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***Basic
Training
Manual***

Introduction:

The purpose of this training manual is three-fold:

1 – to ensure that you know and are able to articulate the essential points of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

2 – to help you become more comfortable with and more effective in your role as Christ's ambassador to your acquaintances, friends, and family.

3 – to give you the tools to make disciples of those you are privileged to introduce to the Lord.

The material in this manual and the accompanying Power Point presentation has been collected and adapted from a variety of sources. The most notable are:

Andrews, Keith, *Learning to Share Your Faith: 8 Lessons for the Christian Witness*. 1998, Seacrest Press.

Bronson, Michael, *Friendship Evangelism*. 2002, BibleHelp.Org.

Copeland, Mark A., *Relational Evangelism*. 2002, Executable Outlines.

Kennedy, D. James, *Evangelism Explosion*. Evangelism Explosion International.

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Red Team

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The Gospel – part 1

We all know that Christians are called to “*go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation*” (Mk. 16:15). Knowing it and doing it are two different things, however. Part of the problem is that most believers are not comfortable with their own grasp of the gospel message. Part of the purpose of this training manual is to teach you to share the gospel *simply, practically, and thoroughly*. The gospel message will be broken down into 5 primary steps. Under each we will learn two major points along with accompanying Scripture. Later we will learn some helpful illustrations.

The 5 steps and points

1. ETERNAL LIFE

- Nobody can deserve or earn eternal life
- Eternal life is God’s free gift

2. MANKIND

- All people are sinners
- Nobody can save himself

3. GOD

- God loves us and doesn’t want to punish us
- God is just and is not willing to overlook anyone’s sin

4. JESUS

- Jesus is God come in human form
- Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead to secure a place for us in heaven.

5. FAITH

- The benefits of Jesus’ work are received by faith
- Saving faith is trusting Jesus’ work rather than our own

ETERNAL LIFE

Nobody can deserve or earn eternal life

People have all kinds of ideas about how they might please God and why they think God should save a place in heaven for them. Some include:

- I’m basically a good person
- I try to help other people
- I go to church almost every week
- I don’t do anything really bad
- My uncle Harry is a preacher

Can you think of other reasons why people might think that God owes them a place in heaven?

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” Eph. 2:8-9

The fact is that nobody’s life is good enough to make him acceptable in God’s sight. Even though many of the things that people try to do to earn salvation are good and commendable things, they always fall short of what God requires.

Eternal life is God’s free gift

If it were not for God’s mercy and grace no one would have any hope of gaining eternal life. Because of His mercy and grace, however, God has made eternal life available as a gift. It can’t be earned, but it can be received – THAT IS THE GOOD NEWS!

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.”
Romans 6:23

MANKIND

All people are sinners

What is a sinner? Does someone have to commit murder or be a thief in order to be a sinner? Those things certainly violate God’s law and are sin;

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” 1 Jn. 1:8

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
Rom. 3:23

but sinfulness is much more subtle than that. A person can sin against God by doing what God says not to do. He can also sin against God by failing to do what God wants Him to do. One can sin by being disobedient or by failing to be obedient – two different things. Sinfulness can manifest itself through our *actions*, or in our *thoughts*, or through *the things we say*.

Nobody can save himself

Many people hope that God will see their “good works” and judge that their goodness “outweighs” their bad works. The fact is that most people do try hard to be good and to do what they believe is right. It is also true that, though they try, they are not always successful. God’s Word clearly teaches that being somewhat good or being not too bad is not good enough. In the book of James

“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matt. 5:48

we read: “*whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of It,*” James 2:10.

GOD

God loves us and doesn't want to punish us

"God is love." 1 Jn. 4:8

We tend to love those who love us. Human love is based on reciprocation. Truly sacrificial love is a rare thing. The love of God is completely sacrificial; it is a selfless love that seeks our good. God's response to us is not based on our character; it is based on His character. This is the testimony of 1 Jn. 4:19, which says: *"We love because he first loved us."*

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love."

Psalm 103:8

God is just and is unwilling to overlook anyone's sin

If love were all that there was to God's character we might take some hope in the idea that God would, based on His grace and compassion, choose to ignore our sin. The same Bible that teaches us about God's love, however, teaches us about His justice, His holiness, and His righteousness. It is clear that, just as it is God's nature to love, it is His nature to act justly.

"Our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12:29
"He does not leave the guilty unpunished." Ex. 34:7

The Gospel – part 2

JESUS

Jesus is God come in human form

In the midst of a conversation with his disciples Jesus asked, “*What about you, who do you say that I am?*” (Matt. 16:15). Peter, of course, gave the correct answer; “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*” People today, as then, have a variety of answers to the question, who is Jesus? Some say:

- A prophet
- A teacher
- A very good man
- A good example
- A religious person

While these statements about Jesus are true, they miss the essential point. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. God’s own Word makes it very clear that Jesus is the author of creation and that all things were made through Him and for Him. (See Jn. 1:3). No mere man could do for us what Jesus Christ has done for us!

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Jn. 1:1, 14

Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead to secure a place for us in heaven

Jesus took on human form to accomplish three major things: First, as our representative, he lived the righteous, obedient life that God requires. He

“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isa. 53:5-6

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

2 Cor. 5:21

became our righteousness. Second, he took our place of punishment and went to the cross to bear the just punishment for our sin. Truly He was the “Lamb of God” Who took away the world’s sin!

“I am going there [heaven] to prepare a place for you.”

Jn 14:2

Third, He gained victory over death and opened the way for us to receive the gift of everlasting life.

FAITH

The benefits of Jesus’ work are received by faith

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith.”

Eph. 2:8

D. James Kennedy says: “Faith is the key to heaven.” The Scripture makes it clear that the

benefits of Christ’s great saving work are for those who believe. The best know verse in the Bible, John 3:16, says, “. . . that whoever believes in Him . . .”

When people came to Jesus and asked, “*what is the work that God requires?*”

Jesus answered, “*believe in the one He has sent*” (Jn. 6:28-29).

