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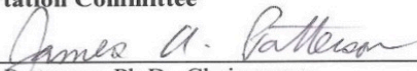
Developing Intentional Evangelism At Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC),  
Singapore

Be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Ministry**  
**In Expository Preaching**

	<i>March 15, 2016</i>
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UNION UNIVERSITY

**Developing Intentional Evangelism at  
Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore**

A Dissertation Submitted to  
The Faculty of The School of Theology and Missions in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Ministry

by

**Thiam Hong Tan**

Singapore

January 2016

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my very supportive wife, Mary. She has been my encourager in this study and a constant practitioner in evangelism. In addition, I dedicate this dissertation to my two children and their respective spouses. They too have been constantly “Go For It, Dad” encouragers. May they also adopt the soul-winning attitude in their lives. Their understanding and faith in my studies and me, which has been demonstrated by the five very close individuals mentioned above, have been my sources of inspiration.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first of all thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for having saved my soul despite being a condemned sinner. I was led to the path of righteousness through many believers and brethren in the Lord who witnessed and prayed for me, including my own father and mother who are now in glory. In the ministry that the Lord put me in, I can only exclaim: “What an honor to be used by the Lord to evangelize to the lost far and wide.”

Second, I would like to thank Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore, for their support to conduct surveys, preaching, and teaching to church members and to allow me to carry out the evangelism seminar, pre-test, post-test, and spiritual discipline surveys to promote evangelism in the church. Needless to say, LBPC’s confidence in me, and my co-trainer, by financing the entire seminar is very much appreciated. May members of the church participating in the seminar continue to become intentional in evangelism in their lives as God intends.

My final thanks to the four LBPC pioneers for their valuable inputs and suggestions during the interviews, in spite of their busy schedules. They also supplied me with useful materials including books, articles, and valuable information.

## ABSTRACT

There are four main privileges that believers are bestowed with as children of God. The acronym WIFE stands for studying the Word of God, Intercession as in praying, Fellowshipping among brethren in the Lord, and Evanglizing the lost. While the first three privileges are generally covered in the lives of believers, evangelism has been the least practiced. Therefore, many Christians are not living as healthy as they should be and, as a result, the kingdom of God suffers.

The project was to develop intentional evangelism at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore, a multi-generational 65-year old church, so that soul winning would become a way of life through intentional evangelism. This project began by looking at the history of LBPC, the fastest growing church in Singapore from the 1950s to the 1990s of the last century, despite being fundamentally a separatist body. I want to explore the rich history and current state of intentional evangelism at LBPC.

A pre-test was introduced at the beginning of the seminar on “Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship” (GSED) to check participants’ personal witnessing habits and their spiritual maturity. The seminar, which was carried out in two sessions within seven days, had a post-test conducted at the mid day of the second session. Five sermons were delivered during the two-day seminar and the sixth sermon during the trainer seminar conducted 50 days later. The sermons included the basic fundamental meaning of the gospel, the need of the gospel, and the blessings of soul winners, emphasizing that



evangelism is a discipline just as studying the Bible, praying, and fellowshiping. Soul winning is the work of the Lord; He will plan from the beginning to the end, what is needed is for us to be in line with His plan and will.

Twenty-one of the 110 participants in GSED were further trained to become fully certified trainers of the GSED. They will in turn train other members within their fellowship group.

My desire is that members will always have some names of people in mind to evangelize and at the earliest opportunity that they will share the gospel until their conversion. Through such training, members would have become agents of a change of mind set from an existing culture of apathy about evangelism to become pro-active Christians in soul winning.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABWE	Association of Baptists for World Evangelism
B-P	Bible-Presbyterian
BTS	Baptist Theological Seminary in Singapore
E-band	Evangelistic Band
EDD	Evangelism and Discipleship Department
FEBC	Far Eastern Bible College
GAF	Golden Age Fellowship
GC	Great Commission
GSED	Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship
ICCC	International Council of Christian Churches
LBPC	Life Bible-Presbyterian Church
LF	Ladies' Fellowship
MF	Men's Fellowship
NBC	Neighborhood Bible Community
UU	Union University
VPP	Verbal Plenary Preservation
YAF	Young Adult's Fellowship
YF	Youth Fellowship

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

In a large and multi-generational church, a culture will set in that defines the boundary of the comfort zone that the majority of members enjoy doing. Every church would like to be as spiritually healthy as possible, to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to evangelism statistics at Bible.org, “Ninety-five percent of all Christians have never won a soul to Christ. Eighty percent of all Christians do not consistently witness for Christ. Less than two percent are involved in the ministry of evangelism.”<sup>1</sup>

Although the above numbers are US statistics, it is generally applicable to many other churches outside the USA. In the recent 2015 Personal Witnessing survey by Life Bible-Presbyterian Church (LBPC), less than 35% witness for Christ at least once a month, and less than 14% are intentionally doing it. It is comforting though that many members are willing to improve their witnessing activities by being trained in personal evangelism (33.3%), and becoming soul winners (37.3%).

This project intended to train willing members in effective evangelism and make it their way of life. They would in turn become the agents of change in the mindset and

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<sup>1</sup>“Evangelism Statistics,” accessed May 6, 2015, <https://bible.org/illustration/evangelism-statistics>.

the culture that contribute to a conducive environment for intentional evangelism in the church.

### Ministry Setting

LBPC Singapore is a large-sized church with 1,100 members. This English-speaking church was founded in 1950 under the leadership of the late pastor, the Rev. Timothy Tow, who came out from the mainstream Chinese-dialect Presbyterian denomination.<sup>2</sup> Rev. Tow came to the Lord in 1935.<sup>3</sup> He likened the church to the parable of a mustard seed that grew into a tree with many roots: “The B-P (Bible-Presbyterian) Singapore Tree Has Seven Roots.”<sup>4</sup>

The **first** root is the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation with its Reformed faith, which was expressed as Presbyterianism in the British Isles. Yet the leader John Calvin was a French theologian and pastor, although his main work was in Switzerland; thus the first root is a French root. It is the Bible, the infallible and inerrant Word of God, that is the supreme rule of faith and practice; hence, the name Bible-Presbyterian.

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<sup>2</sup>Born in 1920, Dr. Tow described in his book, *Son of A Mother's Vow*, that the Tow clan, his father, mother, sister, and he sailed to Singapore as an exodus to Nanyang (South Seas). They arrived in Singapore in December 1926. Timothy Tow, *Son of A Mother's Vow* (Singapore: FEBC Bookroom, 2001), 46.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Tow came to the Lord in 1935 during an awakening that moved through South China and other Far Eastern lands, principally through the extraordinary ministry of the Chinese preacher John Sung—born Sung Chu Un. (Wang Mingdao, who preached John Sung's funeral sermon in 1944, described John Sung as the Lord's “Jeremiah” to Asia. It is thought that several hundred thousands of lives may have been savingly blessed through his timeless travels, preparing a great Chinese “remnant” for the coming years of repression and darkness). See Timothy Tow, *Asia Awakening* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 1988), 9.

<sup>4</sup>Timothy Tow, *The Singapore B-P Church Story* (Singapore: Life Book Centre, 1995), 9.

The **second** root is an English root, which sent Presbyterian missionaries to Swatow or Shantou in South China, from where most of the church founding fathers came. The **third** root is Scottish. In 1847, the English Presbyterians sent their first missionary, the Scotsman the Rev. William Chalmers Burns, a revivalist likened to George Whitefield. He visited the founding fathers' Teochew or Chaozhou ancestors with Hudson Taylor in 1865. Burns founded the Swatow or Shantou Presbyterian Church, and later a Hokkien or Fujian church was established. Some of the Teochew Hokkien ancestors were converted to Christianity through the Reformed faith and began to migrate to Singapore and Malaya between 1860 and 1870.

The **fourth** root is of Swiss origin. A fishing village called Iam Tsau (meaning “Salt Oven”), 25 miles from Swatow, was evangelized by Dr. Rudolf Lechler, of German origin, who worked for the Basel Missionary Society, Switzerland. Some of the LBPC leaders then descended from this remote Teochew village church, in the province of Guangdong. It seemed that Lechler planted, Burns watered, but God gave the growth (1 Corinthians 3:7, ESV).<sup>5</sup>

The **fifth** root is Chinese. In 1935, Singapore experienced a great revival when Dr. John Sung visited Singapore and some 2,000 nominal Christians were converted through his ministry. The founding fathers of the B-P Church of Singapore were not only

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<sup>5</sup>Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *English Standard Version*, 2007.

saved but also called to full-time service.<sup>6</sup> They were fired with a zeal for evangelism and set the pace for the extension of God's kingdom. Dr. John Sung gave the B-P Church the Chinese root.<sup>7</sup>

The **sixth** root is American. Rev. Timothy Tow first learned under Dr. Chia Yu-ming, a doyen Presbyterian theologian of China, Nanking (Nanjing). After a year, he was introduced to Faith Theological Seminary, USA. Dr. Carl McIntire, president of the seminary board and a founding father of the Bible Presbyterian Church, USA, was the proponent of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation who organized the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in Amsterdam 1948 in opposition to the World Council of Churches (WCC). When the challenge to join the ICCC was given by Dr. McIntire to Faith Seminary students, Timothy Tow felt the call to join the movement; hence the B-P Church has an American root.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>“Before the revival meetings concluded, Dr. Sung appealed to the believers to dedicate their lives to the Lord. Moved by the Holy Spirit, I decided to dedicate my life for His service. A total of one hundred twenty persons did likewise that evening.” See Timothy Tow, *Forty Years to Church Growth* (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1993), 19.

<sup>7</sup>Dr. Tow Siang Hwa, the younger brother of Dr. Timothy Tow wrote: “Dr. John Sung’s ministry was unique. His one consuming passion was to turn men and women from sin in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus to revive the Church. . . .At every meeting convicted sinners repented in tears and lives were changed. One of his co-workers in China, William E. Schubert, in his book *I Remember John Sung* (Singapore: Acme Printers, 1976), wrote, that “Dr. John Sung was probably the greatest preacher of this century (20<sup>th</sup>). I have heard almost all the great preachers from 1910 until now (1985), including R. A. Torrey, Billy Sunday, Henry Jowett, the great holiness preachers, the Methodist bishops, including Bishop Quayle, even Harry Emerson Fosdick, who set a great example of the homiletic art, though I did not agree with him, and finally Billy Graham. Yet John Sung surpassed them all in pulpit power, attested by amazing and enduring result. . . .” See Timothy Tow, *John Sung My Teacher* (Singapore: Tabernacle Books, 1985), 7.

<sup>8</sup>Dr. Tow recounted his mentor Dr. McIntire: “I was of a graduating class of 20 and the only one, a Chinese, to become McIntire’s disciple. My heart became knit to his heart, like Jonathan’s to David’s.” See Timothy Tow, *Disciples of McIntire* (Singapore: Far Eastern Bible College Press, 2002), 6.

The **seventh** root is Singapore. Timothy Tow graduated from Faith Seminary, USA, in May 1950. He was requested to inaugurate an English service in October 20, 1950. Though the founding fathers belonged to the migrant generation, having come to make their home in Singapore in the 1920s and 1930s, they were nevertheless the citizens of a new Singapore, fully transplanted. This is the Singapore root. In summary, the seven roots are French, English, Scottish, German (Swiss), Chinese, American, and Singaporean. Doctrinally, the church sought to be in accordance with that system commonly called “the Reformed faith” as expressed in the Confession of Faith as set forth by the historic Westminster Assembly, together with the *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*.

### **The Foundation and Growth Years (1950-70)**

“Holding Forth the Word of Life” (Philippians 2:16, KJV) has been the motto of the church since its inception. The fledging congregation comprised Chinese family names; the Chans, Chias, Chuas, Hengs, Lims, Queks, and Tows. 30 members transferred from the Teochew-speaking mother church to the new English congregation, and they were accompanied by their children and relatives. The young church was comprised of elders and deacons from the mother church to assist the pastor, the late Timothy Tow.

The inauguration date of the Life Church English service was on October 20, 1950, at 5.30 p.m., at 144 Prinsep Street, the then mother church. Immediately, prayer meetings, family worship, church visitation, counseling, and Sunday school were set up, and Bible camps were organized. Worthy of mention was the outreach ministry. Revival and evangelistic meetings were regular events in winning souls. Dominated by young



people, the Youth Fellowship (YF) was the flagship of the church ministry, meeting weekly. The motto was “To Know Christ and to make Him known.” The first YF president was Dr. Tow Siang Hwa, the younger brother of Rev. Timothy Tow. As believers were added through the outreach ministries, baptisms were regularly held at Easter and the anniversary thanksgiving service. The church emphasized the importance of daily witnessing. Rev. Tow recalled that “Not a few in our churches today have found Christ as a result of our members’ constant witnessing.”<sup>9</sup> Mission trips to 60 out of 600 villages in Malaya were launched. Souls were saved and three mission churches were set up.

By 1955, land at Gilstead Road was acquired to build the church with a 750-seating capacity. February 16, 1963, was the dedication day of the Life B-P Church building. Bishop D. A. Thompson, chairman of the British Consultative Committee of the ICCC, officiated and 600 well-wishers and worshippers attended.

### **Period of Multi-Development: Home and Abroad (1971-1990)**

The B-P movement expanded rapidly in Singapore and abroad. Within this period, in Singapore, dozens of B-P churches, large and small, emerged. LBPC became the mother church and its leaders were on fire to spread their wings to all parts of the island. With the blessings of the mother church, they set up churches using the B-P model and were affiliated with the main church, although they are administratively and financially independent.

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<sup>9</sup>Timothy Tow, *The Singapore B-P Church Story*, 65.

Outside Singapore, they spread to major Australian cities, London, and Canada. Mission centers were set up in Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Africa, and Saipan.

For 40 years, the church played an important role in battling liberal theology and the charismatic movement. It saw rapid growth in the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 1980s, it had 25 churches with a total membership of more than 6,000. It must have been one of the fastest growing churches in Singapore during this period. However, with growth, internal differences also arose. Its relentless call for believers to separate themselves from what it considered to be non-fundamental churches and neo-evangelicals brought a mixed response. The result was the dissolution of the B-P Synod in October 30, 1988. B-P churches continued to function individually with autonomy. Nonetheless, B-P churches had been spared from the onslaught of the charismatic movement. The use of a drum band as in the contemporary “worship and praise” is not in the order of worship, even today. The only exception is the use of the King James Bible (KJB); some B-P churches had used other English versions of their own choice. LBPC still follows the former.

### **The Recent Years (1991 to Date)**

With the dissolution of the B-P Synod, the era of LBPC being the sending Ephesian church had almost stopped. Only churches established in the 1990s, which had already been in the pipeline when the Synod was dissolved were associated with the mother church. At the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of LBPC in year 2000, there were 32 affiliated B-P churches, an increase of seven in ten years. By 2007, it added five more

(including one split) to 37 churches. In the past eight years there was only one new B-P church and one ceased to function. Although the number of B-P churches increased by nearly 50% in the past 25 years, but the total number of weekly attendance of the English congregation did not increase proportionately and is “estimated” at between 7,000 to 8,000 or an average increase of <25% (including organic growth if any), which means newly established churches are having smaller congregation. This reflects the land scarce Singapore. During this period, the number of Chinese congregation increased more than the English counterpart.

In 1963, led by the senior pastor of LBPC church, the Far Eastern Bible College (FEBC) was set up on the same premises as the then mother church. The chairman of the board, who was the senior pastor of LBPC, governed the college. The dissolution of the Synod did not affect the relationship between the college and the church; not until in late 1990s, when the college began adopting the VPP, Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Bible.<sup>10</sup> The end result was a split between the college and the church in 2003. The senior pastor, college academia, and some session members of the church set up a new church called “True Life B-P Church.” Some 300 of 1,500 communicant members of LBPC withdrew their membership.

The issue with the college for the use of the premises was resolved in early 2015. Prior to this, LBPC has functioned as normally as it could. The church has 30 session members comprising 10 elders, 16 deacons, and 4 pastors. The church is strong in

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<sup>10</sup>Calvary Pandan Bible-Presbyterian Church Website, accessed May 6, 2015, <http://www.calvarypandan.sg/our-beliefs/vpp>.

Sunday school, from children to the elderly. The church has a very well-established kindergarten during weekdays. There are no cell groups, but regular activities are through fellowship groups, from Lively Teens Fellowship (LTF) to Golden Age Fellowship (GAF). It also has separate Men and Ladies Fellowships (40 years old and above). Each fellowship group has, to a large extent, a great autonomy to function and to plan its own activities and programs. Each fellowship group generally appoints its own advisor, approved by the session, who is normally an elder or a session member, who is the interface between the fellowship and the session. The Evangelism and Discipleship Department (EDD) conducts door-to-door tract distribution, street evangelism, and maintains a supply of gospel tracts. The Missions Committee administers mission stations in South East and North Asia. Missions and gospel outreach accounts for only 10.4% of the 2014 church income. The median age of members is in the mid 40s, female 55% and male 45%. Length of stay comprises 60% more than 10 years, 19% 6-10 years, and 21% <5 years. Weekly average attendance was 976 in year 2014 for the two morning services and one evening service; all the three services are in English. In addition, there is a Chinese morning service, often with dialect interpretation or even English with a Mandarin translation. Its weekly attendance averages 130.

The church draws its membership mainly from within family members, transfers of membership, and conversion. Total communicant members in 2014 were 1,114. Six years ago, in 2008, the numbers were 1,142 persons, showing a net loss of 28 or 2.4% drop.

In essence, comparing with any traditional mainstream denominations, with which Singapore is well represented, LBPC is a very fundamental, conservative, and separatist in its doctrinal stand. It still has the largest membership within the B-Ps and is viewed as the leader among the non-VPP group. The church is viewed by others as biblically sound and has a good reputation overseas; in countries where cults and heresies are rampant, B-P speakers are the safest pick. Many overseas associates and friends are not particularly troubled by the VPP issue; however, when inviting speakers, they are conscious and sensitive enough to know that there are now three camps within the B-P group, the original camp; 15 churches officially rejected the VPP. On the other hand, the VPP camp has the support of 9 B-P churches, and the rest are not aligned with any camp.

