baptist Church, Emmaus, Pennsylvania. It consists of four lessons on salvation. A strong foundation is laid by defining sin from God's perspective and helping the sinner to see his lost condition before God. In Lesson Four, Repentance and Faith are carefully explained. It is very unusual for an evangelistic Bible study course to go into repentance as thoroughly as this one does. A simple chart helps to illustrate the Bible truths.

**In no wise am I saying that confrontational evangelism is wrong or that we should not seek to win people to Christ right where we find them, if possible. If God is convicting the individual and if he**

**understands the gospel and is ready to repent and believe, then nothing else is necessary.**

I am simply saying that one of the best ways to avoid false professions is to avoid shallow, insufficient presentations of the gospel. Even the most careful presentation of the gospel will not avoid all false professions, but it will greatly cut down on them in contrast to a shallow presentation.

Someone might protest, “But time is short and you never know if you will see that person again.” That is so very true, and oftentimes we only have one opportunity to give the gospel to any certain individual. In such a case we must do the best we can and leave them a gospel tract. But it is one thing to give a quick word of testimony or even a quick Romans Road plan of salvation, while it is quite another thing to use that hasty presentation as the basis for manipulating someone into praying a sinner’s prayer.

Someone might protest that it is not possible to be thorough when people won’t even open the door and let the soul winner in the house. That is true, but if a person is not willing to listen to what God has to say, there is no hope for him beyond praying that God will give him an interest. The gospel cannot be forced upon the heart and it cannot be snuck in some side door.

We must ask God to lead us to people who will listen, who will let us into their homes to have a series of gospel Bible studies, who will attend classes at church, etc.

Whatever the problem might be and whatever protests might be offered, being too hurried and plucking the fruit before it is ripe is *not* the solution!

## **5. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM DOESN'T EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF ANSWERING SINCERE QUESTIONS.**

This could go under the previous point of taking the time to be thorough and to deal with the sinner carefully, but I want to cover it under a separate point because of its importance.

At Bible College I was taught *NOT* to answer most questions during soul-winning situations. I was taught to stay with the verses of the “Romans Road” plan and to say, “That is a good question and we will get back to it later, but right now I would like to show you...”

I believe there is a time for that approach, if the question would truly sidetrack the issue and if it is not necessary to answer it, but I also believe that there are many questions that need to be answered before the person can properly understand the gospel and before he is ready to be saved.

The man that led me to Jesus Christ spent three or four entire days with me, patiently teaching me the Scriptures and answering the myriad of questions and arguments that I had, such as whether reincarnation is true or why a man can't simply follow his heart or why God would send people to Hell who have never heard the gospel or how Hinduism is different than the Bible way. If he had put off my questions in the manner in which I was taught at Bible College, he would not have gotten very far with me. My questions reflected what I believed at the time, and they needed to be answered. The fact that he could give me Bible answers for questions I considered unanswerable impressed me greatly. And the fact that he could turn right to the relevant Bible passages was

doubly impressive. I realized that this was a man who took his religious faith seriously and had made the effort to educate himself in it, and it was one of the main reasons why I was willing to listen to him.

In this context, it is important to understand the difference between a question that should be answered and a “foolish question” (2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9-10). A foolish question is one that is asked insincerely with the objective of confusing the truth rather than finding it. It is something that is practiced by hardened rebels and heretics. Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, are often trained to ask foolish questions about such things as the Deity of Christ, death, heaven, and the bodily resurrection. They aren’t interested in your answer; they only want to push their own heresies, which are twisted out of context.

## **6. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM IS TOO FORMULAIC.**

From my experience with soul-winning courses, they are typically too formulaic. The soul winner is taught a simple, pat plan that he uses in every case.

While it is good to have a plan and to know how to present the gospel, there is no one or two soul-winning formulas taught in Scripture.

Christ is the pre-eminent Soul Winner and His dealings with people followed no set pattern. His dealing with the Woman at the Well (John 2) was dramatically different from His dealings with Nicodemus (John 3) or the Rich Young Ruler (Luke 19) or Zacchaeus (Luke 19) or the Pharisees (Matthew 23).