To know about Jesus isn’t enough; one must believe that what the Bible says about Jesus.

“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.” **Jn 3:14-15**

Saving faith is trusting Jesus’ work rather than your own

It is easier to understand what the Bible means by faith if we think in terms of trust. When a person says, “I think that God will give me eternal life because I try to be a good person,” that person is trusting his or her own goodness. When a person says, “I think God will give me eternal life because I go to church” or “I help needy people,” that person is trusting his or her own works. When a person says, “I think God will give me eternal life because my family is Christian and my

“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Jn. 6:40

uncle was a preacher,” that person is trusting his or her heritage. All of that is misplaced trust. Sinners aren’t good enough for heaven. Good works don’t remove the penalty for lawlessness. When one stands before God it doesn’t matter who their family is. Saving faith is trusting Jesus

alone; His righteousness, His atoning works, and His relationship with God the Father. Saving faith means putting all of my trust in the sufficiency of what Jesus did and none of my trust in what I can do.

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

Jn 5:24

Why Me?

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Every Christian is called to be a witness for Christ

Mk. 1:17 – “As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ‘Come, follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men.’”

Matt. 28:18-20 – “Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mk. 16:15-16 – “He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

Acts 1:8 – “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Jesus instructed His disciples to go and share the gospel

- This instruction is for disciples of all times and places
- Jesus promised that He would make them effective
- Jesus promised that they would receive power to witness
- If you belong to Christ this instruction and this power is for YOU!

Many devout believers feel inadequate to the simple task of sharing their faith with others. The truth is, we are all inadequate. Even the first believers – those faithful disciples who had walked with Jesus – had to wait until they received the Holy Spirit’s power before they were able to be effective witnesses. Clearly, they needed more power and wisdom than they had in themselves. Their experience and knowledge was great, but it was still inadequate. If we respond to the great commission in our own strength, we will surely fail. If, on the other hand, we respond in the power of the Spirit of God we will surely succeed. The good news for us is that Christ has given us his Spirit already (see Rom. 8:9). We can expect to be fruitful because God Himself has called us and equipped us!

2 Cor. 3:4-6 – “Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant--not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”

Why Don't More Christians Witness?

- "I don't know how"
- "It's not my gift"
- "I witness by my life"
- "It's the pastor's job"
- Fear of failure and rejection
- Un-confessed sin
- "I don't have time"

I Don't know how – We will learn a step-by-step approach to sharing the gospel

It's not my gift – There is no spiritual gift of evangelism. Sharing the gospel is the calling of every Christian.

I witness by my life – Good! Your life should be a testimony to God's power and faithfulness. People will not know about Christ, though, unless you tell them.

It is the pastor's job – The pastor's role is to "train the saints to do the work of ministry" (See below).

I'm afraid – A clear understanding of the message, a plan for presenting, and a reliance upon God's power will enable you to be effective in spite of fear.

Unconfessed sin – We must be in a right relationship with God if we are to be effective in representing Him to the world. This is not being perfect, only forgiven.

I don't have time – Effective witnesses for Christ need to be **FAT** people.

Faithful, Available, and **T**eachable.

Doing the Work of the Ministry

We sometimes think of "ministry" as an occupation. The pastor, evangelist, or seminary professor are said to have "gone into the ministry." The word "ministry," though, really means "service." One "ministers" when he meets another's specific need. The fact is that all believers are called into the ministry! Read Eph. 4:11-12 in both the NIV and the KJV. Paul is explaining here that the leaders of the church have been called to "train (or "equip") the saints." The word "saint," as it is used here, refers to all believers--the man in the pew is a saint of God!

- What are the saints being trained (prepared) to do? Works of ministry/service
- What will be the result of their work? The church will be built up

Spreading the gospel and introducing the unsaved to their Redeemer is a great work of ministry, but it is not the whole of ministry. Even though evangelism is the primary focus of this study, we should not mistakenly think that ministry consists only of sharing the good news. Tending to the needs of the sick and lonely, helping the hurting, encouraging the hopeless, teaching the young . . . these are also works of ministry. Read Matt. 25:34-40. What specific works of service are mentioned in this passage? _____

Who Can Be a Witness for Jesus?

The witness needs to be:

- **Saved** – A personal experience of God’s saving grace is essential.
- **Cleansed** – Prayerfully search your heart, asking God to reveal anything in your life that hinders your walk with Him.
- **Spirit Filled** – Sharing Christ is not a dialogue, it is a triologue involving a witness, a prospect, and the Holy Spirit.
- **Committed** – This commitment is first, to God, second, to His church, and third, to the Evangelism Team. Be sure you have signed and turned in your commitment card.
- **Prayerful** - Pray for one another and pray for those the Lord will lead you to to share His gospel. Enlist at least 2 prayer partners to pray with you.
- **Relational** – Develop relationships with those around you for the purpose of sharing Christ.
- **Thoughtful** – Be careful to be a good representative of Christ.

Fishermen and Ambassadors

Being a “fisher” of men

Successful fishermen have several things in common

- They do their fishing where there are fish.
- They are careful to have the appropriate equipment.
- They are careful to make the “bait” attractive.
- They take care not to scare the fish away.
- They are serious about catching fish.

Write some ways that the analogy of fishing might be applied to evangelism.

Being an ambassador for Christ

Eph. 6:19-20 – “Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains.”

Paul refers to himself as an “ambassador in chains.” He also asks for prayer. What does he need? That words might be given him and that he might be fearless in sharing the gospel

Consider what an ambassador does.

- He honorably represents his king and country.
- He speaks for his king and not for himself.
- He seeks to bring honor to king and country and not to himself.
- He supports the interests of his king and nation with his actions.
- He lives among those who do not share his citizenship (although his home is part of the kingdom).
- Deals respectfully but persuasively with the natives.

Write some ways that the analogy of an ambassador might be applied to evangelism.

Why Relational Evangelism?

BEING A STEPPING STONE

The instruction in 1 Cor. 10:32 is intended to tell us what not to do. “Do not cause anyone to stumble . . .” And what we ought to do, “follow my [Paul’s] example as I follow the example of Christ.” Clearly, it is far better to be a stepping stone for someone than a stumbling block!