As mentioned earlier, outside Singapore, besides missions work in Malaysia that led to the setting up of churches in West Malaysia, LBPC later set up three churches in Batam (Indonesia), mission stations in Thailand, Cambodia, and Kenya (Africa), as well as sending one missionary to Saipan. However, due to reorganization and rationalization in the missions ministry a few years ago, as some missions fields had been able to become independent or handed over to other BP churches, the missions ministry was reduced to regional Indonesia and Cambodia. However, the church still maintains close relations with former mission stations in other regions by sending short mission teams regularly. In missions ministry, the church maintains its policy of not using any outside mission agencies for doctrinal and control reasons.

Throughout the history of the church, China missions had been largely ignored as it is still considered a Creative Access Country (CAC). Second, the church had been

predominantly an English-speaking congregation and lacks the Chinese-speaking missions-minded individuals.

I have been a transfer member of LBPC for twelve years, and by the grace of God, I am now holding the lay leader responsibility as the advisor to MF, chairman of GAF, and member of the committee of EDD. I conduct mission work regularly in China for speaking, teaching, and training seminars. Beginning in 2013, I also taught at Bible seminaries in Indonesia and Myanmar. I sit on the MF Sunday school sub-committee to decide on MF Sunday school material and speak at fellowship groups, mainly MF and LF (Ladies' Fellowship) and by invitation at LBPC evening service and other B-P and non-B-P churches in Singapore. I regularly speak at a small-group China migrant workers' Sunday night service. I am involved in door-to-door and street evangelism. With one other trainer of the church, we conduct "Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship" (GSED) seminars locally, regionally, and in China.

### **Evangelism Ministry**

When I joined LBPC, the church was in turmoil with FEBC on the VPP issue. The rift was so wide that eventually, at the end of 2003, the church split and some 300 out of the 1,500 members left to set up a True LBPC church, with the full support of FEBC. The split did not resolve the tension as FEBC is still situated on the LBPC premises. This has led to the eventual legal proceeding in 2005, but was largely settled after ten years.

During this period, evangelism, which was already on the decline, slid further. Evangelistic-band (E-band), which conducts the door-to-door evangelism, was left with

only one-member, the chairman, and he proposed to dissolve the 55-year old E-band. The chairman, even though he is committed in this ministry for the Lord, could not handle the task himself. Monthly street-evangelism, in charge by the Young Adult Fellowship (YAF), saw participation dwindling and was dissolved. There are always reasons not to evangelize; among others are young adults, once married, needed to cope with family and children, and no real fruit of conversion, etc. The implication is quite serious as no younger Fellowship groups the YF and the YAF wanted to carry on with the task. The church has become too comfortable among believers and does not befriend non-believers.

Many years back, during the MF Sunday school class, we invited one of the pastors who had devised evangelism materials to share with the class. This must have been the Lord's timing; He cares for the E-band. Just as the class had finished with the evangelism course, E-band was about to be dissolved. E-band was set up when the church started in 1950, influenced by the Chinese root, Dr. John Sung's ministry to our church founder. A group of like-minded MF members (MFers) decided to join the E-band as members and set up a new committee under the leadership of the original chairman, who is aflame for God till today, with 10 to 20 regular participants to various housing estates, twice monthly. Besides MFers, other fellowship groups join the evangelism activities with less frequency.

When we heard that Street-E was dissolved, I encouraged the MF committee to take up the duty; instead of monthly, we continued it on Christmas and Easter at Singapore's busiest Orchard Road, where many foreign nationals are visiting Singapore. This is evangelism at our doorsteps. Despite aging members, it was a blessing to be able

to do this event twice a year. On average, about 10 to 16 took part. Evangelism during these two festivities need little ice breaking; we can easily share the gospel with the people in the street. The Lord has blessed us with some converts too. From here, I learned that other ministries can come and go and be revived in no time; but evangelism once dissolved will be the last thing to come alive again.

In 2011, I was trained as a facilitator on “Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship” (GSED) developed by the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE), and the following year upon graduation from the Bible seminary, I stepped up the GSED training and to date it has covered eighteen provinces of China and in two municipal cities. In addition, I have also taught and preached in Bible schools and churches there until today.

Besides China, where about 1,900 church leaders and believers had been trained in GSED; my co-trainer and I are also involved in conducting the same seminar to churches in Singapore and Indonesia, including a seminar for trainers. To date, about 450 have been trained in these later countries. Some certified trainers or facilitators had also conducted GSED training in their own churches. It is time that we conduct the training at our own church where evangelism is lacking.

#### Purpose Statement

To make LBPC an evangelistic church that is intentionally sharing the gospel with non-believers as a way of life. The goals and sub-goals are designed to support this purpose.



This dissertation project attempted to mobilize members of LBPC in intentional evangelism via the fellowship groups and EDD with the support from the church leadership. In the final analysis, LBPC members should have embraced evangelism as an honor and great privilege and effective sharing of the gospel to the “lost” became a way of life. This privilege is not optional, either for the church at large or for the individual member of the body of Christ. The biblical mandates are: the Great Commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:37-39), the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20), and becoming the Lord’s witnesses (Luke 24:48).

#### Goals and Sub-goals

Due to the intricacies of the project, in a large church setting, I have searched through the historical background of this multi-generational church in terms of culture and practices. Any cultural change had to be dealt with sensitively and in the context of biblical practices. The goal was to create an environment conducive for evangelism and training members in GSED.

To understand the scriptural mandates of the project, I researched the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) for relevant support to initiate the process.

As I am not an ordained minister, main pulpit preaching is off limits. There were a total of six expository sermons included in the evangelism seminar itself, where there were total of 14 hours (three per day for a total of six sermons).

MF, GAF, and EDD members continued to be motivated in evangelism efforts during the pre-seminar period. They helped to publicize to other members of the church

to take part in GSED seminar. Main targets were the fellowship groups and the Sunday school teachers.

Two day GSED seminar was held in September, targeting at 100 participants and subsequently 25 of them were to be trained as qualified trainers of GSED in November.

From the month of July until just before the seminar, pastors were encouraged to include in their sermons a short message on the importance of evangelism as one of the church's mandates.

Announcements were made and advertisement inserts were placed on the Sunday weeklies to encourage members to sign up for the September seminar.

To summarize, the goals and sub-goals are as follows:

1. Goal in Chapter **Two**: To review the various literatures past and contemporary on the approaches in evangelism.
  - a. To find out the contribution of evangelism to a healthy church.
  - b. To find out why such a low percentage of church members are evangelizing.
  - c. To find out the strategies to evangelize and how to become a soul winner.
2. Goal in Chapter **Three**: To research the biblical and theological mandates for evangelism.
  - a. To investigate the biblical passages from the OT regarding evangelism.
  - b. To investigate the biblical passages from the NT regarding evangelism.
3. Goal in Chapter **Four**: To report on the process of implementing the project.
  - a. To conduct the interviews to five pioneers of LBPC on the successes and challenges of evangelism at LBPC.
  - b. To conduct the pre-test and post-test to the participants of GSED seminar on personal witnessing habits and on the spiritual health.

- c. To conduct the GSED seminar and the preaching of six sermons on evangelism topic to heighten its importance and blessings.
- 4. Goal in Chapter **Five**: To evaluate the results of the project and draw a conclusion.
  - a. To evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar including the teaching and preaching.
  - b. To evaluate the pre-test and post-test survey in evangelism habits and whether participants have adopted intentional evangelism habit.
  - c. To evaluate the spiritual health of participants in relations to the evangelism habit.
  - d. To evaluate each goal above.
  - e. To recommend to the church leadership and the session on how to enhance the evangelism efforts in LBPC.

#### Assumptions

It was assumed that all the groundwork could be done at EDD and MF level, and that confidential materials would not be published to avoid the necessity of session approval. Outside MF and EDD church pastors' involvement would be needed.

An evangelism drive via GSED training proceeded without disruption. During the pre-seminar period of two months, church pastors were requested to step up their preaching to include an evangelism drive (not necessarily evangelistic) and to encourage the congregation to be trained in GSED, particularly two months before the seminar.

It was assumed that opposition among members of the church would be small, since promoting and developing evangelism, as a way of life, is biblical. However, when enlarged to church-wide participation, addressing the need of evangelism could be a challenge.

As time is of the essence to create a new culture and better attitudes toward evangelism, it may take several years to bring it to church-wide participation. The succession plan of training leaders in such ministry is of great importance. As the median age of MF members is in the late-fifties, the task of generating a new image and new initiative can be challenging, let alone drawing younger men into MF.

This project does not intend to re-live the LBPC's past success, but to rekindle whenever possible the passion and the commission of the Lord Jesus Christ. Granting the imminent return of our Savior and that life is mortal and finite, what better thing is there than to invest the quality time (not just the disposable) for values that are eternal and glorifying to the Lord? God's kingdom will and must grow; it is a special privilege accorded only to believers, to participate willingly and proactively in this kingdom project.

#### Limitations

In order to implement this project successfully and with the least resistance, the following limitations need to be observed:

- (1) This project was implemented within the scope of one calendar year, from February 2015, or within the requirements of the DMIN program of UU.
- (2) This project was limited to train willing fellowship groups and LBPC members at large in intentional evangelism.
- (3) This project was limited to the availability of published records of the church, its history, constitutions, and past church-wide survey. The researcher will try the best to exclude any confidential and sensitive information that may jeopardize the image of the church.
- (4) Unless certain data were not available and deemed necessary, this project did not use materials or methodology of certain authors, past or contemporary, that the

church has marked as undesirable. In particular, it excluded authors who are using modern psychology and the prosperity gospel, as well as liberals.

- (5) This project worked within the scope of the church's doctrinal stands and avoided treading on grey areas.
- (6) Any surveys and questionnaire, other than those conducted and published by the church, were confined to the related parties, i.e., UU and BTS, of this dissertation (see under "Statement of Permission to Use").
- (7) Depending on the view or views of some top leader or leaders of the church, this dissertation may be requested for limited circulation by UU and BTS only.

### Definitions

Within the scope of this project, the following terms were used and understood by the definitions given below:

- (1) B-P: Bible-Presbyterian, as distinct from the mainline Presbyterian churches.
- (2) BTS: Baptist Theological Seminary (Singapore).
- (3) CAC: Creative Access Country or Nation (CAN) where the gospel is closed or not welcome to these countries.
- (4) E-band: Evangelistic band or evangelism team coined and encouraged by Dr. John Sung set up in churches for outreach purposes.
- (5) EDD: Evangelism and Discipleship Department, which conducts door-to-door, street evangelism, and the management of the printing and supply of the church's gospel tracts.
- (6) Evangelism: The proclamation of the gospel concepts of God, man, sin, death, Christ, cross, faith, and life eternal.
- (7) FEBC: Far Eastern Bible College set up by Life Bible Presbyterian Church at the same church premises.
- (8) GAF: Golden Age Fellowship. One of the fellowship groups of the church for people of age 55 and beyond.

- (9) GSED: Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship is evangelism and discipleship training tools, designed by Sow & Harvest International USA and developed by the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE).
- (10) Intentional Evangelism: A healthy life-style of believers in witnessing to the “lost” with comparable intensity and enthusiasm as in studying the Word, in prayer, and in fellowship with the saints.
- (11) LBPC: Abbreviation for Life Bible-Presbyterian Church Singapore.
- (12) Lifer: Members of LBPC
- (13) LF: Ladies’ Fellowship. The counter part of Men’s Fellowship of the same age group.
- (14) MF: Men’s Fellowship. One of the fellowship groups of the church meant for men within the age of 40 and 55 but often beyond.
- (15) MFers: Members or regulars attending MF Sunday school, fellowship meetings, and other non-regular activities.
- (16) Session: Comprises members from the Board of Elders, deacons and pastors; the congregation elects them every three years.
- (17) UU: Abbreviation for Union University.
- (18) VPP: Verbal Plenary Preservation of the Bible, where it is believed that the underlying translation of the King James Bible, the Greek Textus Receptus (TR) and the Hebrew Masoretic Text are as perfect as the original autographs of the Bible.
- (19) YAF: Abbreviation for Young Adult Fellowship, 26 to 35 age group.
- (20) YF: Abbreviation for Youth Fellowship, 16 to 25 age group.

### Research Methodology

All available books and articles such as the church constitution pertaining to the LBPC history, doctrinal stands, development, and ministries within and outside the country were gathered. Whenever possible, interviews were conducted with those living founders or the elderly associated with the church founders. The idea was to draw

objective views on the successes and challenges of the church, and what could be learned from the history of the church. Of particular interest would be the contribution that the church has made in the past 65 years in extending the kingdom of God, and how the zeal and passion has made an impact in Singapore and abroad.

A pre-test on personal witnessing survey was carried out at the beginning of the seminar to willing participants. This was to gauge members' commitment in intentional evangelism. A post-test survey was taken after the end of the day two seminar to gauge if participants had changed in their habits and attitudes in intentional evangelism.

A second survey, the "Spiritual Health Thermometer" scale (SHTS), modified from Wang Mingdao's spiritual assessment for believers (Appendix 4), was carried out at the beginning and at the end of the seminar. The survey was to gauge the spiritual state or the general improvement of participants after attending the preaching and teaching during the seminar. All surveys were collated collectively and done anonymously in such a way as to ensure confidentiality.

A committee comprising committed members in EDD and MF (more than half of EDD committee are MFers) was set up to administer and promote the GSED seminar via posters and publicity. They were encouraged to canvas to other fellowship groups to enroll for the seminar.

At the end of day 1, participants in the seminar were asked to identify three or more non-believers' names. They could be members of the family, fellow students, or colleagues with one or more becoming the evangelism targets. They were requested to share their evangelism experiences at the day 2 seminar. If such relational evangelism

was not preferred, they could choose to do contact evangelism with a complete stranger(s) they met during the week. Once they attended the seminar, they would be able to identify the worldviews and the spiritual responses of the non-believers, and also know the correct entry point at which to evangelize.

The seminar included lectures in addition to the group discussions. Sermons were on the theme of evangelism from both OT and NT. Sermon topics were chosen from the fundamentals of the gospel to the blessings of soul winners. They were in progression as follows:

Sermon 1 (NT): “If Only You Realized How Awesome the Gospel is!” (Romans 3:21-26).

This sermon expounded the real meaning of the gospel and how our heavenly Father had initiated it through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ, on the Cross. The cross was the point where the love of God and His righteous judgment met and reconciled. We the sinners have no part to play in the formation of the gospel, but to accept it by faith and once we realized that, the gospel is too big to be kept by any one but to share it with others still outside the kingdom of God.

Sermon 2 (NT): “Even Hell Pleads for Evangelism to the Living Lost!” (Luke 19:19-31).

Jesus painted a picture of heaven and hell in the story or parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Those in eternal damnation are very much conscious and plead that his loved ones still living will not end up as he is in and therefore needed some one on earth



to share the gospel to them. Can believers be as heartless as to ignore this call of the lifetime?

Sermon 3 (OT): “Bearing Fruit for Young and Old is not an Option. Any One?” (Psalms 92).

The psalmist compares the wise and the wicked as the tree and the grass. The comparison is the between the eternal life and the physical life on earth. Whether in the harsh desert or in the cold mountain, the trees that are planted by the Lord will flourish and bear fruits in old age. The wicked have the life like the grass only for a season and they shall be destroyed forever. The trees that are planted in the house of the Lord still bring forth fruit in old age, which means we should start very young to be fruitful in the Lord’s service. Soul winners are for all ages and all circumstances. It is not optional; either you are in or you are out of God’s care.

Sermon 4 (NT): “If Only You Realized How Much One Soul Costs?” (Matthew 16:26).

The Lord has placed a price tag on every living soul on earth; it is worth much more than the price of this world. The entire world’s GDP in 2014 is USD 78 trillion. A poor soul without a cent still worth that much and is rich in the eyes of God, if he is His child. The richest man in the world is worth less than 1/1000% of the world GDP and should he rejects Christ, he is worth nothing but a pauper. Do we see souls as God sees them and can we ignore whether their names are written in the Book of Life or not?

Sermon 5 (OT): “Mr. Mrs. Jonah, and Jr., Are You on the Right Track?” (Jonah 1:1-3).

God has a plan to every one of his children that is why he is kept till today on earth for a purpose. God saved us with a purpose to use us. If we do not know His plan for us, the least we can do is to be a soul winner—arise and go to Nineveh. Jonah thought he has the choice, to preach or not to preach to the Ninevites, and ran to Joppa, the non-Israeli territory so that he was safe from God's call. The result was otherwise; God's call cannot be ignored. Similarly, many Christians want to live a comfortable life, especially the second and subsequent generation Christians; to read the Word, to pray and to fellowship are fine, but to evangelize is too confrontational and I am not gifted to do so and therefore absolved from doing it. We are drifting away from sharing the gospel. In my family, no one is doing it, so I am not too. Do not wait till the cost of disobedience of Jonah falls on us; heed the second call of God- go to Nineveh that great city and preach.

Sermon 6 (OT & NT): "Becoming a Soul Winner and its Blessings" (Daniel 12:3; Matthew 28:19-20).

It does not seem right to expect reward from what you do for the Lord; after all, salvation is free and what more should we expect when we evangelize for Him? The real question is not the reward; but those who do not evangelize are using this as an excuse of not doing it. It is not so much how much you will gain, but how many blessings you will lose. Even if your loved one is still outside the kingdom, whether you can live happily when he is destined to condemnation. Daniel 12:3 states: "They that turn many to righteousness as the star for ever and ever." We are the light of the world, should we be rather live in darkness. When we go into all the world to preach the gospel, the Lord promised to be with us always; is not this a great assurance and blessing that we always

look for when we are in doubt and when we are not sure of our work in the Lord? The Lord has made this imperative commandment for us to obey, which is not as a burden but as a privilege; even the angels were not accorded to do.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON EVANGELISM

Since the emergence of an *evangelical Christianity* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, wide-ranging treatments of evangelism are readily available for research and scholarship. For the project study, I have organized this chapter in a topical manner, relevant to the project study and at the same time meeting the requirements of Union University in the Ministry Research Model. The organized topics are as follows:

- (1) Evangelism—Definition
- (2) The Gospel—Definition
- (3) Evangelism—A Spiritual Discipline
- (4) Churches Not Evangelizing—A Fact
- (5) A Healthy Church Member Evangelizes
- (6) Evangelism Methodology
- (7) Becoming a Soul Winner

The review will include as much as possible the theological interpretation of the topic, and the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches as revealed in the relevant literature.