The same thing can be seen in Paul's ministry. Consider his dealings with Lydia (Acts 16:14), the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:25-32), and the philosophers on Mars Hill (Acts 17).

The soul winner must be in fellowship with the Lord so that he has God's wisdom to discern people's spiritual conditions and needs. Some questions should be answered and some ignored. Sometimes we must deal tenderly and sometimes sharply. Sometimes we must hammer the need to repent and sometimes this is unnecessary, as in the case of the Philippian Jailer. Sometimes we must spend a lot of time showing the person that he is a sinner and making him understand what sin is and removing his self-righteousness, while sometimes God has already shown him this.

## **7. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM USES HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY AND SALESMANSHIP.**

The late evangelist Carl Hatch was probably the epitome of this. He was called the world's greatest soul winner by Curtis Hutson and Jack Hyles. In a soul-winning seminar at Bob Gray's Texas Baptist University, which I have on DVD, he taught the following technique:

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Carl Hatch says:

I don't ask anybody if they want to be saved. If you want a positive answer you must ask a positive question. If you want a no answer ask a no question. If you want a yes answer ask a yes question. Soul winning is positive. And in soul winning you use a lot of reverse psychology and psychology.

For instance, if you are lost and I say, “Mr. Smith, let me ask you a question. You don’t want to go to hell, do you?”

He will answer, No.

I say, “Wonderful, you want to go to heaven, don’t you?” He will say yes. I will reply, “Sure you do. Sure you do. Sure you do. Sure you do. I thank God for a man that doesn’t want to go to hell.”

Did you get that? I am reinforcing the fact that he wants to go to heaven. I’m keep everything positive.

I don’t say, “Can I show this to you?” or “Do you mind if I read the Bible to you?” That’s negative and you will probably get a negative answer. I don’t ask people; I just say, “I’m so glad you don’t want to go to hell and I will just take a minute here to show you some verses. I don’t have long and I know you don’t, either. There’s three things that you need to know. First, Jesus died for you. Isn’t that wonderful? Two, Jesus loves you. Isn’t that wonderful? Three, Jesus wants you to go to heaven. Isn’t that wonderful? And I’m so glad that you want to.”

See, I am being positive.

He may say he has a lot of questions, but unsaved people don’t have questions. Don’t get on unsaved people’s questions. Tell them that you will answer their questions later, but first you want to read a few verses of Scripture. Unsaved people don’t have questions. If you get them saved, that answers all of them.

Let me tell you how to deal with someone who has a dumb spirit who bucks getting saved. You share the gospel and get them to the point of praying the sinner’s prayer, but they stop. How do you get that type of person saved? Now, this will work in most cases. If he is a man, put your hand on his shoulder and say, “Mr. Jones, I want to have prayer for you. I’m thrilled you want to go to heaven. God has been good to you. Bow your head with me. Then I pray, “Lord, I’m so thankful for this man that doesn’t want to burn in hell. I’m so thrilled he wants to go to heaven and not take his kids to hell. I thank you for

this man. And I pray you will help him to see that need." While our heads are still bowed, I say, "Mr. Jones, if you want heaven as your home and Christ as your Saviour, pray this prayer. Lord Jesus." And if he doesn't repeat that and tries not to pray, I squeeze his shoulder. I use this technique. If I am dealing with the president of the bank, I take his hand and when it comes time for him to pray, I squeeze his hand. We've titled that the Carl Hatch squeeze. It works. If I am dealing with a woman, I ask her to put her hand on the Bible, and when it comes time to pray I just tap her hand gently. It works; it works.

The previous is from a Carl Hatch soul-winning seminar at Texas Baptist University.