Relational Evangelism is a method of purposely putting ourselves in position to help our friends make a first step toward faith in Christ.

“Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God -- even as I try to please everybody in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”
1 Cor. 10:32-11:1

WHAT IS RELATIONAL EVANGELISM?

Every person is in the middle of a circle of relationships. We have relatives that we are close to, we have associates at work or at school, and we have friends with whom we spend our leisure time. Relational Evangelism involves looking for opportunities to share Christ with those who are *already* in that circle of relationships. It is actually that and more. Relational Evangelism also involves actively seeking *new* opportunities by developing *new* relationships specifically for the *purpose* of sharing Christ.

What Makes Relational Evangelism Different?

When most people think of evangelism they get a mental image of someone like Billy Graham in a huge stadium sharing the gospel with thousands or of someone going from door to door with a huge Bible under their arm asking people if they are ready to die. Neither image seems comfortable or natural to most people. Talking to a neighbor about her flower garden over the back fence or discussing your car’s pinging noise with the mechanic, however, do seem comfortable and natural. Evangelism, if it involves people with whom we have already developed a bond of friendship, can be equally comfortable and natural.

- Relational Evangelism involves taking the time to build real friendships
- Relational Evangelism involves sharing our lives, not just sharing information
- Relational Evangelism removes much of the fear and intimidation associated with witnessing to strangers.
- Relational Evangelism is less offensive to the pre-Christian

EFFECTIVE EVANGELISM IN THE REAL WORLD

We all meet new people every day. We walk into a store and a salesperson comes up to us. "May I help you," they say. We walk down the sidewalk and meet people along the way. We nod and say, "How 'ya doin'?" And then we go on our way and so do they. If we go to the mall we bump into more people than we would care to count. With all those people around, why aren't we constantly making new friends and developing new relationships? Here are some possible reasons:

- There are just too many people. We adopt an attitude of isolation to keep from being overwhelmed!
- Life is fast-paced and building relationships takes time. Neither we nor they want to slow down.
- We are afraid of what new problems we might encounter if we mix with the world. We are comfortable in our "small safe circle of friends."
- We don't make a connection between making friends and doing the work of evangelism.
- We don't want people to get too close for fear of what they might discover in us! We are afraid that our lifestyle and our message are inconsistent so we hide them both.

"Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is."
Eph. 5:15-17

To these hindrances we need to add the simple fact that Christians tend to spend time with Christians. Church, small groups, committee meetings, prayer services, choir practices. These are the things that consume the Christian's time. It shouldn't be surprising to us that those who observed Jesus' ministry asked, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners?'" (Lk. 5:30). To purposely spend time with unbelievers seems odd. Still, to do so is to follow the example Christ.

Why is this important for me?

- Taking Relational Evangelism seriously means that we are committing our whole lives, not just an hour or two each week, to reaching the lost with the Good News. It helps us keep our focus on the *primary* task of the Christian life.
- It gets Christianity out of the church building and into the lives of hurting people.
- It causes us to be more prayerful and careful Christians because our own lives are always visible to those we hope to reach.
- It has the effect of making our community a more godly place.

Why is this important for the Church?

The simple fact is that when there is a personal relationship with a Christian involved people are far more likely to trust Christ for their salvation and are more likely to remain active in the local church. The Institute for American Church Growth asked 10,000 people this question: "What was responsible for your coming to Christ and to this church?" Consider their answers:

- 2% - I had a special need
- 3% - I just walked in
- 6% - I like the pastor
- 1% - I visited there
- 5% - I liked the Bible class
- .5% - I attended a revival meeting
- 3% - I liked their programs
- 79% - A friend or relative invited me**

Certainly the Relational Evangelism approach is not the only workable method of evangelism. It does have these distinct advantages:

- It takes into consideration those forces and circumstances which hinder the effectiveness of personal evangelism.
- It makes us better Christians in the process of trying to influence the lost. It therefore combines effective discipleship with effective evangelism
- It is an easy and natural way to share the gospel with others. It is more likely to lead to success in terms of leading souls to Christ and keeping them faithful to the Lord.

Purposeful Friendships

BUILDING BRIDGES ON PURPOSE

How many people did you see today? Did you ever wonder how many of them know Jesus as their Savior and Lord? Some of those who don't will find their way into a church this coming Sunday, they will hear the gospel for the first time, and they will receive the gift of eternal life. Most won't. What about them? How can they be saved?

There is an illustration that depicts a bottomless gulf. On one side is the Holy God. On the other side is the sinner. Even if that sinner wanted to come to God, there is no way for him to cross the gulf. God Himself bridged that gulf with an old wooden cross. That's why Jesus said, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me*" (Jn. 14:6). Well, that work is finished. The life-saving benefits of that work, however, are only available to those who believe. And, as Paul put it, "how can they *believe* in one of whom they have not *heard*?" The good news must be shared.

Even as God built a bridge, we must also be bridge builders. People cannot make their own way to God, a way must be provided for them. Our willingness to reach out to the friendless and to love the unlovely is the bridge they need.

DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships are complex and developing them is a multi-stage process. Here is a brief outline of how one might progress from getting to know someone to leading them to Christ:

1. INITIAL CONTACT

- Pray and ask the Lord to provide divine appointments
- Choose to be where people are.
- Try to be friendly and willing to talk.
- Take the initiative in meeting new people.
- Try to leave the person with a favorable impression.

2. BECOMING BETTER ACQUAINTED

- Make getting to know the person better your goal.
- Ask questions – listen to their answers.
- Look for common interests.
- Be patient – relationships take time to grow.
- Be honestly complimentary.

- Keep your initial contacts short.
- Don't hide your Christianity – your faith is what makes you you!

3. BEING A SERVANT

- Be alert to see opportunities to be of help.
- Seek to meet genuine, practical needs.
- Remember that love is shown more by deed than by words.
- Be willing to be helped in return – be appreciative.