#### Evangelism—Definition

James Innell Packer (born July 22, 1926) is a conservative evangelical Anglican, author, and theologian in the Calvinist tradition. He currently serves as the Board of Governors' Professor of Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He

is considered to be one of the most important evangelical theologians of the late 20th century.<sup>1</sup> An ordained Anglican minister, he holds a D.Phil. from Oxford University. Dr. Packer's many published works include *Rediscovering Holiness, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, and the best-selling *Knowing God*.<sup>2</sup> In 2005, Packer was selected by *Time* magazine as one of the 25 most influential evangelicals in America.<sup>3</sup> In the 1990s Packer joined a movement called "Evangelicals and Catholic Together" (ECT), which is controversial among evangelicals.<sup>4</sup> In his classic book *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, written in 1961 (with the latest edition in 2010), is still a well-known book on evangelism after fifty years. In the book he defined evangelism according to the NT as just preaching the gospel, the evangel. He elaborates:

It is a work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces for God's message of mercy to sinners. Anyone who faithfully delivers that message, under whatever circumstances, in a large meeting, in a small meeting, from a pulpit, or in a private conversation, is evangelizing. Since the divine message finds its climax in a plea from the Creator to a rebel world to turn and put faith in Christ, the delivering of it involves the summoning of one's hearers to conversion. . . . But the way to tell whether in fact you are evangelizing is not to ask whether conversions are known to have resulted from your witness. It is to ask whether you are faithfully making known the gospel message.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>J. I. Packer, Biographical Sketch, accessed March 8, 2016, <https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/bio/jipacker.html>.

<sup>2</sup>J. I. Packer, Amazon.com, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.amazon.com/J.-I.-Packer/e/B000APQUX6>.

<sup>3</sup>Time Staff, "The Most Influential Evangelicals in America," *Time*, February 7, 2005, accessed June 23, 2015, [http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1993235\\_1993243\\_1993310,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1993235_1993243_1993310,00.html).

<sup>4</sup>"Packer's Involvement in ECT Didn't 'Just Happen,'" The Heidel blog, accessed June 24, 2015, <http://heidelblog.net/2009/10/packers-involvement-in-ect-didnt-just-happen/>.

<sup>5</sup>J. I. Packer, *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God* (Nottingham, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010), 49-50.

Packer's definition should largely be in line with that of evangelical Christians. But being of Reformed faith, Packer cannot detach evangelism from the sovereignty of God, which is also related to the doctrine of grace. In other words, God is sovereign in salvation. We pray for the conversion of others and intercede that God will save them.<sup>6</sup> Packer does not overemphasize the sovereignty so much as to deny any need for evangelism, and of course he recognizes that the overemphasis on human responsibility—that salvation rests on human effort—is equally not biblical. He says:

Our evangelistic work is the instrument that he uses for this purpose, but the power that saves is not in the instrument: it is the hand of the One who uses the instrument. We must not at any state forget that. For if we forget that it is God's prerogative to give results when the gospel is preached, we shall start to think that it is our responsibility to secure them. And if we forget that only God can give faith, we shall start to think that the making of converts depends in the last analysis, not on God, but on us, and that the decisive factor is the way in which we evangelize.<sup>7</sup>

As a Calvinist, Packer has the correct biblical approach to evangelism. The concern is the extreme Calvinists, or the hyper-Calvinists. John Rice, in his article on *Hyper-Calvinism: A False Doctrine*, believes that hyper-Calvinism is not a Bible doctrine but a perversion by proud intellectuals who thus may try to excuse themselves from any spiritual accountability for winning soul.<sup>8</sup> Hyper-Calvinism was prevalent in the Baptist churches in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century; an English Baptist minister told William Carey (who

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>8</sup>John Rice, "Hyper-Calvinism: A False Doctrine," accessed Feb. 11, 2016, <http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/Books,%20Tracts%20&%20Preaching/Printed%20Books/Dr%20John%20Rice/hypercalvinism.htm>.

later became a missionary to India) when he proposed a mission program, “Sit down, young man, when God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid and mine.”<sup>9</sup> In this instance, Packer is of the opinion that the Particular Baptist minister was not totally wrong; he had at least grasped that it is God who saves, and that he saves according to his own purpose, and without our help God would not be helpless. His mistake was that he was not taking the church’s evangelistic responsibility with equal seriousness.<sup>10</sup> C. H. Spurgeon said in his sermon, “Sovereign Grace and Man’s Responsibility,” that this doctrine is as much God’s Word as the other: “You ask me to reconcile the two. I answer, they do not want any reconciliation; I never tried to reconcile them to myself, because I could never see a discrepancy.”<sup>11</sup>

My view is that if all Reformed Christians can see what Spurgeon saw, there would be no hyper-Calvinists. While salvation is monergistic (i.e., that God alone brings about our salvation), the “synergism” here is not about salvation, but points to the human responsibility to work together with God in evangelism.

Packer concludes in his last chapter of the book *Divine Sovereignty and Evangelism*:

What, then, are we to say about the suggestion that a hearty faith in the absolute sovereignty of God is inimical to evangelism? We are bound to say that anyone who makes this suggestion thereby shows that he has simply failed to understand what the

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<sup>9</sup>Patrick Johnstone, *The Church is Bigger Than You Think* (Bucks, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2005), 28.

<sup>10</sup>Packer, *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, 40-41.

<sup>11</sup>C. H. Spurgeon, The Spurgeon Archive: New Park Street Pulpit, Sovereign Grace and Man’s Responsibility, accessed June 24, 2015, <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0207.htm>.

doctrine of divine sovereignty means. Not only does it undergird evangelism, and uphold the evangelist, by creating a hope of success that could not otherwise be entertained. . . . We would not wish to say that man cannot evangelize at all without coming to terms with this doctrine, but we venture to think that, other things being equal, he will be able to evangelize better for believing it.<sup>12</sup>

My comments on J. I. Packer's book are as follows:

First, its strengths lie in his insight into the apparently two opposing views of the sovereignty of God on the one hand, and man's responsibility on the other. Both are valid factors and are taught in the Bible. It gives non-Reformed evangelicals the awareness of knowing that salvation belongs to the Lord (Psalm 3:8). When a soul is saved, we are satisfied while God is glorified. Another good point of this book is that it debunks the misconception of the hyper-Calvinists that denies the need for evangelism.

The first weakness is the heavy stress on the word "responsibility" in man. It is as if, when a man is converted, he has a new responsibility to evangelize. No doubt that the Great Commission is an imperative, but I will be very proud and more than willing to do it as a privilege only bestowed on the children of God (2 Timothy 1:8-10; 1 Peter 2:8-10; John 17:18; Acts 20:24). Just like a father to a son, if he is always reminded that it is his responsibility to care, protect, and supply all the needs of his child, he will burn out when things did not go according to his plan. However, a father will do the extreme for his son's welfare, because it is such a privilege to do so whatever the circumstances he is in; he will be joyful to do so.

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<sup>12</sup> Packer, *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, 135.



The second drawback is Packer's reliance only on the New Testament (NT) definition of evangelism, as it is a NT Greek word, and is silent on the Old Testament (OT). If he could mention that "evangelism" or witnessing to the Gentiles is also referred to in the OT, without giving the OT definition, it would be more wholesome (2 Kings 5:15-18; Psalm 22:27-28; Jonah 3:1-10). To be fair to Packer, until today there has been no "holistic" definition of "evangelism" that comprises both the OT and NT.

#### The Gospel—Definition

Mark E. Dever (born August 28, 1960) is the senior pastor of the Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and the president of 9Marks (formerly known as the Center for Church Reform), a Christian ministry that he co-founded "in an effort to build biblically faithful churches in America." He is known as a Calvinist preacher.

One of his popular books is *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*. Mark Dever expounds "What is the gospel?" using negative approaches: that (1) the good news is not simply that we are okay; (2) it is not simply that God is love; (3) it is not simply that Jesus wants to be our friend; and (4) it is not simply that we should live rightly.<sup>13</sup> He concludes what he understands the good news to be:

The good news is that the one and only God, who is holy, made us in his image to know him. But we sinned and cut ourselves off from him. In his great love, God became a man in Jesus, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross, thus fulfilling the law himself and taking on himself the punishment for the sins of all those who would ever turn and trust in him. He arose again from the dead, showing that God accepted Christ's sacrifice and that God's wrath against us had been exhausted. He now calls us to repent of our sins and trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness.

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<sup>13</sup>Mark Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Book, 2007), 32-42, sub-headings.

If we repent of our sins and trust in Christ, we are born again into a new life, an eternal life with God.<sup>14</sup>

J. I. Packer expresses the evangelistic message or the gospel as made up of four essential ingredients: (1) the gospel is a message about God; (2) a message about sin; (3) a message about Christ; and (4) the gospel is a summons to faith and repentance.<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Harry Poe of Union University has comprehensive concepts called the “Gospel Elements” of the historical “Kerygma,” which—according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary—is “the apostolic proclamation of salvation through Jesus Christ.” Dr. Poe suggests that there are “nine elements in that Kerygma, its doctrines, and the evangelistic issue,”<sup>16</sup> as in the table that follows:

<b>Kerygma</b>	<b>Doctrines</b>	<b>Theologian or Movement</b>	<b>Evangelistic Issue</b>
1. Creator God	God Creation Humanity Providence	Augustine Aquinas Calvin Process Theology	Purpose, Value Grace, Ecology, Identity
2. Fulfillment of Scripture	Revelation Inspiration	Justin Martyr    Hus Tertullian        Luther  Origen    Evangelicalism Wycliff	Continuity, Authority Faithfulness of God, Epistemology  Nature of God
3. Son of God/Son of David	Incarnation Christology	Irenaeus        Barth  Athanasius     Brunner  The Early Councils Black Church	Reliability of God, Example Compassion of God, Physical Need Identification of God, Reconciliation

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 43.

<sup>15</sup>Packer, *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, 66-81, sub-headings.

<sup>16</sup>Harry Poe, *The Gospel and Its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 50-51.

		Theology The Social Gospel Liberation Theology	Acceptance Love
4. Death for Sin	Atonement  Justification [The Lord's Supper]	Celtic Church  Anselm Transubstantiation Protestantism	Redemption New Beginning Relationship, Purification Love Substitution
5. Raised from the Dead	Resurrection  [Baptism]	Early Christian Worship Eastern Orthodoxy	Hope, Personhood  Victory, Eternal Life Freedom,
6. Exaltation	Ecclesiology Lordship	Martyrdom Monasticism  Church Government Bonhoeffer	Prayer, Martyrdom Signs and Wonders, Tradition Worthiness Personal Relationship
7. Gift of the Holy Spirit	Pneumatology, Sanctification, Regeneration, Adoption	Filioque Controversy Eastern Orthodoxy Western Mysticism Protestant Awakening	Transformation Holiness Empowerment Guidance Application of Salvation
8. Return of Christ	Eschatology, Theodicy	Montanus Sibylline Literature Savonarola Joachim of Fiore Münster Anabaptist Fifth Monarchy Men The Third Rome Dispensationalism	Chaos Accountability The problem of Evil Rescue Justification Perseverance and Reward
9. Human Response	Conversion, Election,  Predestination, Grace Faith Repentance	Baptism, Erasmus Penance, Reformed Theology Sola Fide, Bultmann Pelagius, Revivalism	Jesus Christ

The above doctrines are derived from systematic theology. Throughout the centuries, theologians have tended to organize their theological systems either around one of these elements or around a related group of these elements. For example, Thomas

Aquinas oriented his theology around the Creator God and the doctrine of natural revelation. Martin Luther directed his theology around the death of Christ for our sins and the doctrine of justification. Karl Barth focused his theology around Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament Scripture. Rudolf Bultmann oriented his theology toward the response of the gospel and the doctrine of conversion, while Dietrich Bonhoeffer centered on the exaltation and the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ. John Calvin aligned his theology around the Creator God and the doctrine of grace.<sup>17</sup>

My comments on the above literature are: while the definition of evangelism can be construed differently by the extreme proponents of the sovereignty of God on the one hand, and the responsibility of man on the other respectively, the definition of the gospel can be even more varied. Mark Dever's definition is more comprehensive and simple to be told in one minute or less.<sup>18</sup> The weakness of this definition is the lack of OT substance, other than that men sinned and on their own are cut off from God.

Packer's outlined definition of the gospel will need a more detailed explanation as to what are included in the four ingredients; it also becomes a thesis rather than a definition.

Dr. Harry Poe's *kerygma and didache* (proclamation and teaching) of nine elements of the gospel covers the entire OT and NT. The entire Bible tells the story of Jesus Christ and his salvation as told by Jesus to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-27): "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted (or

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>18</sup>Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*, 42.

“expounded” in the NKJV) to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself (v. 27). What is needed is a narrative definition of the gospel incorporating all the nine elements.

In my opinion, any definition of the gospel that includes the concepts of God, man, sin, death, Christ, cross, faith, and life eternal is complete enough to be presented to non-believers. Dr. Poe’s nine gospel elements meet these criteria.

There have always been attempts to change the meaning of the gospel. The trend is becoming more serious in the twenty-first century. To be more specific, the very foundation of Christianity, which is Christ, has constantly been undermined to the extent that the preaching of the gospel is fast becoming a Christless Christianity.<sup>19</sup> To make the gospel more acceptable to non-believers and skeptics, churches have turned “Good News” to “Good Advice.”<sup>20</sup> The world and its worldview have invaded the church, and the church is heading towards the world for ideas and inspiration. If such a scenario continues, evangelism may soon become so worldly that it has nothing to offer to the world. We are to be very clear in our minds that the gospel of Jesus Christ, preached by Paul in the first century, is the same gospel that we preach today. In other words, evangelism then and now should never change; the methods may differ, but the truth of the gospel remains the same.

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<sup>19</sup>Michael Horton, *Christless Christianity: The Alternative Gospel of the American Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2008), 20.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 101.

### Evangelism—A Spiritual Discipline

Most books on spiritual discipline or spiritual formation (which is the result of that discipline) usually do not include evangelism.<sup>21</sup> They may have followed the old traditional view of the spiritual disciplines, which was generally silent on evangelism. Books such as Thomas à Kempis' *Of The Imitation of Christ*, in 1418, and books by St. Augustine are examples of a traditional approach that excluded evangelism as a spiritual discipline.<sup>22</sup> Contemporary spiritual discipline literature may mention evangelism as part of Christian living, but only in passing and not as a principle discipline for wholesome Christian living. All the above-mentioned authors focused on prayer, meditation, contemplation, fasting and solitude, study of Scriptures, and worship, but stopped short of including evangelism as a spiritual discipline. Another concern is the way spiritual discipline is defined. Paul Pettit, author of a spiritual formation book, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation*, comments:

Spiritual formation means different things to different groups and definitions are agreeably difficult to arrive at, at the very least we can state the following two principles with conviction. First, spiritual formation is the holistic work of God in believer's life whereby systematic change renders the individual continually closer to the image and actions of Jesus Christ. And second, the change or transformation that occurs in the believers' life happens best in the context of

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<sup>21</sup>Famous books such as Richard Foster and Emile Griffin, eds., *Spiritual Classics: Selected Readings on the Twelve Spiritual Disciplines* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2000); Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline—The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998); Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York: HarperCollins, 1988), and *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997); and Donald Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* (Colorado Spring: NavPress, 2001).

<sup>22</sup>Thomas à Kempis, *Of The Imitation of Christ* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1981), trade paperback ed.

authentic, Christian community and is oriented as service toward God and others.<sup>23</sup>

Pettit suggests that spiritual formation is not just focusing on believers' relationships with the Lord or with the community of believers, but also involves the relationships between believers and others, especially with unbelievers who need to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>24</sup>

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Boa, in his book *Conform to His Image-Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation*, includes facet 11 (out of the total 12 facets) "Nurturing Spirituality: A Lifestyle of Evangelism and Discipleship."<sup>26</sup> The believers' highest call in ministry is to reproduce the life of Christ in others. Reproduction takes the form of evangelism to

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<sup>23</sup>Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation: A Community Approach to Becoming Like Christ* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2008), 19.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 20.

<sup>25</sup>Kenneth Boa, Bible.org, accessed June 25, 2015, <https://bible.org/users/kenneth-boas>.

<sup>26</sup>Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 367-412.

unbelievers and edification of the saints, lifestyle edification, and evangelism as a way of life.

In setting forth evangelism as a spiritual discipline, Boa aptly summarizes:

The believer's highest call in ministry is to reproduce the life of Christ in others. Reproduction takes the form of evangelism for those who do not know Christ and edification for those who do. This section develops a philosophy of discipleship and evangelism and looks at edification and evangelism as a way of life; lifestyle discipleship and evangelism are the most effective and realistic approaches to unbelievers within our sphere of influence.<sup>27</sup>

Boa sets the objectives of nurturing spirituality—a philosophy of evangelism:

“An increased passion to be engaged in a lifestyle of relational evangelism, and a more full-orbed philosophy of evangelism as a way of life.”<sup>28</sup>

I totally agree with Boa for his complete and balanced view and understanding of spiritual formation. Evangelism is a spiritual discipline and not a spiritual gift, like that of an evangelist. Every Christian should and must practice it. If we believe that the chief end of man is to glorify God, how could man glorify God if there are no converts and new believers to praise God?