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This is nothing more than cheap salesmanship. It might be a good way to sell a used car but it is a bad way to win souls to Christ. There is not a hint of such a thing in Scripture. We can't imagine the Lord Jesus or the apostles doing such a thing. When Jesus dealt with the woman at the well, He didn't ask a bunch of leading questions to keep the subject positive. He is the one who brought up the woman's immoral lifestyle. When He dealt with Nicodemus, He confronted the man with his need of the new birth, which Nicodemus didn't find positive at all. Christ told the rich young ruler to sell everything he had and follow Him. He told people if they didn't repent they would perish, which is a very negative approach (Luke 13:1-5). He told the people that only those who continue in His Word are His true disciples (John 8:30-31). Jesus and the evangelists in the early churches knew absolutely nothing of the Carl Hatch squeeze.

## **8. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM DOESN'T DEPEND ON GOD ENOUGH AND ISN'T GEARED TO LOOK FOR GOD'S WORKING.**

Our part in evangelism is to proclaim the gospel properly, to warn people of the judgment of God and to urge them to be saved and to pray for them. That is all that we can do. We cannot save anyone. We cannot manipulate them into being saved. We cannot sneak the gospel to them in such a way that they get saved without hardly knowing it.

Salvation is a divine miracle from beginning to end. We don't believe that God "sovereignly chooses" who will be saved or that He has elected only some to be saved, but we do believe that salvation is 100% the work of God. It is God who must convict (John 16:8-11), enlighten (John 1:9), draw (John 12:32), regenerate and impart the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:7). What we do in evangelism is to look for this miracle-working power of God in individual's lives. If that work is not present, there will be no salvation. God does this work of regeneration in answer to repentance and faith, but the only way that we can know that the repentance is real and the faith is true saving faith is by the miracle-working power of God in the individual's life.

Quick Prayerism typically focuses on the technique and program of getting people to pray a prayer and ignores what is happening in the person's life. This is why it is not unusual for Quick Prayerists to get people to pray a sinner's prayer when they aren't interested enough even to invite the soul winner into the home. A Bible College teacher told me recently about a student of his who continues to put pressure on people while door knocking

even when they have indicated that they aren't interested in getting saved. You don't see that in the Bible. When I was in Bible College I was often amazed when I was with "successful" soul winners and they would lead people in a prayer when in my mind the individuals were disinterested, perhaps just willing to say the prayer to get rid of us or to say the prayer as life insurance and a ticket into Heaven but with no real conviction and no intent to change directions.

The objective of biblical evangelism is not to get people to pray a sinner's prayer. The objective is to see the miracle-working power of regeneration in people's lives.

Repentance is both something that God has commanded man to do (Acts 17:30) and it is a miracle-work of God in the heart (2 Timothy 2:25). I believe both of these things come together for salvation. God seeks to give repentance but man must respond. Salvation is man agreeing with and responding to the work of God in his heart, the work of spiritual enlightenment, conviction, drawing, and repentance.

## **9. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM PROMOTES THE ERROR OF IMMEDIATELY GIVING ASSURANCE.**

I have often cringed as I have observed a soul winner giving assurance to someone who has just prayed a sinner's prayer, even when there was no evidence that the person was truly saved or that he was more than vaguely interested in what the soul winner was talking about.

What is wrong with assurance, you ask? Nothing is wrong with it, but it is only for those who are saved.

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand” (John 10:27, 28).

God promises eternal life to those who are born again, but He certainly does not promise eternal life to those who merely pray a sinner’s prayer. Verses 27 and 28 in John 10 are connected. Verse 28 says Christ gives eternal life to His sheep, but verse 27 says His sheep follow Him. Verse 27 is the evidence of salvation, while verse 28 is the eternal blessing of salvation. You cannot take the promise of verse 28 unless you display the evidence of verse 27.

Consider also the following passage:

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouceable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister” (Colossians 1:21-23).

Those who are reconciled to Christ and who therefore have eternal life are those who continue in the faith and are not moved from the gospel. Those who merely pray a sinner’s prayer and do not continue in the faith demonstrate that they have never been born again.