4. BEING A FRIEND

- Purposely cultivate common interests.
- Seek to develop openness, honest, trust, and ease of communication.
- Accept them as they are – sanctification comes *after* salvation.

5. SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

- Make the relationship between your faith and your life clear.
- Be open about how knowing Christ has impacted your life.
- Let God's Word be seen as authoritative in your thinking.
- Let your testimony flow naturally into the conversation.
- Ask questions and listen to the answers.

6. THE WITNESS OF THE CHURCH

- Introduce your friend to the love and unity of other Christians.
- Let their corporate testimony reinforce your own.
- Let them see worship as a testimony to the reality of God.
- Let love be genuine.

7. EXPOSURE TO THE GOSPEL

- Pray for an opportunity to share the gospel.
- Expect an opportunity to share the gospel.
- Be prepared to share the gospel fully and clearly.
- Remember that the initial objective is to create understanding.
- Be willing to answer questions.

8. INVITATION

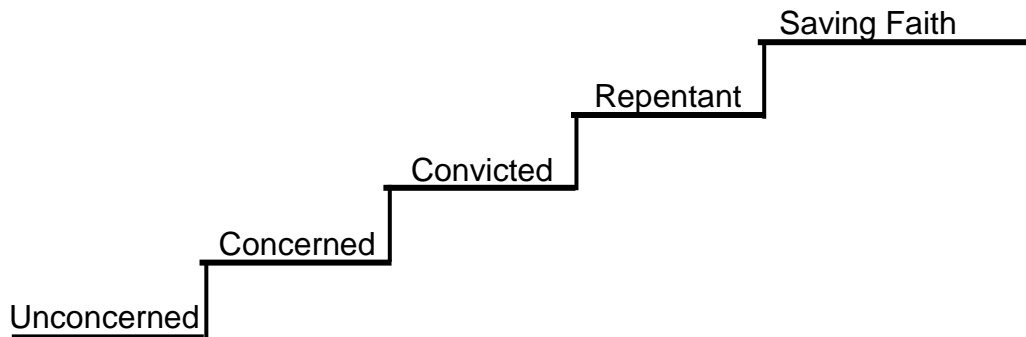
- Ask if they would like to receive the gift of eternal life.
- Make sure they understand the gospel – clarify.
- Make sure there is a transfer of trust from self-effort to Christ.
- Make sure they understand Christ's role as Lord and Savior.
- Make sure they understand the need for repentance.
- Pray for them, with them, and for them again.

9. DISCIPLESHIP

- Give them some basic Bible study material along with a gospel of John.
- Meet with them to help them through the study.
- Help them to utilize the five means of growth

TAKING STEPS TOWARD LIFE

It is helpful to have some sense of our friend's spiritual condition. We will learn some questions later that will help us make this diagnosis. For now, though, let's think in more general terms. Usually people don't make a great leap from zero to hero. They sort of grow in their spiritual awareness one step at a time. In his booklet, *Step Up to Life!*, Elmer Murdoch observes that everyone is on one of the following steps in his spiritual walk. It helps us to know this so that we can approach the person with reasonable expectations. Consider the following steps:



- The person who is **UNCONCERNED** may have a church background and may know a lot about Jesus and the Bible. The point is not what they *know* or *don't* know. The point is what they *care about*. This person's knowledge or lack of knowledge has no effect on his life. He goes through life without ever giving a thought to a God to Whom he might have to one day give an accounting. In his worldview there is no God! The good news is that a person's unconcerned attitude doesn't keep God from caring about them.

***“God demonstrates his own love for us in this:
While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
Rom. 5:8***

- The person who is **CONCERNED** has come to a level of spiritual awareness where he is seeking answers to spiritual questions. He may or may not look to the *church* for those answers. His concern may center on *fear of death* and the *possibility of an after-life*, a sense of personal *sinfulness* or *hopelessness*, or the need for personal *significance*. A concerned person is likely to have ears to hear the Word of truth.

***“Whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”
Mk. 4:22-23***

- It is the Holy Spirit who brings conviction. **CONVICTION** is an overwhelming sense of guilt about sin. No one truly comes to this point in his spiritual life without the Holy Spirit's work in their heart. This guilt is so intense, however, that the person is motivated to do something about it. Interestingly, many people remain in the uncomfortable state of conviction for a long time. The friend's role at this time is not to try to add to the sense of spiritual *discomfort*. The friend's role is to point the person to the *solution*. Namely, turning to Christ and finding forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

1 Jn. 1:9

- **REPENTANCE** is often described as a change of direction. Some call it a U-turn or maybe a "YOU-turn." Actually, it is not just going in some new direction, it is going in a specific direction. We go astray because we go our *own* way. The only way to please God is to go *God's* way. Repentance, therefore, is much more than a change of mind. It is a change of heart. Repentance involves getting off the throne of one's life and letting the Lord Jesus Christ sit down.

"We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way." **Isa. 53:6**

- The final step is to trust it all to Christ. We want to be able to lead our friends to **SAVING FAITH**. Saving faith has three components: *Understanding*, *Belief*, and *Trust*. In order to be saved, a person must *understand* who Jesus is and why He lived and died. This is why it is essential that the gospel be shared. In order to be saved, though, a person must not only know, he must also *believe*. Most of us know a lot about Santa Clause, but we don't depend on him to bring our Christmas presents. Saving faith requires one more great step. It is one thing to believe that Jesus died to save sinners. It is another thing to apply that understanding and belief to myself and to transfer all my *trust* to Him.

"If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." **Rom. 10:9-10**

A Strategy for Success

A MORE EXCELLENT WAY

Relational Evangelism, by its very nature, is non-pushy. The non-Christian, because of this, does not feel that the witness is “after something” and he does not put up the normal defensive mental barriers. This is the key to the success of Relational Evangelism. Mental barriers stop the heart from hearing the Gospel. Open communication should be a high priority for the Christian witness.