Boa sets the right perspective of life by quoting Ecclesiastes 3:11—God has set eternity in our hearts. Boa insists that the purpose of evangelism is because “the eternal gives meaning to the temporal.”<sup>29</sup> The mission of our Lord's earthly life was to save souls (Luke 19:10) and that should be our mission too. It is the first thing that we want to

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., 365.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 388.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 389.



emulate, if we want to be Christ-like. It is doable and the Lord has shown us how to do it in the Gospels.

Boa also believes that evangelism is a process; he proposes and suggests four phases in the process of evangelism: (1) preparing the soil, (2) sowing the seed, (3) cultivating the soil, and (4) reaping the harvest.<sup>30</sup> Boa's suggestion of substituting "soul" for "soil" makes the process of evangelism more obvious.<sup>31</sup> It means preparing the soul, sowing the seed, cultivating the soul, and reaping the harvest.

All evangelical Christians believe that evangelism is a divine-human co-operation effort, but man needs to be invited to participate in evangelism. He has tasted the goodness and the blessings of salvation, which only God can give. Now he should be encouraged to share with the lost. Boa affirms that the results of evangelism belong to God. God wants his people to be involved in saving others: "God does invite us to participate in his purposes by being a part of what his Spirit is accompanying in the lives of people."<sup>32</sup>

I believe that many models of evangelism center on the reaping phase, as Christians are eager to harvest the souls for the kingdom. However, this rush to reap

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 391.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 392.

when it is not deeply rooted in biblical truth and in God's way, the seed may be sown in shallow earth and will soon wither away.<sup>33</sup> This rush to reap souls may not bring about long-term discipleship and growth, especially when there is lack of follow-up and discipling. Boa advocates that "cultivating soul" requires even more time and effort than just mere "reaping"<sup>34</sup> evangelism. In short, evangelism is a long-term effort.

I especially like Boa's emphasis on the truth that "evangelism is an eternal investment."<sup>35</sup> He cites Luke 15 as one parable in three movements. Whenever a lost soul is found, there is joy in heaven, which warrants celebration (Luke 15:10). Churches are lacking in enthusiasm whenever there is new convert; at most we congratulate the new brother in Christ. We should do more—perhaps invite the new brother to a meal, celebrate, get a family to befriend him, introduce him to a Bible study fellowship. This reluctance could indicate that we are not sure whether he is genuinely converted, truly born of the Spirit. If our evangelism is thorough and biblical, we would have explained the concept of salvation clearly and relevantly.

Boa apologetically says "many believers have been taught to feel guilty when they fail to share their faith with outsiders."<sup>36</sup> I must say that even Christians who are intentionally and consistently witnessing feel at times inadequate in sharing the gospel clearly with unbelievers. But this should not prevent Christians from witnessing for the

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<sup>33</sup>See "The Parable of the Sower" in Matt. 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8.

<sup>34</sup>Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 393.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 395.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 396.

Lord. We should focus to wake up dormant Christians to take the first step of faith to share the gospel. The same amount of effort and encouragement should be there in evangelistic effort as in teaching members to read and study the Word and to pray. Evangelism is an indispensable and integral part of Christian growth and spiritual discipline.

Many Christians who are not evangelizing sometimes suggest that lifestyle, as a living Christian friendship with non-Christians is a sufficient way to impress unbelievers. They claim it is enough for unbelievers to know by their lifestyle and friendship. It is not necessary to speak to them about the gospel or share Christ. They consider such an approach as too confrontational and aggressive. Boa believes that the two methods are extreme examples. Friendship without evangelism, and evangelism without friendship must be avoided.<sup>37</sup> The right balance is found with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to befriend others, and to share the gospel with unbelievers as guided by the Spirit.

In summary, I would like to recommend Kenneth Boa's *Conformed to His Image* to all churches for members to practice a holistic spiritual discipline that will produce well balanced, spiritually nourished, and healthy church members. If every church adopts evangelism as a spiritual discipline as Boa suggests, we are likely to see church members living healthy spiritual lives.

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

### Churches Not Evangelizing—A Fact

John Richard Rice (1895-1980) was a Baptist evangelist, pastor, and the founding editor of *The Sword of the Lord*, an influential fundamentalist newspaper. As early as his 1966 book (reprinted several times till 1977), *Why Our Churches Do Not Win Souls*, he said:

Sadly, I say that most of our churches win few souls, and many, many thousands win none at all! Let us face that sad condition honestly and acknowledge it, compare it with NT standard for churches, then intelligently set out to find the basic failures which prevent soul winning and make our churches relatively fruitless and powerless to propagate Christianity and get people saved . . . We seek in this book to find the basic causes of failure in soul winning in the churches.<sup>38</sup>

Rice mentions that most church programs minimize soul winning; church members are not set up to do evangelism. Although many churches believe the fundamentals of the Christian faith and believe theoretically in soul winning, they minimize it and do not organize all the programs of the church to this one major end. Pastors are usually called to serve the membership, not primarily to win souls. Seminaries and Bible colleges, which train Christian workers, do not set up standard that ministers of God are primarily to be soul winners nor soul winning is the a major program of the church.<sup>39</sup>

I could not agree more with Rice, as it is alarmingly rare to find soul winning taught and practiced in seminaries. Many consider evangelism as a lower grade work, and

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<sup>38</sup>John Rice, *Why Our Churches Do Not Win Souls* (Murfreesboro, TN: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1979), introduction pages. 3-4.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 37, 39, 43-44.

a waste to be taught in theological institutions. Non-seminarians can do evangelism just the same: why waste time studying it or practicing it? Instead, theological students are encouraged to spend practical achievements in preaching, church management, and counseling, which are more in line with the curriculum of the Bible institution and the demands of churches. I am wondering how many seminaries require teaching staff to be soul winners themselves? I have yet to hear of churches employing seminarians and requiring them to be soul winners as one of the pre-qualifications for employment. If anything, it will be just an added advantage.

Rice cites many pastors of the past generation who won souls. R. A. Torrey was a pastor, but what a soul winner! Charles H. Spurgeon was a pastor all his days and never called himself an evangelist. Yet multiplied thousands were saved under his ministry, and the Metropolitan Tabernacle was called a “soul trap.” In America all the great pastors have been great soul winners. Consider Jonathan Edwards, T. Dewitt Talmage, A. B. Simpson, George W. Truett, R. G. Lee, W. B. Riley, Oswald J. Smith, H. A. Ironside, P. W. Philpott, Louis T. Talbot, J. C. Masee, D. L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, etc. All true pastors will be soul winners.<sup>40</sup> Besides the above, Rice asks how many pastors are personally involved in winning souls (today)? Rice draws the conclusion that the net effect is “Like people, like priest.” To build soul-winning churches, they need soul-winning pastors.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Rice, *Why Our Churches Do Not Win Souls*, 68.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 53.

While Rice's observation may be right, I do not totally agree with him. Some pastors are given the gift of evangelist (Ephesians 4:11) and some are not. But I concur with Rice that every pastor must evangelize and be a soul winner. Mature members should not just wait for their leaders or pastors for instructions to do evangelism, especially in a large church setting. Mature members should take the lead in soul winning for the simple reason that, they had been trained in biblical doctrines, they have intimate relationships with the Lord in prayer and devotion, and they fellowship with other mature Christians. What is needed is a step of faith to reach out to the unsaved. My recent observation among churches is that pastors of small churches, especially the newly-established ones, tend to mobilize members to do evangelism; they are more motivated to fill up the empty seats in church. In larger churches, pastors tend to leave the task of evangelism to others. Both practices are certainly not biblical. The biblical imperative is that evangelism is a spiritual discipline for all pastors and members to obey and practice in their daily living.

Rice is of the opinion that many preachers personally win very few souls because they think that they are called to preach to edify believers.<sup>42</sup> Winning souls becomes a secondary or optional duty. There are preachers who think that their call is to preach and not to evangelize. To make matters worse, "many preachers do not know how to win souls or know little about it."<sup>43</sup> Many are not trained, or in their seminary made little

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 56.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 58.

attempt to be trained to preach evangelistic messages. Perhaps they think such work belongs to evangelists and not to ordinary preachers.

The drawback with Rice is that he is not a proponent of expository preaching as it is usually done in Bible-believing pulpit, for it fails to win souls. He cited the only expository sermon in the Bible is Nehemiah 8:8. None of Jesus' sermons, neither the Sermon on the Mount, nor his many parables is called expository.<sup>44</sup> I do not think that every sermon has to be evangelistic or inclined to an evangelism topic, although it should have a section towards the end of the message to call for souls to repent and accept Christ as their personal Savior. Expository preaching is the main stay of edifying the saints and, without it, preaching will be topical or not deeply rooted in the Word. Expository preaching will expound the will of God, and the purpose of the biblical author and the message that was intended to the original audience as well as the application to the contemporary listeners. Dr. Peter Masters of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London has two sermons on Sunday, one expository in the morning and a gospel message in the evening; the gospel message can also be expository. The parables of Jesus can be good sources of expository evangelistic sermons.

In a more contemporary literature, Mark Dever, in his 2007 book *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*, lists five basic excuses why people do not evangelize.<sup>45</sup> I make comments on Dever's reasons for excuses.

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<sup>44</sup>Rice, *Why Our Churches Do Not Win Souls*, 74.

<sup>45</sup>Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*, 20-22.

Basic Excuse 1: “I don’t know their language.” It may be true, but there is always opportunity to give out a gospel tract relevant to the target audience.

Basic Excuse 2: “Evangelism is illegal.” This often is true in the creative access countries or nations (CAC or CAN). In Singapore, due to “Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act” it can be sensitive to evangelize certain ethnic groups of other faiths.<sup>46</sup> But building bridges or friendship evangelism can still be cautiously implemented.

Basic Excuse 3: “Evangelism could cause problems at work.” As long as evangelism is not done during working hours and not done aggressively, there is no reason why we should not evangelize at our work place.

Basic Excuse 4: “Other things seem more urgent.” Setting priorities in life is important; but leaving no time for evangelism at all is not a good management of time.

Basic Excuse 5: “I don’t know non-Christians.” Even if this is true, we can still do friendly contact evangelism, and door-to-door or street evangelism. While a mature Christian has few non-believing friends, a new believer still have plenty of non-Christian acquaintances, it is necessary that a new convert be encouraged to witness to their existing friends as soon as he found the new faith. The souls that he wins will continue to be his friends.

The strength of Dever’s book is to convince us that evangelism is God-given commission and method, a God centered message, and a God centered motive. We

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<sup>46</sup>“Maintenance of Religious Harmony Act,” accessed March 8, 2016, <http://statutes.agc.gov.sg/aol/download/0/0/pdf/binaryFile/pdfFile.pdf?CompId:6ca7840b-73ed-45e3-8424-84e462d9374f>.



should all evangelize.<sup>47</sup> God calls all Christians to share the good news. Churches need to make sure that we understand the gospel and we can all express it clearly. We should work to train each other that will help us to share the gospel.<sup>48</sup>

The weakness of the book is Dever's use of the five excuses. Barring the cultural aspect of the environment Dever is in, they are in my opinion not the most critical ones. The more critical ones are the fear of damaging relationships, especially in the Asian context, and the lack of "how to" evangelize.

Books dealing with reasons for not evangelizing are rather rare, perhaps due to the negativity that they could portray. Most churches already know their own problems and reasons for not doing evangelism, but they just do not want to be confronted with the truth. I have therefore researched websites, which are honest and up front in laying down the facts and truths.

Ministry Matters<sup>TM</sup> provides both community and inspiration to Christian leaders. In the article "5 Evangelism Barriers," it says that there are few words in the Christian life more intimidating than evangelism. That is why a lot of us try to leave the heavy lifting to other people.<sup>49</sup> The barriers are: "We don't know how to articulate what we believe"; "We try to complicate things" with bombastic words like atonement and deep theological arguments; "We lack passion"; we need to examine why are we lacking this

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<sup>47</sup>Dever, *The Gospel & Personal Evangelism*, 107.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 53.

<sup>49</sup>Shane Raynor, "5 Evangelism Barriers (And How to Deal with Them)," accessed June 4, 2015, <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/4259/5-evangelism-barriers-and-how-to-deal-with-them>.

enthusiasm; do we believe what we say we do?; “Our prayer life is unhealthy (stinks)”;  
and “Our sin holds us back.” The above seems to be directed at un-regenerated  
Christians, but it can be a checklist to all that need to learn how to evangelize.

Gary L. McIntosh, a nationally and internationally known professor of Christian  
ministry and leadership, wrote in his “The Good Book” blog, by the faculty of Talbot  
School of Theology, about eight barriers to evangelism. Four of them are listed below as  
they are more identifiable to Asian environment:

Related to this is the low evangelistic conscience found in many churches. The  
focus of sermons on biblical knowledge, historical events, and modern issues  
often comes with a reduced emphasis on the need for salvation. Or, another way  
to state it is, the recent emphasis on the Great Commandment often comes with a  
reduced emphasis on the Great Commission. Unless the fact of the lostness of  
mankind is preached passionately from the pulpit, a church is not likely to be  
passionate about evangelism.

Church consultant Lyle Schaller notes that differing perspectives between  
the *pioneers* and *homesteaders* often leads to less evangelism. Pioneers are people  
who have been in the church for many years. They often identify with previous  
pastors and recall building projects that occurred years before. Newcomers are  
homesteaders who appear to intrude on the turf of the pioneers and identify  
closely with the current pastor. Typically the pioneers resist doing any new form  
of ministry that might reach new people for Christ (thereby bringing in new  
homesteaders).

Another primary barrier is little training for evangelism in most churches.  
Churches tend to get results related to the training and teaching they offer. It is not  
surprising that churches, which train their members to share the gospel, get the  
best evangelistic results. And, it is not surprising that churches weak in  
evangelism rarely train and teach members to evangelize.

Most churches focus on being friendly rather than being friends to  
newcomers. While it is true that guests to our churches want a friendly welcome,  
long term what they really seek are friends. When guests encounter a friendly  
church they naturally expect that they will be able to make lots of friends.  
Unfortunately, it is easier in most churches to become a member than to make  
lasting friendships. Since most people come to Christ through family and friend

connections, this lack of friend-making in churches leads to fewer people accepting Christ as their personal savior.<sup>50</sup>

To some Christians, the word “evangelism” can be intimidating: “it is a burden,” “I am not gifted,” and “it is not my cup of tea.” James Stuart, professor of NT at the University of Edinburgh, puts it this way: “The threat to Christianity is not atheism, materialism, or communism. The greatest threat to Christianity is Christians who are trying to sneak into heaven incognito without ever having shared their faith.”<sup>51</sup> We have, therefore, become our own enemies and Satan likes it. This is one characteristic indicating the existence of a problem of an evangelism disorder or a syndrome.

There are Christians who think that if they mind their own lifestyles and own businesses, they will be noticed by others and draw them to Christ. Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg say: “Far too many Christians have been anesthetized into thinking that if they simply live out their faith in an open and consistent fashion, the people around them will see it, want it, and somehow figure out how to get it for themselves.” Hybels and Mittelberg said that almost never happens.<sup>52</sup> Lifestyle evangelism alone or when it replaces the verbal sharing of the gospel is grossly inadequate.

The sin of omission is declared by James 4:17, “So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.” In this section it refers to failing to witness or

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<sup>50</sup>Gary McIntosh, “The Good Book Blog,” accessed June 4, 2015, <http://www.thegoodbookblog.com/2014/may/20/barriers-to-evangelism/>.

<sup>51</sup>Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 398.

<sup>52</sup>Bill Hybels, and Mark Mittelberg, *Becoming a Contagious Christian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 46.

evangelize is against the Great Commission of the Lord. The doctrine of the “sin of commission” and the “sin of omission” are both sides of the same coin.

### A Healthy Church Member Evangelizes

Thabiti M. Anyabwile was the senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Grand Cayman Islands. His book, *What is a Healthy Church Member*, has very strong backing with forewords from pastors such as John MacArthur, R. C. Sproul, and theologians Albert Mohler and D. A. Carson.<sup>53</sup> There are ten marks—one mark per chapter—of a healthy church member; among others, a member is an expositional listener by seeking always to hear the true meaning of the text so that he can apply it to his life. Although Anyabwile did not mention witnessing in this chapter, I would think that one of the natural outcomes of the application would be evangelism. Mark 2 of a healthy church member is a biblical theologian; this is to protect the church from false and unsound teaching. The practice of biblical theology is necessary to fulfilling the Great Commission.<sup>54</sup> It is evangelism and missions.

Mark 3: a healthy church member is gospel saturated. The greatest need in the world today is the gospel. It is the greatest need of the world because men, women, and children are perishing without a vital knowledge of God through the good news of our Savior and his Son, Jesus.<sup>55</sup> Mark 4: a healthy church member is genuinely converted. Anyabwile says 40 percent of the people he interviewed for membership in his local

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<sup>53</sup>Thabiti Anyabwile, *What is A Healthy Church Member?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008).

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.*, 15, 30.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, 39.

church told him that they were not converted people. He includes the implications for evangelism in this chapter. In addition to looking inside, we want to look outside, as it were, at our understanding of conversion and how it affects our church approach to evangelism.<sup>56</sup>

Mark 5: a healthy church member is a biblical evangelist. Anyabwile cites an occasion when he attended an evangelism conference. The main speaker asked the audience what they thought was the number-one reason for Christians not doing the work of an evangelist. The audience gave a number of good answers, ranging from fear, lack of knowledge, and indifference. The speaker stunned the audience when he suggested that those are certainly problems, but that the number-one problem is that too many Christians do not believe Romans 1:16. They do not believe that the gospel is the power of God for salvation. They lack confidence in the gospel.<sup>57</sup>

What impressed me is that Anyabwile considers half or 5 of the 10 marks of a healthy church member as witnessing and evangelism related. In other words, no church member lives a healthy Christian life without witnessing to non-believers. In mark 4, where about forty percent (40%) of church members are not sure of their conversion, this makes us also to search within our own church. If there are such members, we have a dual role now to not only looking outside the church for evangelism, but also inside the church to ensure all our regular attendees are saved while bringing in new souls from outside.