Consider Hebrews 6:9-11:

“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every

one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end" (Hebrews 6:9-11).

Note that there are "things that accompany salvation." An empty profession is not biblical salvation, and those who have an empty profession, who do not care about the things of God, do not have eternal life no matter how many prayers they have prayed or how many times they have been baptized and no matter who has given them assurance. True salvation is accompanied by works and labours of love, which are the products of the indwelling Spirit. Hebrews 6:11 reminds us that full assurance is only for those who give evidence that they have been born again.

Consider 1 John 3:2-3:

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 John 3:2,3).

Verse 1 tells us that those who are born of God have eternal life and will be like Christ in Glory. Verse 2 goes on to warn that those who are truly born of God purify their lives. The purifying is not the means of their salvation; it is the evidence of their salvation.

All of these passages teach that we must be careful about giving assurance of salvation to those who have merely prayed a prayer.

We can tell them that IF they have repented toward God and exercised faith toward Christ they have eternal life, but if they have merely prayed a prayer, they are still lost in their sins. To tell a person dogmatically that he has

been saved and now has eternal life when we do not know if he has been saved is unscriptural and harmful.

The Bible gives us many examples of those who were interested in the things of God and were even zealous for God and who appeared to be saved but were not. Judas is a prime example. Those in Matthew 7:21-23 who prayed “lord lord” and who did many wonderful works were not saved. The Jews mentioned in Romans 10 had a great zeal for God but they were not saved. The false teachers of 2 Peter chapter 2 professed Christ but were not saved. Those mentioned in Titus 1:16 professed that they knew God but they were not saved.

A sinner can have many false motives for calling upon the Lord other than for salvation from his sin. He can call upon the Lord because He wants help with some immediate problem in his life, or to get rid of the soul winner, or because he wants a ticket to Heaven when he dies (though he has no intent to know or serve God in this life), or because he thinks that the sinner’s prayer is another of the many religious things he must accomplish in order to be saved eventually, etc.

It is one thing to tell a person that he *can* have assurance from God and from the Scriptures *if* he is truly saved; it is quite another thing for the soul winner to give a stranger assurance and promise him a home in Heaven simply because he has prayed a sinner’s prayer.

Yes, Romans 10:13 says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” but that verse cannot be isolated from the rest of the passage and from the rest of the book of Romans and from the rest of the Bible. It must be a certain kind of calling upon the Lord, a calling from the heart, a calling that is based in sound

repentance toward God and proper faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the final analysis, giving assurance to a sinner is not the soul winner's job; it is the job of the Holy Spirit and He accomplishes this through God's Word. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:15-16).

#### **10. THE TYPICAL SOUL-WINNING PROGRAM IS GEARED TO NOT DOUBTING THE REALITY OF EMPTY PROFESSIONS.**

In the environment created by the Quick Prayerism program, it is typical not to doubt the reality of salvation no matter how empty the profession. To doubt that people are really getting saved would destroy the entire program and the enthusiasm of those who are getting the "decisions."

I recently talked with a Bible College student who told me that he had led perhaps 100 people to the Lord, but when I asked him how many of those were serving the Lord today he could only point to two. When I questioned the reality of the salvation of the 98, he argued with me that they could be saved even though seemingly nothing happened.

I once met a missionary in England who told me that they were seeing "many" come to Christ through their tract work on the city sidewalks. When I asked him about the attendance to his church services, though, he said the number was very small. When I asked him why he thought that many people were actually getting saved

when they weren't interested enough even to attend church, he got upset and told me that "we can't judge who is saved or not." This man had recently attended Hyles' Pastors School where Hyles had said that repentance is necessary for salvation and the missionary told me that he believes in repentance! Obviously this so-called "repentance" is meaningless as far as any practical effect in people's lives.

While it is true that we cannot know for absolute sure who is saved, and while it takes time for people to grow spiritually, and while some demonstrate more enthusiasm for Christ than others, and while we can be deceived about a Judas here and there, it is not true that people can be saved without evidence. The Bible is as clear on this as it is on any doctrine. Consider the following Scriptures:

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, AND THEY FOLLOW ME" (John 10:27).