Remember, the purpose of your conversations with your non-Christian friend is not to prove that you are correct, but to present the truth. Any approach that causes a person to become *defensive* is counterproductive. When discussing a topic, be careful not to put the person down with your words or the tone of your voice. It is unlikely that you will win a hearing for the Gospel by butchering your friend’s “sacred cows”!

DIRECTING THE CONVERSATION

Being a good *listener* opens many doors. It shows the person you are conversing with that you really *care about them*. It is also good to ask questions about comments that they have made. Though they are doing most of the talking, you can control the *direction* of the conversation by the *questions* you ask.

The more you are willing to listen, the more people tend to open up and share their true thoughts and feelings. Watch for facial expressions, changes in their voice and other clues that indicate particularly tender points. For example, you might say, “I noticed you cringed when you mentioned your brother, is that a sore spot?” The response could be anything from, “Yes, he’s dying of cancer,” to “Yes, we haven’t talked since he wrecked my car.” Pursuing these issues, though, allows the person to share his heart with you.

If you talk to a person long enough, *they* will eventually bring up the subject of morals, death, God, or the church. This is especially true if the person you are talking with knows you are a Christian. Since these subjects arise through normal conversation, the person does not feel defensive and will talk freely about them. When he does, you have a wide open door to share your testimony and, eventually, the Gospel. This gives you the opportunity to ask the two diagnostic questions

The Evangelism Prospect List

We have learned that the first step in Relational Evangelism is turning associates and acquaintances into friends so that we will have the opportunity to share Christ with them. You should start the process by making an "Evangelism Prospect List." An EPL is helpful because:

- Success in anything requires establishing a direction and setting goals.
- We need to be constantly reminded of those goals.
- We need to focus prayer and effort on the immediate need.

"The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus . . . Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the [Christ]" **John 1:35-41**

Your list will probably consist of relatives, neighbors, co-workers, classmates, children of friends, etc. As you make your list, ask the Holy Spirit to bring people to mind. Don't try to do this at one sitting. Give it a day or two.

After you have compiled a list, pray; then narrow it to no more than ten people and prioritize the list. When you are comfortable with your list write it below for a permanent record.

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE #
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____

THE RELATIONAL EVANGELISM MINISTRY CHART

We will also make a Relational Evangelism Ministry Chart. This tool helps us track our friend's spiritual and relational growth. There are two reasons why this is important. First, it helps us to be specific in our prayers for the individual. If we have become acquainted with someone, have found and taken advantage of opportunities to serve and befriend the person, but haven't had the opportunity to share our testimony then we need to ask God to provide that opportunity. Second, It helps us to strategize realistically. An unconcerned person is unlikely to attend a small group Bible study with you, for example, but a concerned individual might. The unconcerned person would be more comfortable at a concert or a sporting event. On the other hand, A person who has felt the convicting power of the Holy Spirit might be encouraged by the joy and peace he sees in your Christian friends. This person, therefore needs to be exposed to the witness of the church.

Here is an example of a Relational Evangelism Ministry Chart:

NAME John Pewstetter

Initial Contact		Becoming Acquainted		Being a Servant		Being a Friend		Sharing your Testimony		Witness of the church		Exposure to the Gospel		Invitation		Discipleship	
✓		✓		✓	✓	✓											
Unconcerned				Concerned				Convicted				Repentant				Saving Faith	

This chart indicates that John has been contacted and that the witness has spent time getting to know him. Opportunities have come up for the witness to be a helper to John and an open, friendly, and honest relationship, centered around common interests, is developing. It would seem that John is concerned about spiritual things, but no opportunity has arisen to share with him the impact that Christ has made on the witness' life.

Prayer needs:

- That the Holy Spirit will turn John's concern into conviction and lead him to repentance.
- That God will open a door of opportunity for the witness to share with John what Christ has done for him.

Helpful Illustrations

ETERNAL LIFE

A Gift is a Gift!

Wouldn't it seem strange to wake up on Christmas morning and find packages under your tree with price tags on them? To: Bill From: Dad, \$27.50, for example. Those wouldn't be "gifts." The giver pays for the gift, right? All you should have to do is receive the gift – open it up, and it's yours! God's gift of eternal life is like that. He paid for it and He is giving it to you. Since it's already paid for, what could you add anyway?

Receiving the Gift

Suppose that your best friend knew that you have always wanted a particular type of expensive sports car. This friend is so loving and gracious that he or she saves and saves and finally buys the car for you. How would they feel if you wouldn't take the car without trying to pay them for it? Humble gratitude is the only proper response to such an extravagant gift.

MANKIND

Sin Defined

Most people become quite offended if someone calls them a sinner. The fact is, though, that the Bible teaches that we are all sinners – everybody. That's because anything that fails to come up to God's requirements is sin. We can sin by doing something that God says not to do. We can also sin by failing to do something that God says we should do. Sin doesn't even have to be action or inaction; what we say or even what we think can be sinful.

The Sharpshooter

There was a young man who had just completed basic training and was headed home for a two-week leave before reporting to his duty station. Because funds were low, he took the bus. Busses stop at every little town, of course. At one of the stops the soldier got off the bus. He was surprised to hear gunfire and went to investigate. What he found was a young boy with a 22 rifle shooting at a concrete wall behind his house. Now the soldier had just won his sharpshooter medal and he considered himself to be a good shot. What he saw was amazing! The wall was covered with circles about the size of a nickel. And right in middle of each one was a bullet hole! How could anyone shoot with such accuracy? Then he found out how it was done . . . the lad would shoot at the wall, lay down his rifle, take out a marker, go up to the wall, and then draw a small circle around the hole.

We could all be righteous if we were allowed to move the targets to match our actions. God, however, has already placed the targets. He has already set the standards and they don't change to suit us. Sin is falling short or missing the target.

The Auto Accident

A young lady was late for work and decided to take a chance at a traffic light. It was already yellow, but she decided to speed up rather than slow down and try to go on through. She crashed into a truck that had entered the intersection as soon as his light turned green. The young lady was not seriously injured, but her car was destroyed. Even if she decided never to drive illegally or irresponsibly again, and even if she kept that promise, the damage to her car **WOULDN'T** be undone.