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 54.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 57, 61-62.

The strength of the book is its application to each member of the church rather than addressing the church collectively. It becomes more personal and focused. It drives the point that evangelism and witnessing are the keys to spiritual health, for it consists of fifty percent of the healthy members' criteria.

The weakness is the use of the terms “theologian” and “evangelist” in reference to members. They are in my opinion too high-sounding words that may scare away ordinary believers.

The book by Thabiti Anyabwile has some similarity to another 9 Marks series by Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of A Healthy Church*. The marks of a healthy church are expositional preaching, biblical theology, a biblical understanding of the good news, conversion, evangelism, church membership, church discipline, Christian discipleship and growth, and church leadership.<sup>58</sup> In mark 3, a biblical understanding of the good news, Dever uses four points—God, man, Christ, response to share the gospel. In mark 4, a biblical understanding of conversion, Dever stresses that if our conversion is basically understood to be something we do ourselves instead of something God does in us, then we misunderstand it. Dever was reminded of Spurgeon's story of how he was walking in London when a drunken man came up to him, leaned on the lamppost near him and said, “Hey, Mr. Spurgeon, I'm one of your converts! To which Spurgeon responded, “ You must be one of mine—you're certainly not one of the Lord's!” In mark 5, a biblical understanding of evangelism, Dever asks these questions:

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<sup>58</sup>Mark Dever, “Nine Marks of a Healthy Church,” accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.lvcchurch.org/documents/9marks.pdf>.

If church's membership is markedly larger than its attendance, the question should be asked: does that church have a biblical understanding of conversion? Furthermore, we should ask what kind of evangelism has been practiced that would result in such a large number of people who are uninvolved in the life of the church, and yet consider their membership in good standing an evidence of their own salvation? Has the church objected in any way, or has it seemed to condone this situation by silence? Biblical church discipline is part of the church's evangelism.<sup>59</sup>

In reviewing the strengths of Dever's discussion above, it not only states what are the marks of a healthy church, but it also addresses what could be construed as healthy signs but actually are not; for example, the large discrepancy between the registered membership versus the actual attendance. I particularly like his illustration of Spurgeon's convert; it actually brings up the message of warning us that there may be many professing converts who are not genuine converts at all within the church. They are man's or the preacher's convert and not God's convert. We have to be mindful of such a scenario and the need to evangelize to such members inside the church. It is tricky and touchy, but we are the watchmen (Ezekiel 3). The weakness, I think, is the rather simple four-point gospel that Dever uses. The four points, God, man, Christ, and response is actually only three points. I am not sure what comprises the three points, as Dever does not elaborate and that chapter has less than two pages. If the important concepts of sin, death, faith, and eternal life are covered inside, it is fine; if not, there is something missing from the complete gospel. As far as a response is concerned, we must know at which stage the recipient of the gospel is at; if his heart is still hard and barren, he needs to be tilled and not rushed into a response to the gospel. Evangelism is a process, not an

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 32.

event; the process of tilling, sowing, and reaping takes time. The exception is when a non-believer is at his deathbed; a full gospel message can and must be preached, for time is of the essence. I am of the view that when a man is at his wit's end and near death, his concern is his immediate future; that is death, and what he needs to do to be saved. His heart may soften and may be ready to receive the gospel.

Wayne Grudem mentions the “marks” of the church as part of the doctrine of the church in distinguishing the true churches and the false churches.<sup>60</sup> The marks of the true church and its members as discussed by Thabiti and Dever fall into this category of the doctrine of the church.

#### Evangelism Methodology

Paul Little worked for twenty-five years with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Until his death in 1975, Little was also associate professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He was the author of several books and articles, including *Know Why You Believe*. Little's association with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship gave him the expertise and the experience in interacting with college and university students.

In chapter two of his book, *How to Give Away Your Faith*, he challenges believers to be the effective ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20); our duty is the ministry of reconciliation (v. 18), the word of reconciliation (v. 19), and a call to be reconciled with God (v. 20). As representative of the perfection of the Lord Jesus

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<sup>60</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 864-67.



himself, both the life we live and the words we say are equally important. It is like asking which airplane wing which side is more important, both are.

Little cites two kinds of opportunity to witness, the one time and the frequent contact. He advocates smaller group evangelism as more fruitful than the larger auditorium evangelistic meeting. The later attracts few non-believers. As a true diplomat of the Lord, we should seek to be the best friends to non-believers.<sup>61</sup>

In the topic of how to witness, Little suggests that we can follow Jesus' example. As Peter reminds us, the Lord guides us by his own example (1 Peter 2:21). Little uses Jesus' interview with the woman at the well in Sychar, Samaria (John 4). Jesus began with a social contact with the woman; he then established common ground as a bridge for communication by asking effective questions. He then aroused interest, getting the ball rolling by meeting the woman's needs. Jesus gave only as much of the message as the woman was ready for, and did not condemn her. Jesus stuck to the central issue of reconciliation between her and God. Finally, Jesus confronted her with the conversion decision.<sup>62</sup>

Little provides apologetic resources under the subject of "why we believe" and "Christ is relevant today" with some tough questions and answers. He also discusses worldliness. In the final analysis, worldliness is essentially a self-indulgent attitude. It is

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<sup>61</sup>Paul Little, *How to Give Away Your Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1966), Chapter Two, 40-50.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., 54-75.

an internal attitude more than external. Little further reminds us of living by faith as the operating principle in our Christian lives from day to day.

The first strength of the book is particularly evident in that it assumes a campus setting, with real life campus examples. It offers encouragement to those who are introverted not to despair, as quiet people often appear more approachable to equally quiet persons. Second, the application from Jesus' witnessing to the Samaritan woman is particularly interesting. Jesus did not judge or condemn her sins, but drove to the point of her greatest need, which was the living water. Once she was in line with the Lord's plan or will, everything else, including her social sins would be or were resolved. We should learn not to be judgmental and do the same when we witness; the greatest need of non-believers is Jesus as Lord and Savior—everything else is secondary.

The weakness, as I see it, is in the apologetic resources that Little puts forward, particularly in chapter six—the seven basic questions. This is not surprising; while others regard him as an evangelist, I am more inclined to categorize Little as an apologist. Nonetheless, I am not claiming that an apologetics approach is not an effective way of witnessing. Jesus himself, when in synagogue, often answered the Pharisees what are now considered apologetic questions. Witnessing among the intellectuals on the campus needs to involve good apologetics. His definition of the gospel in chapter five is by giving the outline: Who is Jesus Christ? His diagnosis of human nature, the fact and meaning of his crucifixion, the fact and meaning of his resurrection and becoming a Christian, is a thesis rather than a definition. One needs to dig into the details of the outline before he can grasp the content of the gospel.

Another book to review in this topic of witnessing is by Bill Bright, *Witnessing Without Fear: How to Share Your Faith with Confidence*. William R. "Bill" Bright (1921-2003) was an American evangelist. In 1951 at the University of California at Los Angeles, he founded Campus Crusade for Christ as a ministry for university students. In 1952 he wrote *The Four Spiritual Laws*. In 1979 he produced the Jesus Film.<sup>63</sup>

In this easy-to-read book, Bright sets the stage that witnessing is sharing the most important thing in his life, while trusting God with the result. He has not found witnessing to come naturally and easily. By nature he was a shy, reserved person; initiating conversation with strangers was sometimes difficult for him. Bright says he was not a natural-born witness.<sup>64</sup>

Bright discusses five compelling reasons why Christians should witness as a way of life: (1) Christ's clear command to every Christian; (2) men and women are lost without Jesus Christ; (3) rather than being not interested, the people of the world are truly hungry for the gospel; (4) Christians have in our possession the greatest gift available to mankind—the greatest news ever announced; and (5) the love of Jesus Christ for us, and our love for Him, compels us to share Him with others.

Bright's views on why more Christians do not witness: Barrier 1: Spiritual Lethargy—in this be sure there is no un-confessed sin in your life, be sure to be controlled by God's Holy Spirit. Barrier 2: believing the enemy's "lines," such as "Mind

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<sup>63</sup>“Bill Bright: 1921-2003,” accessed March 8, 2016, <http://billbright.ccci.org/public/>.

<sup>64</sup>Bill Bright, *Witnessing without Fear: How to Share Your Faith With Confidence* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1987), 13-19.

your own business, you don't have any right to force your views on some one else." The answer is, where will you be today if the person who introduced you to Christ had "minded his own business?" "You are going to offend this person. Don't say anything." "He will think you are a fanatic." "This person will say no and I will be embarrassed."

Barrier 3: lack of practical know-how; evangelism training is the answer.

Bright says that understanding success and failure can free you from the fear of being rejected. Did Jesus fail in his witnessing? Judas Iscariot never received Him as his Messiah. Many in the throngs around Him did not receive Him. Success in witnessing is simply taking the initiative to share in the power of the Holy Spirit, and leaving the results to God. Failure in witnessing is failing to witness. Therefore, there is no failure in witnessing. Bright uses the parable of the sower to point out that, there are four types of listeners; only the good soil brings forth harvests.

Besides praying for friends a witnessing necessity, Bright proposes five steps to guide a conversation towards Christ. LETUS represents Love, Establish Rapport, Talk about Jesus, Use Stories, and Sequence of Questions.

In order to make the gospel simple, Bright suggests using the *Four Spiritual Laws*. Developed by Bill Bright in 1952, *The Four Spiritual Laws* is a gospel presentation in a fifteen-page booklet with Scripture verses. Law 1—God **loves** you and offers a wonderful **plan** for your life. Law 2—Man is **sinful** and **separated** from God; therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life. Law 3—Jesus Christ is God's **only** provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life. Law 4—We must individually **receive** Jesus Christ as Savior

and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives. The rest of the booklet includes an invitation for receiving Christ with a suggested prayer, the assurance of salvation, do not depend upon feeling, new life in Christ, suggestions for Christian growth, and the importance of attending a good church.<sup>65</sup>

The strengths of the *Four Spiritual Laws* are several. The obvious one is its succinct presentation of the gospel. It comprises the most basic gospel concepts. It is most useful for contact evangelism in that we may not have other opportunities to meet in the future. We can share this salvation message in about ten to fifteen minutes. The booklet can be presented to the person being witnessed to so that he can reflect on what had been shared. This is necessary because the material can be refreshing news for people who never heard of Jesus or the gospel before. The pictorial sketches speak many words and can be easily understood. The booklet is less likely to be thrown away than a gospel tract, even if a person is less interested in the gospel. It has now been developed into an electronic "flash" version that is eye catching with some animation.<sup>66</sup> It is also available in mobile App.

The main drawback is its lack of addressing human sin and repentance. The invitation to receive Christ using Revelation 3:20 is theologically incorrect, because the biblical text is directed at a church rather than to non-believers. Another weakness is that the tool is only suitable at the harvesting stage of a seeker. For people who never heard of

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<sup>65</sup>Bright, *Witnessing without Fear*, 121-135.

<sup>66</sup>Crustore, *The Four Spiritual Laws*, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://crustore.org/fourlawsflash.htm>.

the gospel, it does not have the appropriate point of conversation and may result in outright rejection by the target audience. It is not suitable for the illiterate. It needs the clarification that *Four Spiritual Laws* does not save a person. The strong emphasis on the four laws seems to override salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation does not come by practicing the *Four Spiritual Laws*. The tool is designed as an event of conversion rather than a process. Evangelism is not an event but a process.

In handling hostility, questions, and resistance, Bright suggests: (1) never argue; (2) do not try to reason within the listener's sphere of expertise; (3) remember what God has commissioned you to do; (4) try to get the listener into the *Four Spiritual Laws* as quickly as possible; (5) appeal to the listener's intellectual integrity; and (6) always, if listener rejects the gospel, leave him with something to read.

The strength of Bill Bright's literature is that it is easy to read and understand in simple language. It offers the solution to deal with enemies' "lines" or lies. It also deals with how to overcome fear and lack of know-how. Bright analyses it well when he says that there is no failure in witnessing; the failure is failing to witness. The use of acronym LETUS makes the steps easier to remember. The *Four Spiritual Laws* has been a popular tool in the campus for many decades and many were converted. It is a simple illustration that encompasses the major concepts of the gospel.

The drawback of the above method of witnessing is that it does not consider evangelism as a process, and our witnessed target may need tilling and cultivating rather than being ready for harvest. In addition, due to new innovation, there had been several

other tools used for evangelism, such as the EvangeCube and the EvangeCard, which are wordless and easier to use.

In this section I would like to review other past and present evangelism methodologies available for comparison and study. No method is perfect; as E. M. Bounds puts it,

The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. . . . What the Church needs to-day is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Ghost can use -- men of prayer, men mighty in prayer. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.<sup>67</sup>

### **Evangelism Explosion (EE)**

Dr. D. James Kennedy (1930-2007) was the founder and president of Evangelism Explosion International, the first Christian organization to be ministering in every nation of the world. A gifted teacher, he taught (until 1996) more than 75,000 ministers and seminary students on the subject of lay evangelism. He was the senior pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, chancellor of Knox Theological Seminary, founder of Westminster Academy, and speaker for the national television program *The Coral Ridge Hour*.<sup>68</sup>

Dr. Kennedy outlines how a whole congregation can be motivated and mobilized to perform this task of evangelism led by the pastor. *Christianity Today* magazine

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<sup>67</sup>E. M. Bounds, “Good Reads,” accessed June 26, 2015, [http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/942850.E\\_M\\_Bounds](http://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/942850.E_M_Bounds).

<sup>68</sup>James Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion: Equipping Churches for Friendship, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Healthy Growth*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publisher, 1996), back cover.

described his congregation as the fastest growing Presbyterian church in the U.S. at a time when churches everywhere were complaining about dwindling membership.<sup>69</sup>

In the beginning chapter, Kennedy sets the record straight that the first biblical principle is that every Christian a witness. Second, pastors must equip their lay people; the third is on-the-job training; and fourth, train soul winners. The last principle means we will make a far greater impact for eternity by training soul winners than by just winning souls. This is spiritual multiplication. Kennedy recognizes the power of the Holy Spirit in witnessing: “Salvation is of the Lord” (Jonah 2:9). It means that our witnessing must always be a “trialogue” rather than dialogue. Kennedy cites Jesus’ example of the “Five Laws of Persuasion” in witnessing to the Samaritan woman; i.e., attention, interest, desire, conviction of sin, and commitment. In presenting the gospel, he rejects the “canned” or mechanical approach whereby the presenter memorizes a presentation. The presenter is trained with guidance and direction, but also is allowed to express his own creativity until it becomes his own method.<sup>70</sup>

In witnessing as a way of life, Kennedy starts with relational evangelism since people are at the center of network relationships. God desires relationships as bridges. The other is contact evangelism or the occasional witnessing situation (e.g., while waiting for elevator, you can strike a conversation like “Are you going ‘up’?”). Insurance agents

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., Foreword by Billy Graham, 1970.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., “Equipping Lay People,” 1-18.



can say, “This will take care of you until you die, but what’s going to happen to you then? Do you know for sure you are going to heaven?”<sup>71</sup>

In sharing the good news, Kennedy puts up a condensed ten-minute presentation starting with two diagnostic questions. The first is, “If you were to die today would you go to heaven, or is that something you would say you’re working on?” and the second “Suppose that you were to die today and stand before God and He were to say to ‘why should I let you into My heaven?’ What would you say?” Kennedy’s gospel concepts are grace, man, God, Jesus Christ, and faith (what is and what is not). At the end of sharing the gospel, a commitment is requested. It involves the transition, commitment, clarification, prayer, and assurance.<sup>72</sup> Asking diagnostic questions is further explained in chapter six, which is to enable us to ascertain whether or not they (the non-believers) have what we want to offer them, and what they are basing their hope of eternal life upon. Similarly in chapters seven and eight respectively, the five gospel concepts—grace, man, God, Jesus Christ, and faith, and the commitment—are further analyzed and internalized in the presentation.<sup>73</sup>

The next three chapters deal with discipling, folding into the church, and enlisting and training new trainees. Chapter twelve handles objections, with commonly tough questions answered. Some effective illustrations are in the following chapter. Chapter fourteen includes “Screening Contact,” with “Questionnaire Evangelism.” It uses a small

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., “Witnessing As A Way of Life,” 19-30.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., “Sharing Good News,” 31-53.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid., “Analyzing The Gospel Presentation,” and “Calling for Commitment,” 88-101.

printed form containing introductory comments and questions, concluding comments, and various options for follow-through.

The strength of EE lies in the fact that it is biblical. It is a comprehensive training program for equipping laypeople to live a witnessing life. Evangelism Explosion has now been published in a number of different forms, including Kids' EE, Seniors' EE, Deaf EE, and XEE. The latter is designed especially for members of Generations X and Y. Its training workbook used to be called “EE III”; the “3” stands for Evangelizing, Discipling, and Church Nurturing. I am told by the director of EE III Singapore that they now simply call it EE and are emphasizing four things— Friendship, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Church Growth, while the Mandarin translation is still called “Three Prosperity” (三福), which is more appealing to the Chinese churches and the superstitious Chinese non-believers. I highly commend EE’s vision: “Every nation equipping every people and every age group to witness to every person.”<sup>74</sup> It is more than just evangelism-driven tools, but a missions program for discipling all nations as well. It is perhaps the most widely used evangelistic training curriculum in the world, and has been translated into seventy different languages.<sup>75</sup>

The weaknesses are also as many, though they may be less major in comparison to its strengths. Unlike the Bible, which is inerrant and complete, all other human-authored books are subject to change and revision; EE has been revised in several

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<sup>74</sup>“Purpose Statement,” Evangelism Explosion International, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://evangelismexplosion.org/about-us/purpose-statement/>.