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19).

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION, though we thus speak" (Hebrews 6:9).

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4).

There is not one example in the New Testament of an individual who is saved and does not give clear and even dramatic evidence thereof. Consider the Woman at the Well in John 4 and the Jews who repented on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:42) and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-39) and Cornelius and his household (Acts 10) and the converts at Antioch (Acts 11:20-23) and Lydia (Acts 16:14-15) and the Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:23-34).

Quick Prayerists typically confuse backsliding and carnality with unregeneracy. There is such a thing as backsliding in the Christian life, but a backslider is one who has first experienced the reality of spiritual life. Someone who has made an empty profession and has no evidence whatsoever that he has been regenerated is not a backslider. The same is true for carnality. A truly born again believer still has the old man living within him together with the new man and it is possible to walk after the flesh to some extent and therefore to be carnal (Gal. 5:16-25), but there will still be plenty of evidence of one's salvation. Take the members of the church at Corinth, for example. Paul said they were carnal (1 Cor. 3:1) but they showed all sorts of evidence of salvation. They had been converted from dark idolatrous paganism and loved the things of Christ; they were zealous of spiritual things, zealous in ignorance, but zealous nonetheless (1 Cor. 14:12). And the best evidence of all that they were truly saved is the fact that they responded to Paul's reproof and repented of sins they were guilty of in the church (2 Cor. 7:9-11).

What about Demas? He forsook Paul because of his love for this present world (2 Tim. 4:10). But Demas is not an example of someone who is saved but has no evidence. Demas had shown plenty of evidence of salvation. He

had even been a co-worker with Paul and had preached the gospel and helped plant churches (Col. 4:12; Philemon 24).

**BUT ISN'T IT GOOD THAT PEOPLE ARE BEING SAVED EVEN IF THERE ARE LOTS OF EMPTY PROFESSIONS?**

We thank the Lord for every soul that is genuinely saved, even through the means of Quick Prayerism, but we cannot ignore the destructive nature of this practice.

Those who aren't saved have not only prayed a sinners prayer, they have been told that they are saved and have been given assurance of salvation. By this means they become almost inoculated to genuine salvation.

The churches that have adopted this unscriptural method of evangelism have produced millions of false professions. There are many churches that can show only a handful of new creatures in Christ for every hundred or even thousand converts they claim. There is something extremely wrong about that picture. It is a great confusion.

For years I have observed the sad fruit of this technique: multitudes of false professions, confusion about salvation, indifference to biblical truth, agnosticism, reprobate living, and blasphemy against God. In many communities across the land a large percentage of the population has prayed a sinner's prayer under the ministry of churches practicing Quick Prayerism. Vast numbers of these have never been born again and they are now almost inoculated against biblical salvation. When challenged about their lifeless spiritual condition, they commonly reply, "I have done that," meaning they

have prayed a prayer and have been given assurance of eternal life. Since they were not told that God requires that they repent of their sin and idolatry and that there will be a change of life, they are comfortable and self-assured that they have a ticket to Heaven. Those who observe these things are made to think that salvation means little or nothing in relation to one's manner of life.

We conclude with the testimony of an evangelist about the danger of multiplying false professions through faulty soul winning techniques:

“Many years ago, in order to answer the criticism of the mounting number of false professions, I heard a brother say, ‘I would rather lead 100 souls to Christ, knowing that 95 of them were false professions, and see five of them go to heaven, than to not attempt to be a soul-winner.’ The first tragedy of that statement is assuming that those are the only two options: either to rack up false professions while winning a few, or to not witness at all. How about the option of being a witness within the guidelines of scriptural teaching, which produces very few false professions! The second tragedy is the flippant attitude about the 95 people to whom you gave assurance of salvation that will one day wake up in hell! Most of them will not allow a genuine witness to approach them about their souls, because they're banking on that false assurance that you gave them.”