An Omelet with a Bad Egg

Let's suppose you invited a friend over for breakfast and made him an omelet. The first egg was good, the second egg was good, but the third egg was stinky rotten! Would adding more good eggs make the omelet good again? Clearly, no amount of good eggs will undo the effects of one rotten egg. It is the same with sin.

The Batting Average

Some players in the major leagues are better hitters than others. Most have batting averages around .250. Some have averages above .300. The occasional rare and gifted player can get through a season with an average over .400; but nobody bats 1.000 for the season! Trying to earn eternal life is like trying to bat 1.000 after you've already made a few outs! Jesus said, "You must be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

GOD

The Loving and Just Judge

Can you imagine the dilemma of a judge who finds his best friend in court charged with a serious crime? He certainly doesn't want to punish his friend, but if he ignores the crime and extracts no punishment he isn't being a just judge. So the judge finds his friend guilty, sets the maximum fine that the law allows, and then he pays the fine himself. His friend is free from the penalty for his crime and yet the just requirements of the law have been satisfied. God looks at sinners like that. He loves them but He can't overlook their sins. His solution was not to be unjust, but like the judge in the story, to pay the penalty for their sin Himself.

JESUS

The Record Book

(A New Testament or another small book can be used as a prop when sharing this illustration – put the book in your left hand). Let's pretend that this little book contains everything I have ever done in my life. You know there are a lot of sinful things recorded in here! (Raise your right hand – which represents God – high above your left). When God looks at me this is what He sees. I can turn over a new leaf (turn the book over) or try to turn my life around (turn the book around) but that doesn't really change anything. God did something amazing. He came in the person of Jesus to take that sin away. (Bring your right hand down even with your left). The Scripture says that we are like sheep who go our own way BUT that God has laid on Jesus the sin of us all. (Shift the book from your left hand to your right hand). Now I can have a relationship with God because there is not sin in the way – Jesus took it and paid the penalty for it!

Prairie Pioneers

There was a small group of pioneer families making their way across one of the central states to a distant place that had been opened up for homesteading. They traveled in covered wagons drawn by oxen, and progress was necessarily slow. One day they were horrified to note a long line of smoke in the west, stretching for miles across the prairie, and soon it was evident that the dried grass was burning fiercely and coming toward them rapidly. They had crossed a river the day before but it would be impossible to go back to that before the flames would be upon them. One man only seemed to have understanding as to what could be done. He gave the command to set fire to the grass behind them. Then when a space was burned over, the whole company moved back upon it. As the flames roared on toward them from the west, a little girl cried out in terror, "Are you sure we shall not all be burned up?" The leader replied, "My child, the flames cannot reach us here, for we are standing where the fire has been!"

What a picture of the believer, who is safe in Christ! The fires of God's judgment burned themselves out on Him, and all who are in Christ are safe forever, for they are now standing where the fire has been. -- H.A. Ironside

Telling Your Own Story

THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTIMONY

Many of the people with whom you would like to share Christ do not understand or believe that the Scripture is the inspired and infallible Word of God. They will not, therefore, grant it any special authority. They may be unimpressed and unconvinced when it is quoted. Likewise, they may be unfamiliar with and not persuaded by the traditional teaching of the church. Personal testimony, however, is different. You have what no one else has: firsthand knowledge of what the Lord has done in YOUR life. Your Christian testimony is very difficult to argue with or discount.

- You know how your heart attitude has changed.
- You know how your understanding of God's love and provision has changed.
- You know how your priorities and your lifestyle have changed.
- You also know, and can testify to, the power that brought about these changes.

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
Acts 1:8

This was Jesus' plan for His disciples from the beginning. Notice in Acts 1:8 that the disciples are to become WITNESSES after the Holy Spirit is sent to them. To “witness” is simply to provide testimony of what you have seen and heard.

MAKING IT EFFECTIVE

It is very helpful to take the time to thoughtfully and prayerfully plan your testimony. Your objective is to organize your experiences with the Lord into a two-minute narrative that you can be ready to share when the opportunity arises.

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.”
1 Pet. 3:15

Being a Bridge Builder

WHY BUILD BRIDGES?

In the physical sense, a bridge is a structure that enables people and things to cross from one side of an expanse to the other. Bridges are helpful in the spiritual sense as well. The gulf between the lost person and our holy God, in fact, is infinitely wide and un-crossable without a bridge. The most significant of all spiritual bridges, of course, is the one God built using the rough timbers of Jesus' cross. Through Him and by means of His sacrifice the believer has access to the Father.

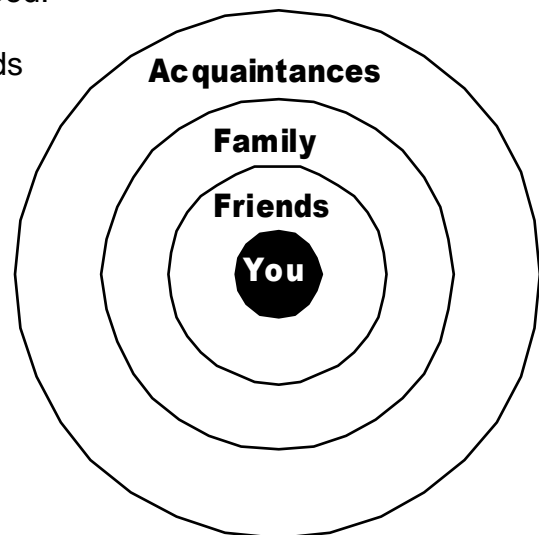
There are things that we can do, individually and as a church, to provide ways of access for people to come to Christ. These actions – called *Bridge Events* – are purposely designed to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Provides the pre-Christian with a connection to a Christian environment and personal relationships with believers.
- Serves to prepare the heart of the pre-Christian for conversion.
- Plants the seeds of truth from God's Word.
- Brings the person to a point of faith in Christ alone.

BRIDGE EVENTS

A *Bridge Event* is designed to help the pre-Christian “cross the bridge” from indifference and unbelief to the Kingdom of God.