<sup>75</sup>“Evangelism Explosion History,” accessed December 11, 2015, <http://evangelismexplosion.org/about-us/history/>.

editions, supposedly to take into consideration critical feedback and some cultural issues. Many have commented on its rather confrontational approach; it has since changed to include friendship and relationship building. Kennedy's elevator illustration, "Are you going all the way up?,"<sup>76</sup> is culturally very offensive to non-believing Asians, who are superstitious. The gospel presentation may not consider sensitively that evangelism is a process that needs to examine the worldview of the target audience. Using the same technique and approach to all people—atheists, other faiths, and gospel seekers—may not be appropriate. I am still wary of the two diagnostic questions as applicable to all situations. The emphasis on calling for commitment is not always appropriate; it seems that we rely more on man's responsibility rather than God's sovereignty. Being Presbyterian, Kennedy is less Reformed than many other Reformed believers. Finally, Kennedy does not give a definition of the gospel in a short narrative; instead he uses the five gospel concepts whose content has to be analyzed one-by-one.

### **Bridge to Life<sup>TM</sup>**<sup>77</sup>

*The Bridge* illustration developed by the Navigators is one of the oldest tools available for evangelism. It is available in pamphlet form as a short gospel tract. It has been used successfully to communicate the gospel over many years and in many contexts, in both groups and person-to-person. One of the most effective ways to present the gospel using *the Bridge Illustration* is to ask questions about the Scriptures that will enable a

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<sup>76</sup>Kennedy, *Evangelism Explosion*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 27.

<sup>77</sup>"The Bridge of Life," The Navigators, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.navigators.org/Tools/Evangelism%20Resources/Tools/The%20Bridge%20to%20Life>.

person to see each truth directly from God's Word. The drawing of the Bridge conveys four concepts: God's purpose, Man's problem, God's remedy, and Man's response.<sup>78</sup>

The strength of the illustration is easily copied or drawn as long as you have a blank paper and best if you have a dual color pencil one with red to draw the cross of Christ. It can attract the attention of the person with whom you are sharing, as long as you keep explaining the lines or picture you are drawing. Since the Navigators started promoting this in the early 1960s, there have been several similar tools being introduced by other Para church organizations; one such version is *God's Bridge to Eternal Life* developed by Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary, TM registered @1998. It is available as smart phone App to facilitate witnessing. LBPC also has a similar one called the *Bridge of Life* in PowerPoint. It can be explained with all the eight concepts of the gospel; God, man, sin, death, Christ, cross, faith, and life. Depending on the amount you share, it can take up to ten to fifteen minutes to share. It is suitable for group or class sharing; a white board and colored markers are needed.

The drawback is that it is not so suitable for contact evangelism with only few minutes to share. The amount of time to build bridges with a stranger can take more time, leaving less time for sharing the gospel. In this case, verbal sharing is more meaningful. To make it attractive, the illustration is best drawn nicely and neatly, but not every one is an artist.

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<sup>78</sup>Nav Press, *Bearing Fruit in God's Family: Book 3, 2:7 Series* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999), 55-61.

## **The Romans Road**

The Romans Road is one way to explain the gospel using only the appropriate verses found in the book of Romans. It is an effective way to communicate with non-believers what is the gospel and that men are sinful and need salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The five sections (and their verses) are normally in this order:

1. Everyone is a sinner (3:10-12, and 23).
2. The price of sin is death (6:23).
3. Jesus Christ paid the price for us and died for our sins (5:8).
4. We can receive salvation and eternal life through Jesus Christ (10:9-10, and 13).
5. Salvation through Jesus brings us into a relationship with God makes us righteous in His eyes. (5:1, 8:38-39).<sup>79</sup>

The good point of this method is that all the Bible verses can be found in one book—Romans. In Romans, most of the major doctrines are addressed by Paul. The Romans Road can be a powerful tool as the verses are the power of God; when we share them, we are confident that they are accurate and perfect. However the weakness of this method is that non-Christians who have not read or are not familiar with the Bible will find the method rather intimidating and, depending on the Bible version used, the KJV verses need to be paraphrased or interpreted in simple English. This method restricts the use of other more appropriate verses found outside the book.

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<sup>79</sup>About Religion, “What is Romans Road,” accessed December 21, 2015, <http://christianity.about.com/od/conversion/qt/romansroad.htm>.

## **EvangeCard**

EvangeCard began as EvangeCube, and was developed by e3 Resources.<sup>80</sup> The card itself is wordless, but the explanation is downloadable from e3 Resources. The card begins with the “Man in Sin” as separated from “God”; following the direction of the arrow, the next pop up is “Christ on the Cross,” followed by the “Tomb” and the “Risen Christ.” Opening both arrow 3s leads to “Cross Bridge.” The next arrow 4 goes to “Heaven & Hell,” and the last step 5 is for “Followers of Christ.”

The advantages of this tool are many. First, it is a small square card that can be placed in the wallet or a pocket and can be taken out anytime to share the gospel with strangers or people we come across with, whether at the bus stop, in the train, or the plane. The pop up pictures can attract people while we explain with words. All the eight gospel concepts can be deployed. Therefore, it is a full gospel presentation. Once someone accepts the Lord, we can introduce the last picture, which shows how we should love God and all people; the four signs represent Bible study, pray to God, fellowship with other Christians, and most importantly tell others the good news about Jesus. It is a useful tool for the illiterate. Since the Bible verses are not written on the Card, we do not have to mention the chapter and verse. The EvangeCard gospel message can be shared in three minutes.

The weakness is that it is made of paper, and therefore subject to wear and tear pretty fast; but for the sake of sharing the gospel to others, it is worth purchasing. It is

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<sup>80</sup>e3 Resources, E-card, accessed June 26, 2015, [http://e3resources.org/content/Downloadable\\_Items/eCard\\_insert.pdf](http://e3resources.org/content/Downloadable_Items/eCard_insert.pdf).

more useful for contact evangelism rather than relational evangelism. It does not, however, consider the tilling and sowing process of evangelism.

## **Kairos**

The Kairos course began in the Philippines in 1994. It was known then as the CWMC (Condensed World Mission Course). In 1989 and 1990 Mission Awareness conferences were conducted in the southern Philippines to help focus the Filipino church's attention on the millions of individuals in unreached people groups within the country. The response to this challenge was overwhelming. The lack of education and understanding in cross-cultural missions in general, however, was a major obstacle. Foreign missionaries had failed, by and large, to teach on cross-cultural mission and for the need of the church to reach out to nearby neighbors or other unreached peoples.<sup>81</sup>

The course is getting momentum, particularly in the Chinese-speaking churches including China. The Chinese name of the course is "Seize the Opportunity":

Kairos :: καιρός :: an appointed time or opportune moment  
 Kairos is an exciting nine lesson interactive study of the purpose and plan of God from Genesis to the end of the age. Focusing on the biblical, historical, strategic, and cultural dimensions of missions, this course seeks to align every believer's worldview with God's heart for the nations and mobilize the whole Church for His global mission. Now in over 70 (latest news is 80) countries and 30 languages, and with a network stretching around the globe, Kairos is much more than a course, it is a movement. We all have a part to play. It's not a missions course solely for "missions-minded" people. It is for everyone! We have the opportunity to partner together with the Church around the world to see the Great Commission fulfilled. This is the opportune moment, now is our Kairos time. Join

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<sup>81</sup>"Kairos: God, the Church and the World," accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.kairoscourse.org/about-kairos>.

the movement!<sup>82</sup>

The article further says that, “Its mission is to present the Kairos Course to the Church world-wide in a professional and structured manner, so as to encourage the emergence of indigenous mission movements that will result in strategic and effective outreach to least-reached peoples.”<sup>83</sup>

The strength of Kairos is in missions work rather than evangelism and discipleship. In recent years, it has gained momentum in many parts of Asia, including South East Asia and Singapore, and even in USA. Since there are no published materials or books on Kairos, unless one takes part in the course, no review can be made.

### **Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship (GSED)**

Developed by ABWE USA, this is one of the newest tools on evangelism and discipleship on the market. Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship is a ministry of ABWE—the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism ([www.abwe.org](http://www.abwe.org)).

GSED began in 2005 in order to equip ABWE missionaries for worldview-relevant evangelism and discipleship in a broad range of cross-cultural settings throughout North America and around the world. Soon after Good Soil began, pastors and other leaders from North American churches and missionaries from other mission agencies began to be interested in Good Soil training and resources. Although this was not originally our intention, we have always welcomed these opportunities to share Good

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<sup>82</sup>“Kairos USA,” accessed June 26, 2015, <http://kairosusa.com/index.php>.

<sup>83</sup>“Kairos: God, the Church and the World,” accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.kairoscourse.org/course-descriptions>.



Soil training with theologically like-minded churches and other ministry agencies. GSED takes its name from the parable of the seed and the soils. The seed is the message of the gospel. But how did Jesus define “good soil”? Matthew, Mark, and Luke recorded three different words that Jesus used on these occasions to describe “good soil.”<sup>84</sup>

GSED has many advantages. It uses the Engel’s scale to gauge the spiritual response of any one being witnessed (from -12 to +12), -12 being born in a God-vacuum or an atheist and 0 represents repentance and conversion event. It is a process in 3 stages: the tilling, planting and reaping. +1 to +12 is the scale for the sanctification process. Before we witness, if the target person is known or a relative, one can estimate the scale of his spiritual response (see Appendix 5). The entry point of evangelism can then be tailored to his need. “Peeling the onion” is aimed at knowing the core value of a person; once it is known, a conversion discussion can begin. The tool is particularly useful for relational evangelism, irrespective of which scale that person’s spiritual response is located. The textbook, *The Story of Hope*, comprises twenty OT and twenty NT biblical stories of salvation chronologically designed with biblical theology in mind. When one finishes all forty stories, he is ready to be presented with the eight gospel concepts of God, man, sin, death, Christ, cross, faith, and life. The chances are that the person has already been grounded in the understanding of the salvation of God and ready to take the step of faith to accept Jesus as his personal Savior and Lord. This method will be

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<sup>84</sup>“Good Soil Evangelism & Discipleship,” accessed December 16, 2015, <http://www.goodsoil.com/about>.

particularly useful for multigenerational churches with many extended family members who are still outside the faith.

The drawback of this method is that it can be rather lengthy if the person being evangelized is at -12 scales; it may take him months before he is ready to be harvested. The other disadvantage is that the tool is not suitable for contact evangelism, but the onion peeling can still be applied to any one that we have built the bridge of friendship. While the strength of GSED is in evangelism, it is somehow lacking the same punch in the discipleship area. Churches may need to supplement with their own discipleship program if they already have one or use other materials such as the Navigators 2:7 series.

### Becoming A Soul Winner

Dr. Stephen Olford (1918-2004) was an internationally-known minister, born in Zambia, who served churches in England and the United States. Often called “the preacher’s preacher,” he influenced countless lives through television, radio, and the founding Olford Ministries International.

Does the subject of personal witnessing frighten you? If it does, you are not alone. Even a seasoned evangelist and preacher, Stephen Olford, says in his book, *The Secret of Soul Winning*:

The fact that I was a committed Christian did not seem to make much difference. In one sense it made me worse. As a saved person, I knew it was my duty to witness for my Lord and, when possible, seek to win others to Him. But such a sense of duty only brought me into inner bondage. I have known what it is to gather up my courage and walk the entire length of a train, giving out gospel

booklets to anyone who was courteous enough (and, I often thought, pitying enough) to take a copy. But was I ever glad when such a task was complete.<sup>85</sup>

Dr. Olford recalled: “Then God graciously stepped in. He had permitted me to struggle on long enough to convince me that I could do nothing about it. I was shy; I was bound; and I was defeated. In a word, I was a failure.”<sup>86</sup>

Olford then recounted that how sometime later he was brought out of the “bondage of soul-winning *in the flesh* and into the blessing of soul-winning *in the Spirit*,” when he came across a solemn question put up to him by one of his old friends: “Tell me, did you get the permission of the Holy Ghost to speak to that man about his soul’s welfare?”<sup>87</sup>

The young Olford began to realize that soul-winning is God’s work. As such, from start to finish God must plan and carry it through. Our involvement is **to be in line with His will**, and the Holy Spirit must take the lead. He further cautioned us that Jesus Christ is the only successful soul-winner; but to try to copy Him is to fail miserably, for His thoughts are not our thoughts, His ways are not our ways. But Christ sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, and the Spirit can lead us to do His work, as long as we surrender to His sovereign will. Dr. Olford was transformed:

That evening I went home determined to cease trying and to start trusting. From that moment soul winning for me has been different. Not only have I been

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<sup>85</sup>Stephen Olford, (with David Olford), *The Secret of Soul Winning* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 1.

<sup>86</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*

delivered from shyness and self-consciousness, but I have been introduced to a level of soul-winning that is divinely directed and unspeakably joyous.<sup>88</sup>

There was a time in the life of this great Bible preacher Stephen Olford that “Even the thought of talking to people, publicly or privately, paralyzed me with fear. I was painfully shy by nature but also hopelessly indisposed to meeting new faces.”<sup>89</sup> But thanks be to God, the thought of evangelism as totally the work of our Lord Jesus Christ that He must lead us in and that our work is just to keep in line with His leading has made Dr. Olford one of the successful soul winners we have ever known.<sup>90</sup>

The sentence “Our business is to be in line with His will” seems to indicate human effort to find the right alignment with God’s will, while the successful soul-winner must be led by the Spirit seems to suggest divine appointment.<sup>91</sup> Olford suggests that the first characteristic of a soul-winner is (1) His appointment. This does not mean that the appointment is exclusive only to Christ’s disciples and full-time ministers. I am relieved when Olford, later in that section, mentioned that “The motto and mission of every local church should be ‘Every Member Evangelism.’”<sup>92</sup>

With the above clarified, I shall proceed with the remaining six of the seven characteristics of a successful soul-winner that Olford suggests. They are: (2) His approbation; the will of God is the salvation of men and women; they are approved for

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>90</sup>Billy Graham’s “Foreword” to Olford’s book *The Secret of Soul Winning*.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 5, 7.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., 8.

winning souls; (3) His anointing, which is an outward manifestation for special service, characterized by spiritual authority and knowledge given to soul-winners; (4) His announcement; a soul-winner could announce that he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; (5) His approach is to have calmness, composure and gentleness”; (6) His assurance is to have hope and a positive attitude; and (7) His acceptance, in His name, souls will be saved.<sup>93</sup>

Olford suggests a three-fold training for soul-winners: (1) the spiritual training; (2) the biblical training; and (3) the practical training. Christ trained his twelve disciples. “For three and a half years the Master trained His men by instruction, by discipline and by example- in order that He might send them forth to be witnesses to Him to the far ends of the earth.”<sup>94</sup>

The greatest strength of Olford’s book is in the title of the book itself, *The Secret of Soul Winning*. It is a transforming mind-set. Stephen Olford’s change of mind-set from soul winning *in the flesh* into soul winning *in the Spirit* was a revolutionary transformation; it is the renewing of the mind: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, . . .” (Romans 12:2). Soul winning *in the flesh* is due to self-centeredness; self-motivated, self-service, self-effort, self-interested, self-glorified, self-struggled, self-defeated, self-responsibility, self-blamed, whereas soul winning *in the Spirit* is all the opposite. It is Spirit-led from the beginning to the end, as

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., summary of the remaining six characteristics of a soul-winner, 8-13.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., 29.

soul winning is God's work, our business is to be in line with His will.<sup>95</sup> For those believers in the cold cellar or dungeon, unless they are led by the Spirit, no amount of persuasion and words could melt their heart and make them come out to the open among lost souls. So the process of "drying our cold heart of apathy" is by the transformational work of the Holy Spirit that could ignites fire.

Soul winning is a spiritual warfare; we are converting souls who are under the bondage of the evil force, the "prince of the power of the air" (Philippians 2:2). No master would like to lose his followers. Satan will not give up easily. Until he loses his war against the Holy Spirit, Satan will not let non-believers go. It is therefore almost certain that without the involvement of the Holy Spirit, non-believers cannot be converted. Even when the Holy Spirit is at work, the devil is not going to concede defeat easily without a fight: "It is not our way of putting the gospel, or our method of illustrating it, that wins souls, but the gospel itself does the work in the hands of the Holy Spirit."<sup>96</sup> Charles Spurgeon, the prince of preachers, told us that we are sometimes disappointed with our converts; we will always be disappointed as far as they are our converts. But the situation is different, and we greatly rejoice over them when they prove to be the Lord's work.<sup>97</sup> For they are the Lord's converts.

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>96</sup>Charles Spurgeon, *The Soul Winner* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1995), 158.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., 158.

The best strategy for soul winning is echoed in Olford's words "keeping in line with His will."<sup>98</sup> This is the most fundamental secret that many had missed. Soul winning is the Lord's work; He plans it from the beginning to the end, and our duty is to stay within and be in line with His plan. Everything else will fall into its own place in the plan and all will be done to the glory of God.

One weakness of Olford's book is that, apart from the exciting introduction, there is no mention of how to be in line with the Lord's will. The closest sign is in chapter one, but all the seven points are "His"; there is nothing that we can do. Many Christians are at a loss with witnessing, because they do not know how to be in line with the Lord's will. They have hundred and one reasons that become excuses. If they were to resolve those reasons, which can be legitimate, one by one, there is no more time to witness. I believe we can learn the examples in the Bible: the Samaritan woman at the well; Zacchaeus' transformed life; Peter's answers to the Lord's three questions "do you love me?"; and Paul's "for me to live is Christ" attitude. All these Bible characters have one thing in common—repentance and obedience. It means in line with God's will. To be in line with God's will, God is in complete control of our lives, we surrender to His sovereignty, and we witness in the power of the Spirit.<sup>99</sup> We should leave all the results to the Lord.

Not my works, but yours Lord, I do as you will. Once we are in line with God's will, all the rest of the reasons and excuses for not witnessing will disappear. The result is that witnessing becomes a very lively and light, a privilege to do. Using Olford's words,

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<sup>98</sup>Olford, *The Secret of Soul Winner*, 2.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., 3.

witnessing becomes “unspeakably joyous.”<sup>100</sup> This is to emulate Jesus, though He did not need to repent, but He certainly obeyed the will of the Father: “Not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42; Mark 14:36), and three times He prayed the same obedience in Matthew 26:39, 42 and 44.