We all have acquaintances, family, and friends who do not know Jesus as Savior and Lord. The question is, how can we help our friends move closer to faith and discipleship? A *Bridge Event* provides the witness with a way to touch his or her world for Christ. It is a real-life opportunity for you to introduce people that need to know Jesus to the community of faith and ultimately to the Savior Himself.



BRIDGE EVENT RATING SCALE

The fact is that each person has a different entry point; each is at a different level in what they are ready to hear and experience. In order to accommodate those differences we plan different kinds of *Bridge Events* ranging from those which are purely social to those where opportunities are made for people to receive Christ. Consider the following *Bridge Event Rating Scale*.

1. An event designed to get pre-Christians in the door, into a Christian environment, or into personal relationships with believers without a specific spiritual content or context. EXAMPLE: Holiday Jamborees, _____
2. An event or series of events designed to introduce pre-Christians to biblical principles and concepts stressing practical life applications. EXAMPLE: Outreach Seminars, _____
3. An event or series of events designed to introduce pre-Christians to the basic biblical ideas about the state of man and his need for salvation with the intent of bringing him to a point of personal introspection and pointing him toward Christ. EXAMPLE: Neighborhood or campus Bible classes, _____
4. An event at which the gospel is directly presented with no explicit response requested. EXAMPLE: 5-Day Bible Club, _____
5. An evangelistic event that directly presents the gospel and provides an opportunity for a follow-up visit with a pastor or elders. EXAMPLE: Easter Sunday worship service, _____
6. An event at which the gospel is presented along with an immediate opportunity to respond with repentance and a prayer for salvation. EXAMPLE: A special evangelism service, _____

DOING YOUR PART

It is essential that Red Team members actively work to bring their pre-Christian acquaintances, family, and friends to these events. Because you have developed relationships with them, they will be more receptive to your personal invitation than to any other kind. You also have a good sense of what types of events they have already been prepared for by the Holy Spirit.

Encouraging Spiritual Growth

WEED AND FEED

If you want to grow a garden you have to do two things: 1 - fertilize and water the plants you want in the garden, and 2 - pull up and remove the plants you don't want in the garden. The fact is that weeds are not only unsightly in the midst of the beautiful flowers; they also restrict the flowers' growth by crowding them and by drawing off essential nutrients.

There are parallels that can be drawn between the garden and the church. Helping young Christians to grow in a healthy manner in faith and knowledge is also a two-part process.

They too are faced with things in life that will crowd out what the Lord is doing and which, if left in place, can use up their time and energy.

Part of the work of discipleship, then, has to do with helping the new believer be free from those vines of sin that once held him in bondage. Remember, though, sanctification is a life-long process and it is the Holy Spirit who accomplishes this task. Still, He will use you as a *tool* in that process!

A weed-free garden isn't much to look at if the flowers aren't growing and blooming. The greater task of discipleship lies in encouraging healthy growth. The Christian life, after all, is really about doing and serving; it isn't about hiding and avoiding. The parable of the Talents makes this truth abundantly clear. Below you will find a discussion of the five primary means of spiritual growth. Every Christian, even the newborn, needs to be actively involved in all five.

"The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.' "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"

Matt. 25:20-21

MEANS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Daily Bible Reading

The Bible is sometimes called the "good book." Well, it certainly is that and much, much more. The Bible is the very Word of God. It is His revelation to us. It is the only way for us to know about God and to understand what He wants us to do.

"I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."

Ps. 119:104-105

Actually, the Word of God does both of the things that we considered above. It serves to illuminate the right path that the Christian needs to walk. At the same time, it reveals the pitfalls that the Christian needs to avoid. Never forget that God's Word is truth.

Regular Worship

“A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.”
Jn. 4:23

Simply put, worship is the acknowledgement of the worthiness of God. God is worthy of honor and deserving of our praise because He is our Creator, Sustainer, and Redeemer.

An attitude of worship - seeking to glorify our Lord in all that we do - should be the continual air in which the Christian lives his life. Still, there are special times when the church comes *together* to worship Christ. This is certainly appropriate on Sunday, which is the *Lord's Day*.

Ordinarily corporate worship consists of the following elements:

- Singing Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
- Offering prayers of praise and petition to God
- Reading of the Scripture
- The preaching of the Word
- The giving of the tithe and offerings
- The occasional administration of the Sacraments
- The receiving of blessings

An Active Prayer Life

Prayer is an honest expression or communication with God.

“The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.”
Ps. 91:15

Thought we pray with our mouth, our prayers reveal the contents of our heart. God encourages His people to come to him in prayer and to call upon Him in times of need.

It is important for new believers to understand that part of what Christ has done for them is to give them access to the Father. They don't need anyone to go to God for them. They may address God themselves.

Young Christians should be encouraged to give thanks to God and praise Him in their prayers. They should pray for their specific needs and for the needs of others. They should pray for their leaders and for the church as a whole. They

should ask God for direction and wisdom. And they should ask for the illumination and empowering of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Christian Fellowship

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." **Jn. 13:34-35**

We mustn't think of Christian fellowship in the same way that we think of friendships in the secular world. Christian fellowship is really quite different. Christian fellowship involves a sharing of lives at a level that is impossible in the world. Why? Because it is based on a common faith in the Lord Jesus and, perhaps even more importantly, because it is enabled by the Holy Spirit Who is present in the lives of all believers. The Spirit draws us together and makes us one. So unique is the bond between disciple and disciple that Jesus pointed to it as the identifying mark of the true church in the world (consider Jn. 13:34-35 above).

Active Ministry

"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

Eph. 2:10

It is very beneficial for young believers to be actively involved in ministry. To be part of the church is, out of necessity, to be part of the *work* of the church. The idea

of a passive believer is not found in the Bible!

The first thing that the new believer can do is to serve Christ as a *witness*, telling someone else how Christ has brought them from death to life. The new disciple should be encouraged to pray and seek the Lord's direction regarding their ministry. They can, and should, be incorporated into some type of helping ministry as quickly as possible. This helps them to put down roots into the good soil and to begin to grow in their faith and their faithfulness.