Once the mindset is settled, the action must begin. Here, Spurgeon has this to say:

Brethren, do something; do something, do something! While committees waste their time over resolutions, do something. While Societies and Unions are making constitutions, let us win souls. Too often we discuss, and discuss, and discuss and Satan laughs in his sleeve. It is time we had done planning and sought something to plan. I pray you, be men of action all of you. Get to work and quit yourselves like men. Old Suwarrow’s idea of war is mine: “Forward and strike! No theory! Attack! Form column! Charge bayonets. Plunge into the center of the enemy!” Our one aim is to save sinners, and this we are not to talk about, but to do it in the power of God!<sup>101</sup>

### Conclusion

Evangelism is a divine-human cooperation, a special privilege accorded to God’s children. Salvation is under the sovereignty of God; man is a mere channel or instrument to spread the gospel. This is in line with the Reformed faith that LBPC subscribes. All literature reviewed above affirms that evangelism is not optional to believers.

Evangelism is an important component of spiritual discipline, without which the spiritual life of the believer is incomplete. Besides being grounded in the Word of the Lord, living a prayerful life, and in constant fellowship with fellow believers, a healthy church member should also be a witnessing Christian. As mentioned in the purpose

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>“Charles Spurgeon, quoted in “Creating a Culture in Evangelism,” accessed June 26, 2015, [http://proclaim.typepad.com/culture\\_of\\_evangelism.pdf](http://proclaim.typepad.com/culture_of_evangelism.pdf).



statement, LBPC members should embrace evangelism as an honor and great privilege and effective sharing of the gospel to the “lost” becomes a way of life.

The obstacles and reasons why Christians are not winning souls, are numerous, but not insurmountable. The secret of soul winning is best shared by Dr. Stephen Olford; to be a soul-winner, the first and foremost criterion is to be in line with God’s will. LBPC members are to change the mindset that the purpose of evangelism is to make converts for the Lord and not for the evangelist. In this way, evangelism is a joyous endeavor that is planned by the Lord from beginning to the end. At the end God is glorified, Christ is magnified, and members are satisfied.

Finally, there are many witnessing tools that can be adapted to one’s preference of witnessing. I have found that the GSED is suitable for LBPC members to adopt for their flexibility and adaptability. It is the best among all other tools available for intentional evangelism. As for contact evangelism, EvangeCard is a handy, pictorial, and interactive tool for all occasions. Both tools comprise all the gospel concepts needed to make a complete gospel presentation.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **THE BIBLICAL RATIONALE AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR EVANGELISM**

This chapter will provide a biblical rationale and the theological foundations for the research project. It explains the biblical passages in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) concerning evangelism. I will organize the material topically as follows:

- (1) Evangelism in the OT & NT
- (2) Evangelism as a Spiritual Discipline in the OT & NT
- (3) The Great Commission in the OT & NT
- (4) Evangelism Methodology in the OT & NT
- (5) Soul Winning in the OT & NT

As evangelism is a large topic, I will focus on key biblical texts while other texts are merely cited. I will consider the biblical contexts in the OT and NT, interpretation of the texts and the theological foundations, and their application to the contemporary situation in the church today. In some cases, the discussion includes the use of OT texts in the NT. It will also serve as the biblical basis for the preaching series.

The goals of this chapter are to confirm: (1) the Bible mandates evangelism for every believer; (2) it is a spiritual discipline for all believers; (3) the Great Commission is for every Christian; (4) the principles of evangelism methodology in the OT and NT are still valid today; (5) and soul winning is God's plan for every believer.

## Evangelism in the OT & NT

Evangelism is derived from the Greek word *euaggelion* (εὐαγγέλιον), meaning “gospel” or “good news,” or the message of such news. The verb “to evangelize” or the proclaiming of the good news is *euangelizo* (εὐαγγελίζω). Many Christians would associate evangelism as a NT event pertaining to the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the roots of evangelism originate in the OT. On the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:27, Jesus taught the two disciples: “Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” Jesus came into this world to fulfill the prophecy about himself from the beginning of the creation of the world in Genesis and the OT Scripture. In addition, there are 250 OT quotations in the NT, and more than 1,000 if one includes indirect or partial quotations.<sup>1</sup>

### Old Testament

Robert Cate writes that the real heart of the OT message is redemption:

The **salvation** of man is, in fact, the heart of the entire Bible message. Genesis 1 to 11 set the stage. There we were introduced to God, man, and man’s sinful rebellion. All the rest of the Bible is the story of God working out man’s redemption. In the OT we note the two main features in this story. First the history is the record of the sin of man. Second, God’s act in history centers in **salvation** and **redemption**.<sup>2</sup>

In Genesis 3:15 we read, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel,” which has been commonly called the *protoevangelium* (or the “first gospel”)

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<sup>1</sup>*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Old Testament Quotations In The New Testament.”

<sup>2</sup>Robert Cate, *Old Testament Roots for the New Testament Faith* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1982), 173.

because it was the original proclamation of the promise of God's plan for the whole world.<sup>3</sup> This was the first redemption plan of the world after the fall of our first ancestors, Adam and Eve. The blessing of "to be fruitful and multiply" (1:28) became a curse (3:17-19). But God in his redemption plan later revealed that the offspring or the seed of the woman is none other than the OT Messiah, the NT Christ Jesus. The "seed" or "offspring," *zera* (זֶרַע) is a masculine noun; it is also translated "son," as in the vow of Hannah (1 Sam. 1:11). The Messiah is to be the seed of a woman only, of a virgin, that he might not be tainted with the corruption of human nature; he was sent forth, born of woman (Gal. 4:4), that this promise might be fulfilled.<sup>4</sup> It is the supernatural birth of our Lord Jesus Christ; he had no biological father (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23-24; Luke 1:35; 2:35). The Trinitarian theology of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is clearly present in the immaculate conception of the child Jesus (Matt. 1:18) as the offspring of the woman mentioned in Gen. 3:15. Churches that do not subscribe to this miraculous birth of Jesus have no gospel to tell the world. This "first gospel" is the foundation of all the subsequent good news in the OT and NT.

God called **Abraham** to leave his idol-worshipping country of Ur and to go to the land that He would show him. The Lord promised Abraham that he would make him to become a great nation, and that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him: "And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great,

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<sup>3</sup>Walter Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 37.

<sup>4</sup>Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993), 14.

so that you will be a blessing. I will **bless** those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be **blessed**” (Gen. 12:2-3). All nations could be blessed by responding to the evangelistic proclamation with faith and repentance.

Abraham believed in God and obeyed His command to sacrifice his son, Isaac. The angel of the Lord called him one who feared God (Gen. 22:12). Abraham was not justified by works; he believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness (Rom. 4:1-3). The salvation of Abraham was not of works but of faith. Paul’s theology of faith affirms that those who have faith are the children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7, KJV). Believers today are the spiritual descendants of Abraham and waiting for us are the blessings that God promised to Abraham 4000 years ago in Gen. 12:2-3. The time ahead for believers today could not be far too long to wait, *Maranatha*, (*marana tha*; μαράν ἂθά) or **Our Lord, come!** (1 Cor. 16:22)

**David** wrote most of the messianic psalms. Walter Kaiser Jr. quotes the best grouping of sixteen psalms into the following eight headings:

- David’s Greater Son (Ps. 89; 132)
- The Mystery of the Incarnation (Ps. 8; 40)
- The Rejection of the Messiah (Ps. 118; 78:1-2)
- The Betrayal of the Messiah (Ps. 69; 109)
- Death and Beyond (Ps. 22; 2)
- Victory Over Death (Ps. 16; 102)
- Messiah’s Marriage and Ministry (Ps. 45; 110)
- The Reign of the Glorious King (Ps. 72; 68)<sup>5</sup>

Other psalms also describe the Messiah with fulfillment in NT:

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<sup>5</sup>Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 92-93.

Messiah would be the Son of God (Ps. 2:7; 12; Matt. 17:5)  
 Messiah would be despised and crucified (Ps. 22:6-8; 14; Luke 23:21-23; Matt. 27:35)  
 Messiah would be hated without cause (Ps. 69:4; Luke 23:13-22)  
 Messiah would be Lord, seated at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1; 5; 1 Pet. 3:21-22)  
 Messiah would be the line of Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 6:17-20)  
 Messiah would be the “stone” rejected by the Jews (Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42-43)<sup>6</sup>

Israel was to be a witness to the nations (Ps. 18:49). David was confident that all nations would be converted (Ps. 22:27). David prayed that salvation would be known among all the nations (Ps. 67), that all nations would worship the Lord (Ps. 86:9). The theology of David emphasized the sovereignty of God; God chose who would be the king of his people. It is another unilateral covenant after Abraham, between God and David (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17:11-14; 2 Chron. 6:16). The Messiah is called “the son of David” (Matt. 21:9). As David prayed for the salvation of all nations in the missional psalms, 67 and 96, so we are to pray for the world to come to know the God who created this world.

**Isaiah** prophesied the coming of the Messiah in detail, from his virgin birth and suffering to his death and resurrection. The entire book can be divided into three sections, each with messianic themes: “The book of Isaiah is rightly considered the greatest of OT prophecies. Chapters 1—39 stress the Messiah as King. The emphasis of 40—55 is upon the suffering Servant, the Savior, while 56—66 anticipate the election of a new people of God, who become the NT church.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>“Jesus in All the Books of the Bible,” Jesus Plus Nothing, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/jesus66books.htm>.

<sup>7</sup>Clyde Francisco, *Introducing the Old Testament* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1977), 168.

For unto us a child is born,  
 unto us a son is given:  
 and the government shall be upon his shoulder:  
 and his name shall be called  
**Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God,  
 The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.**  
 Of the increase of his government and peace  
 there shall be no end,  
 upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom,  
 to order it, and to establish it  
 with judgment and with justice  
 from henceforth even forever.  
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isa. 9:6-7, KJV).

The context of the above passage points to the imminent destruction of the Northern kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians, although Isaiah mainly ministered to the Southern kingdom of Judah. The Assyrians occupied neighboring Samaria, too close for Judah's comfort. Isaiah's vision was of a conquering Davidic king (vv. 7 and 11:1, 10) who would deliver Israel from their enemy.<sup>8</sup>

Isaiah described the coming Messiah with many titles: "Wonderful," "Counselor," "Mighty God," "Everlasting Father," and "Prince of Peace." Matthew Henry's commentary says that he is Wonderful for in his birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, he was wonderful. He is the Counselor, for he is intimately acquainted with the counsel of God from eternity, and he gives counsel to the children of men. He is the mighty God—God, the mighty One. He is the mediator who has no less power than that of the mighty God. He is the Everlasting Father, from everlasting to everlasting. He is the Father of the world to come, the Father of the gospel-state, the Father of the great work of

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<sup>8</sup>Robert Chisholm Jr., *Handbook on the Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 38.

redemption. He is the Prince of Peace. As a king he creates peace in his kingdom.<sup>9</sup>

Traditionally “Wonderful” and “Counselor” have been taken separately, yielding a total of five titles (see KJV).<sup>10</sup> The Messiah shall judge the nations (Isa. 2:4a).

Isaiah is cited by name about twenty times in the NT. John cites Isaiah 6:10 and 53:1 in consecutive verses, identifying both as Isaiah (John 12:38-41); Isaiah said these things because “he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him” (12:41).<sup>11</sup>

The theological message of the above passages anticipates the Christology of the church, the gospel to all mankind who long to be in the state of a perfect society. We are to look ahead to the Second Coming of Christ with hope, confidence, and certainty. Christ’s rule is the ideal government that no earthly ruler can provide, even in today’s first world countries. Should we not want to share this good news with those who are still outside the kingdom?

Other descriptions of the Messiah with the corresponding NT verses as fulfillment of the prophecies are appended below:

Messiah would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:34-35)  
 Messiah would be Immanuel "God with us" (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:21-23)  
 Messiah would be God and Man (Isa. 9:6; John 10:30)  
 Messiah would have the 7-fold Spirit upon Him (Isa. 11:1-2; Matt. 3:16-17)  
 Messiah would heal the blind, lame, deaf (Isa. 35:5-6; Mark 10:51-52)  
 Messiah would be preceded by a forerunner (Isa. 40:3; Luke 1:17)  
 Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 42:6; John 8:12)  
 Messiah would be despised by the Jewish nation (Isa. 49:7; John 10:20; Matt.

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<sup>9</sup>Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 1096.

<sup>10</sup>Chisholm, *Handbook on the Prophets*, 39.

<sup>11</sup>Tremper Longman III & Raymond Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 307.



27:23)

Messiah would be whipped and beaten (Isa. 50:6; Matt. 26:67, 27:26)

Messiah would die as a guilt offering for sin (Isa. 53:10a; John 18:11)

Messiah would be resurrected and live forever (Isa. 53:10b; Mark 16:16)<sup>12</sup>

**Jeremiah**, the weeping prophet, revealed that the Messiah would be God (Jer. 23:5-6).<sup>13</sup> The Messiah would be the priestly king (30:9, 21).<sup>14</sup> Messiah would be a righteous branch (Jer. 23:5) and He would be our righteousness (v. 23:6). Despite his discontent with the message that the Lord commissioned him to deliver (Jer. 18:18-23), Jeremiah was ever conscious of his call from the Lord (1:5; 15:19) to be a prophet. As such, he proclaimed words that were given him by God himself (19:2) and, therefore, were certain of fulfillment (28:9; 32:24). Under the new covenant, Israel need not teach to her neighbors and relatives (31:34) for everyone in the coming kingdom (including the Gentiles) would know the Lord, but until then each man is to teach (or witness) his neighbor and his brother ‘Know the Lord.’ (31:34a, NASB)

**Daniel** prophesied that Messiah would be “a son of man” given an everlasting kingdom (Dan 7:13-14). Messiah would come 483 years after the decree to rebuild Jerusalem (9:25) and He would be killed (9:26), Messiah is the “stone” that smashes the kingdom of the world (2:34, 44) and is typified by the fourth man in the fiery furnace, one like the Son of God (3:25); God sent his angel to shut the lion’s mouth (16:22). The theological message of Daniel is that God is sovereign. He overrules and eventually will

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<sup>12</sup>“Jesus In Every Book of the Bible,” Jesus Plus Nothing.

<sup>13</sup>Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 187-88.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 189.

overcome human evil.<sup>15</sup> All God's children are bestowed with "Immanuel," "God with us," only if this good news is enlarged to all the people that we love and know. How many of our church members' family are still outside the kingdom? If the Lord was in the fiery furnace, why are we not aflame for the Lord?

**Joel** prophesied that the Messiah would offer salvation to all mankind (Joel 2:32; Rom 10:12-13): "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32a). Messiah will baptize people with the Holy Spirit (2:28-30). The Holy Spirit indwells every Christian without exception. Paul told the Christians at Rome that they were "in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you"; he added that, "Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9).<sup>16</sup> The theology of Joel is that the Lord hears the call of his people and he saves them. The Holy Spirit dwells in every believer. Are we spiritual on the outside or the inside? We are the temple (*naos*, ναός), specifically the Holy of Holies, where the Holy Spirit resides. Are we not directed by the Holy Spirit to spread the good news?

**Habakkuk** prayed for revival and yet God raised the Chaldeans to be God's instrument of his judgment on Judah and his answer to the prophet's prayer (Hab. 1:1, 5-7). Amid pessimism, Habakkuk gave his faithful people this life-changing word: "... the righteous shall live by faith" (2:4b; Rom 1:17).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Longman & Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 392.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>17</sup>John Blanchard, *Major Points From the Minor Prophets* (Darlington, England: EP Books, 2012), 181.

One of the key themes of **Zephaniah** is that God wants to extend blessings and grace to all peoples and nations (Zeph. 3:9-10). “The day of the Lord” is mentioned twenty times by Zephaniah: “The great day of the Lord is near, near and hastening fast” (1:14). Paul often mentions the day of the Lord or the day of Christ (Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:8) and he looked for the final theophany and final vindication of God in history.<sup>18</sup> The theology of Zephaniah focused on the great day of the Lord and the God of Israel as the universal God. Time is not in our hands, the Lord’s return is imminent, and the warning of the wrath to come must be preached by the church today. Material prosperity will come to naught if we miss the boat that could save us.

To **Haggai**, the future belongs totally to God. As history moves to its final countdown, God will reorder all things and establish his kingdom on earth as a preparation for his eternal kingdom. God will bring in an immovable kingdom (Hag. 2:6), an immovable king (7), and an immovable glory (8-9). At the heart of this text is that the word of God will “shake all nations, and the desire (treasure) of all nations will come.”<sup>19</sup>

### **New Testament**

As stated previously, evangelism is derived from the Greek word *euaggelion* (εὐαγγέλιον), meaning “gospel” or “good news,” or the message of such news:

The NT word had two basic uses, referring first to the good news Jesus preached (the proclamation of the kingdom of God), and later to the good news about Jesus. . . . Evangelism is properly defined in terms of its message and not the recipients, the results, or the methods used. Most definitions are more descriptive, such as the oft-quoted definition of the Church of England’s Commission on Evangelism:

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<sup>18</sup>Longman & Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 475-76.

<sup>19</sup>Kaiser Jr., *The Messiah in the Old Testament*, 206.

“To evangelize is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit that (people) shall come to put their trust in God through him, to accept him as their Savior, and serve him as their King in the fellowship of his Church.”<sup>20</sup>

Table 3-1: Gospel and Evangelism in the New Testament and the number of occurrences<sup>21</sup>

Greek	Transliteration	Tense	Meaning	Mk	Mt	Lk	Acts	Jn	Paul	General Epistles	Rv	Total
εὐαγγέλιον	<i>euangelion</i>	noun	gospel; good news	8	4	0	2	0	60	1	1	<b>76</b>
εὐαγγελίζω	<i>euangelizo</i>	verb	to evangelize; tell good news	0	1	10	15	0	21	5	2	<b>54</b>
εὐαγγελιστής	<i>euangelistes</i>	noun	evangelist	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	<b>3</b>

The above table summarizes the uses of the word “evangelism” as a noun, as a verb, and the noun “evangelist.” All three words occur in the NT. It is by no means exhaustive as many passages are also closely associated with the gospel or the proclamation of the good news without using the above words.