Foundations for Discipleship

MAKING DISCIPLES

It is interesting that most Christians see the “great commission” of Matt. 28 as relating to *evangelism*. Evangelism, however, is only the first step. Jesus’ command is to “make *disciples*.” What does it mean to “be a disciple” and how do we fulfill the mandate to make them?

The New International Dictionary of the Bible defines “disciple” first as, “A pupil of some teacher.” It goes on to say, “The word implies the acceptance in mind and life of the views and practices of the teacher.” So, if this definition is correct, two things become evident. First, a person can’t be a disciple unless he has a teacher. And second, that teaching goes far beyond the sharing of information. Jesus said: “*Everyone who is fully taught will be like his teacher*” (Luke 6:40).

“Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.’”
Matt. 28:18-20

“In Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I urge you to imitate me.”
1 Cor. 4:15-16

It is clear that the true model for the Christian life is Christ and not a fellow believer. Still it is also clear from the teaching of Scripture that older more mature believers have the responsibility to teach, encourage, and correct the younger believers. Paul really summed

up the process of discipling young Christians when he wrote: “*Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ*” (1 Cor. 11:1).

GUIDING BIBLE READING

Where do I begin? We know that new believers need to read the Bible and that they need to read it regularly. The Bible alone will provide the direction and

nourishment that they need to grow in faith and to stay on course. Generally, however, starting with Gen. 1:1 and reading straight through to Rev. 22:21 is not the most productive plan. A good early diet might include Gen. 1-3, Psalms, and John. This will give them a good sense of the power of God, the accessibility of God, the love of God, and the deity of Christ. Encourage them to establish a regular time each day for Bible reading. About a chapter a day is a practical goal. Your job is to be a source of accountability and to be available to answer

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.”
Ps. 119:9

questions. Don't be afraid to say: "that's a good question, let me study that and get back to you."

WHAT ABOUT WORSHIP?

"I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Ps. 122:1

It is essential that new believers be exposed to corporate worship right away. Like Bible

reading, gathering for worship needs to become a regular habit. The best way to encourage this habit is not to tell them to GO to church. The best way is to BRING them to church. New believers, particularly those who do not have a church background, may not be comfortable with the whole idea – they probably have real questions about what goes on and what they are supposed to do. Many of the things that we take for granted – like the Lord's Supper, for example – will be totally foreign to them. Be ready to explain and to assist and to support. Most of all, let them see you honoring Christ in your own worship.

ENCOURAGING PRAYER

In contrast to the more formal prayers that your new Christian friend will hear in church, make your prayers for them and with them simple and specific. They need to learn quickly that God is with them and that He not only allows, but actually desires their prayers. Help them to establish a regular prayer time each day. This can be done in conjunction with their daily Bible reading, of course. It is also important, though, to teach them the principle of "prayer without ceasing." Prayer needs to become a matter of first rather than last resort!

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Php. 4:6

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

We must remember that the person who comes to Christ already has a circle of friends and that those friends probably don't know or serve Jesus. Our role is not to put down or to isolate the new believer from his old friends or relationships – they may provide an avenue for future evangelism. It is our task, however, to introduce the new believer to other believers and to help him to develop real, meaningful, and lasting new relationships. Certainly small group ministries, Sunday School classes, and other church groups and ministries can

"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."

1 Jn. 1:7

be invaluable in accomplishing this task. Still, discipling is essentially a one-on-one activity. It must start with a sharing of your own life.

ACTIVE MINISTRY

“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

1 Cor. 12:27

We know that our physical bodies grow stronger and healthier when they get regular exercise. This is true with regard

to a person’s spiritual condition as well. The Lord has saved us because He loves us. But He also has called us to be His servants. He is our Savior AND our LORD. As quickly as possible, help your new Christian friend to discover the spiritual gifts that the Holy Spirit has given him and introduce him to an area of ministry where those gifts may be utilized.

Making Them Part of the Family

OPENING THE FRONT DOOR

There are three primary ways that the Lord brings people into His church. There are some that the Lord just sends to us. These people will sort of show up at the door as strangers looking for a place to find rest and refreshment. There are others that we go after through outreach events and service-oriented ministry. Far and away the largest groups of people, however, come to the church by means of *friends reaching friends*. A card in the mail can, under certain circumstances, be an effective way to communicate. A personal invitation from an acquaintance or a friend is far more effective, however.

You can be involved by doing the following:

- Extend a personal invitation to come to an event, to worship, or to a small group meeting.
- Personally bring a friend or neighbor to an event, to worship, or to a small group meeting.
- Start a Bible study or prayer group in your home, somewhere in your neighborhood, or at your workplace so that you have something to invite your friends to.
- Look for those people that the Lord sends to us. Introduce yourself. Introduce them to others. Look for ways to begin developing a purposeful relationship.
- Be involved in outreach or service ministries with an eye toward making new friends and enlarging your circle of acquaintances

It is important to remember that getting people to church or to an event is not the goal. The objective is to lead them to Christ and to help them to grow in faith and faithfulness. This isn't a one time effort, it is a long-range goal. It takes time to make disciples.

GUARDING THE BACK DOOR

Don't become so fixated on the front door – looking for *new* converts and working with *young* Christians – that you forget to maintain fellowship with your *old friends!* We always need to be aware of needs within our body; hurts, lacks, difficult times, etc., so that when such needs arise, we can meet them with mercy and love.

ASSIMILATION

The process of drawing new people into the body, making room for them to exercise their spiritual gifts, embracing them as part of the family of the local church, is sometimes called “assimilation.” If we are to do it successfully, we have to adopt a posture of inclusiveness rather than exclusiveness. We must have an attitude of acceptance that is willing to receive people as they are and let the Holy Spirit do His work in them. Sometimes the process of assimilation requires us to be the leaders and the trainers and sometimes it requires us to step aside to make room for new family members.

Above all, always remember that whatever we do, it is for the glory of Christ and for the edification of His Church.