Evangelism or gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) as a noun occurs 12 times in the Gospels and a total of 76 times in the NT. Among the Gospels, Mark records the most with eight verses.

**Mark 1:1** begins with “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” From there on Jesus proclaims the good news of God himself saying, “The time

<sup>20</sup>*The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, s.v. “evangelism.”

<sup>21</sup>Felix Just, “Gospel and Evangelism in the New Testament,” Electronic New Testament Educational Resources, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Gospel-Evangelism.htm>.

is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel” (vv.14-15). Jesus through the gospel saves lives (8:35) and those who believe in Him and the gospel will have eternal life (10:29-30). Jesus announced that the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations (13:10). Mark ends with the Great Commission, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole world” (16:15).<sup>22</sup> Christology and discipleship are the two main themes of Mark’s theology; two other more general purposes are historical interest and evangelism, the good news of salvation (1:1).<sup>23</sup> Mark’s audience consisted of Gentile Christians. As they were challenged to spread the good news, so are we.

**Matthew** records the word *euangelion* four times. Jesus went to Galilee, teaching in the synagogue and proclaiming the gospel (Matt. 4:23); later he went into the cities and villages, teaching in the synagogue and proclaiming the good news (9:35). Jesus also performed miracles and preached the good news to the poor (11:5).

“To evangelize” or tell the good news (εὐαγγελίζω) occurs 11 times in the Gospels. One key verse is Matt. 24:14: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” Before the Lord returns, the gospel must be proclaimed throughout the whole world. The key condition of the Lord’s return is the evangelization of the world, or reaching the unreached. With worldwide travel becoming common, there are and will be

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<sup>22</sup>Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include 16:9-20.

<sup>23</sup>D. A. Carson & Douglas Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nottingham, England: Apollos, 2005), 185-86.

many unreached people from CAN countries traveling abroad. As a cosmopolitan city like Singapore, with many migrant workers and visitors from China, Myanmar, and Vietnam, which are sensitive to Christianity, we should make our effort to share the gospel to them. Even if we are not in the forefront of the mission, we should still be behind the scenes praying and giving to the mission.

The main theme of Matthew's Gospel is "Christ is the King of the Jews." It has 129 references to the OT from 25 books.<sup>24</sup> The theology of Matthew is salvation-historical and Christological.<sup>25</sup> The Great Commission is the greatest reason that the church of Jesus Christ exists on earth. The danger of not being an evangelistic church is the greatest omission.

Although **Luke** records no use of the word "gospel" as a noun, at the end of the book, the last chapter, Luke records the Great Commission; his suffering, resurrection from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations (Luke 24:46-47). Luke, however, has ten occurrences of *euangelizo*; among them, John the Baptist preached good news to the people (Luke 3:18), and Jesus went on through cities and villages proclaiming the good news (4:43; 8:1).<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Norman Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 52.

<sup>25</sup> "Matthew, Theology of," Bible Study Tools, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/bakers-evangelical-dictionary/matthew-theology-of.html>.

<sup>26</sup>Luke—other verses that mention the word gospel (*euangelizo*) are 1:19; 2:10; 4:43; 7:22; 8:1; 9:6; 16:16; 20:1.

Luke records Jesus' story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31). In Hades the rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to preach the gospel to warn his five living brothers, lest they ended up in the same place of torment. This is one of the clearest manifestations of the reality of heaven and hell and the urgency of preaching the gospel to the living lost before it is too late. This parable was the biblical basis of one of my sermons entitled "Even Hell Pleads for Evangelism to the Living Lost!"

**John** records none of the words for "gospel" or "evangelism," but he states the greatest message of salvation in John 3:16 and the need to be born again (3:3). John also records the Great Commission in John 20:21 and 21:24.

In **Acts**, there are two occurrences of the word "gospel." One is during the Jerusalem council; after much debate, Peter summed up that the Gentiles would hear the message of the gospel and become believers (Acts 15:7). The other is in 20:24. Acts records 15 occurrences of the word "to evangelize" (*euangelizo*). Everyday in the temple and at home they did not cease to teach and to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah (5:42); those who were scattered went from place to place, proclaiming the word (8:4); they preached the gospel in the neighboring Samaria (8:25); and Philip spoke of the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, who believed and was baptized (8:35).<sup>27</sup> This was the beginning of NT missions.

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<sup>27</sup>Acts—other verses that mention the word "evangelize" (*euangelizo*) are 8:40; 10:36; 11:20; 13:32; 14:7; 14:15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:18.

Paul's epistles or letters record the most usage of the noun "gospel" (εὐαγγέλιον) to the tune of sixty times. Only selected verses are appended below; others are listed as footnotes.

**Romans:** Paul was set apart for the gospel of God (Rom. 1:1), he was not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes (16), and he was the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God (15:16).<sup>28</sup> Romans records two occurrences on *euangelizo*; how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news (10:15b). Here Paul quoted Isaiah 52:7 and Nahum 1:15. Paul was not to preach where any other apostle had ministered (15:20), which is one piece of evidence that Peter had not founded the churches in Rome.<sup>29</sup> Paul's priority was to spread the good news in new mission fields, so that more would believe (15:21).

The theme of the book of Romans is the gospel. While many understand *what* the gospel is, one often quoted example is 1 Cor. 15:3-4; we need to also know *how* the gospel came about. Romans 3:21-26 gives us the truth and the mystery of how God initiated the gospel. Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones says that Romans 3:21-26 presents the most concise and yet comprehensive declaration of the gospel in all of Scripture.<sup>30</sup> The context

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<sup>28</sup>Romans—other verses that mention the word gospel (*euangelion*) are 1:9; 2:16; 10:16; 11:28; 15:19; 16:25.

<sup>29</sup>Warren Wiersbe, *Matthew—Galatians*, The Bible Exposition Commentary 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989). 564.

<sup>30</sup>Martin L. Jones, "Romans 3:21-31, The Righteousness of God, the Good News," accessed August 13, 2015, [http://www.bunyanministries.org/expositions/romans/05\\_rom\\_righteousness\\_of\\_god.pdf](http://www.bunyanministries.org/expositions/romans/05_rom_righteousness_of_god.pdf).



of the passage is in vv. 9-20, that no one is righteous; even by works of law (20), no one can be saved. The only way is that the righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe (vv. 21-22, NIV). However, before coming to this stage, three things must happen. First, men committed an offense (23) and they must be pardoned. Second, an offense had taken place and it must be removed (24). And third, God is offended, so He must be propitiated or appeased (25). The word **propitiation** in Greek *hilastérion* (ἱλαστήριον) is a new word used by Paul and only occurs twice in the Bible, in Rom. 3:25 and in Hebrews 9:5; in the latter verse it is translated as the “mercy seat.” All the three acts can only be accomplished through the redemption in Jesus Christ at the cross. We often speak of the love of God (John 3:16), but the truth is that God is offended by our sin and in His righteousness He must judge the sin. The only way to remove the sin is by imputing it to His only Son who knew no sin. The result is that God is appeased and He justifies men who have faith in Jesus (26). It is an awesome gospel that only God can accomplish and none is the doing of man. This was the biblical basis of one of my sermons on “The Awesome Gospel.”

**1 and 2 Corinthians:** In Christ, Paul became the Corinthians’ father through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15); he became all things to all people for the sake of the gospel (9:23). The gospel hardens those who are perishing, to keep them from seeing the light in the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Cor. 4:3-4). Paul and his team were the first to come all

the way to Corinth with the gospel of Christ (10:14).<sup>31</sup> In 1 and 2 Corinthians there are five instances of “to evangelize.” Paul’s primary responsibility was not to baptize but to preach the gospel (1 Cor. 1:17). Paul was so obligated to preach the gospel that he declared “woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16, KJV). Suffice it to say, there is no blessing if we do not preach the gospel; the consequence could well be that we become stumbling blocks to non-believers because of our silence in sharing the good news.<sup>32</sup>

**Galatians:** Paul warned the Galatians against turning to another gospel (Gal. 1:6-7); the gospel proclaimed by Paul is not of human origin (11); and the gospel that Paul preached to the Gentiles was not run in vain (2:2).<sup>33</sup> Galatians has five verses using *euangelizo*.<sup>34</sup> Paul said he was the very least of all the saints, but that grace was given to him to bring to the Gentiles the news of the boundless riches of Christ (Eph. 3:8). In 4:11 Paul mentioned the gifts to the churches that some would be apostles, prophets, evangelists (*euangelistes*, εὐαγγελίστης), some pastors and teachers (4:11). Paul encouraged Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (*euangelistes*), to carry out his ministry fully (2 Tim. 4:5). Having disciples is a way to pass on the gospel to the younger believers; this has been so for two thousand years and we must also teach our disciples in

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<sup>31</sup>1 & 2 Corinthians—other verses that mention the word gospel (*euangelion*) are 1 Cor. 9:12, 14, 18; 15:1, 2; 2 Cor. 2:12; 8:18; 9:13; 10:16; 11:4.

<sup>32</sup>1 & 2 Corinthians—other verses that mention the word “evangelize” (*euangelizo*) are 1 Cor. 15:1, 2; 2 Cor. 10:16; 11:7.

<sup>33</sup>Galatians—other verses that mention the word gospel (*euangelion*) are 1:8-9; 2:5, 7, 14.

<sup>34</sup>Galatians—verses that mention “evangelize” (*euangelizo*) are 1:8, 9, 11, 16, 23; 4:13.

the same manner as Paul to Timothy, Titus, Silas, Epaphras, and so on, so that the chains that connect the gospel will not be broken.

**Ephesians:** Believers in the gospel are sealed with the Holy Spirit (1:13); Gentiles are fellow heirs through the gospel (3:6); and Paul asked the Ephesians to pray for him to speak with boldness the mystery of the gospel (6:19).

**Philippians:** The Philippians were in a partnership in the gospel (1:5), and Timothy served with Paul in the work of the gospel (2:22).<sup>35</sup>

**Colossians:** The hope of heaven is in the truth of the gospel (1:5), and Paul as the servant of the gospel exhorted the Colossians to be established and steadfast in the faith from the hope promised by the gospel (1:23).

**1 & 2 Thessalonians:** The message of the gospel came to the Thessalonians not in word only but in the power of the Holy Spirit with full conviction (1 Thess. 1:5); despite great opposition, the gospel is to be declared (2:2), and those who do not obey the gospel will be in flaming fire and experience vengeance when Christ returns (2 Thess. 1:8).<sup>36</sup> And in **Philemon:** Onesimus is useful for the gospel (1:13):

Paul's theology is on God and Jesus Christ. It is God-centered and Christ-centered. We think here of Romans 11:36, speaking of God: "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things." So, Paul's theology is focused on God, the One from whom all things come and through whom all things are accomplished. And ultimately all things are for His glory. In Pauline theology God is the center of that theology. . . . But God, in Pauline theology, is magnified in Jesus Christ. God's centrality is manifested in Christ. So it is not as if God and Christ are separate, but God and Christ work together in Paul's theology. We think

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<sup>35</sup>Philippians—other verses that mention the word gospel (*euangelion*) are 1:7, 16, 27; 4:3, 15.

<sup>36</sup>1 & 2 Thessalonians—other verses that mention the word gospel (*euangelion*) are 1 Thess. 2:4, 2:8-9; 3:2, 6; 2 Thess. 2:14.

here of 1 Corinthians 8:6, where Paul says: "Yet for us, there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist."<sup>37</sup>

Paul was the Apostle of Jesus Christ, an accomplished missionary, an evangelist, and a theologian. He was a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22:28). He was thoroughly trained in the law of Judaism and a member of the strictest Jewish sect (Acts 22:3). He used "more than ninety quotations from the OT in his letters."<sup>38</sup> Although initially a persecutor of the church, he became a faithful follower of Jesus after his conversion. His anguish over Israel's salvation was so strong that he was ready to exchange his own salvation for that of the Jews (Rom. 9:2-3). He was also a minister to the Gentiles (15:16), which made Paul love every soul in the world. One of Paul's humblest sayings was, "I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to Barbarians, both to the wise, and to the unwise" (1:14 KJV). If Paul owed a gospel debt, ours would be even bigger. The answer is what Paul told Timothy, "Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2a). The church today is charged to preach the gospel and like Paul; we need to pay the gospel debt. Our gospel debt is obviously greater than Paul had.

Although there are biblical mandates from both the OT and NT for evangelism, there is a difference in the role of the OT prophets compared to the NT evangelists. OT prophets were appointed directly by God and received direct instructions to proclaim God's instruction, warning, prophecies to God's people, in particular the Israelites, as the

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<sup>37</sup>Thomas Schreiner, "What is the Most Important Thing in Paul's Theology?," Biblical Training, accessed July 29, 2015, <https://www.biblicaltraining.org/blog/curious-christian/7-24-2013/what-most-important-thing-pauls-theology>.

<sup>38</sup>Carson & Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 373.

latter had no direct relation with God. They foretold the coming Messiah. The message of the OT prophets began with warning of the sins of the people, and unless they repented, the blessing of God and salvation would not come to them. The NT message is more positive; it begins with the good news and, if the people accept the gospel, salvation is theirs. By contrast, the NT evangelists are the result of spiritual gifts at work in them (Eph. 4:11). They have direct relationships with God through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but not through a direct revelation or message from God. The proclamation of the gospel message is the Word of God in the Scripture. The audience is enlarged to include the Gentiles. In general, while the OT prophets foretold, the NT evangelists forth told God's Word in the Bible:

The Old Testament predicts a Messiah (see Isaiah 53), and the New Testament reveals who the Messiah is (John 4:25–26). The Old Testament records the giving of God's Law, and the New Testament shows how Jesus the Messiah fulfilled that Law (Matthew 5:17; Hebrews 10:9). In the Old Testament, God's dealings are mainly with His chosen people, the Jews; in the New Testament, God's dealings are mainly with His church (Matthew 16:18). Physical blessings promised under the Old Covenant (Deuteronomy 29:9) give way to spiritual blessings under the New Covenant (Ephesians 1:3).<sup>39</sup>

As believers, the Holy Spirit dwells in us. While we may not have the spiritual giftedness to become evangelists, we are nonetheless the witnesses of the gospel and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can declare the good news with boldness to anyone to whom the Spirit directs us.

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<sup>39</sup>“Old Testament vs. New Testament – What Are the Differences?” Got Questions?org, accessed August 13, 2015, <http://www.gotquestions.org/difference-old-new-testaments.html>.

While many theologians believe that there is **continuity** between the OT and NT, there is some important **discontinuity** that needs to be highlighted. In the OT, the Spirit of the Lord visited people, caused things to transpire, and accomplished the will of God. Prophets, priests, and leaders had the experience of the Spirit of the Lord “Coming upon” them to endow them with ability (Ex. 31:3; Num. 11:16-17; Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 1 Sam. 16:13-14) or knowledge (Num. 24:2; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Chron. 12:18; 2 Chron. 15:1; 18:23; 20:14; 24:20; Neh. 9:20, 30) in order to accomplish God’s purposes. Such visitation of the Spirit was temporary until the purpose was accomplished and the Spirit left the individual.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, the early church experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit as the fulfillment of a promise from God made to the prophets (Acts 2:17; cf. Joel 2:28) and confirmed through Jesus Christ, who promised that the disciples would receive the Spirit themselves (Acts 1:5, 8; 11:16). The Spirit comes to those who have faith in Jesus Christ and seals them as a possession of God (Gal. 3:14; Eph. 1:13).<sup>41</sup> This is a classic example of OT promise and NT fulfillment.

The concept of salvation may differ between the OT and NT; it could mean save in terms of the physical nature in the OT and not the salvation we normally ascribe to in the NT:

In the Old Testament "salvation" is **usually** a physical deliverance or rescue. "Save me!" is a common cry for God's help (Ps. 3:7; 6:4; 7:1; 22:21; 54:1; 65:1). The Old Testament believers were often "saved out of their troubles" (Ps. 34:6), "saved out of their distresses" (Ps. 107:13), "saved from their enemies" (Ps.

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<sup>40</sup> Harry Poe, *The Gospel and Its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 220-21.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 225.

18:13) and their "adversaries" (Ps. 44:7). The Exodus is a prominent example of God's rescuing and "saving His people out of the land of Egypt" (Jude 5). Noah and his kin were also "saved," delivered, "brought safely through the water" (I Peter 3:20; II Peter 2:5). These are the New Testament references that apply "saved" and "salvation" to Old Testament personages.<sup>42</sup>

I agree with James A. Fowler who wrote the above passage that OT salvation was usually deliverance from physical harm, but in other instances it was spiritual. The message of Jonah to warn the destruction of Nineveh brought the people to repentance and the salvation of Ninevites was spiritual. Jesus said that the men of Nineveh would stand up at judgment day against the generation at the time of Jesus for not believing in him (Matt. 12:41). All the sixteen OT persons of faith in Hebrews 11 and the prophets (Heb. 11: 32-38) were spiritually saved because of their faith.

Salvation in the NT is **always** spiritual and is only accomplished through Christ Jesus (Acts 4:12; John 3:16; 14:6); it is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8). In addition, believers in the NT are delivered from the consequences of sin.

The issue of continuity and discontinuity between the OT and the NT emerged in the mid-twentieth century among English-speaking scholars such as Harold Rowley, C. H. Dodd, and John Bright. The debates have continued with no end in sight. Apart from fully discussing the covenant and dispensational theologies, it is sufficient to say that "The Old Testament is characterized by **promise**, and is thus a preparatory revelation, in

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<sup>42</sup>James Fowler, "Old Testament Believers and New Testament Christians," Christian in You Ministry, accessed August 17, 2015, <http://www.christinyou.net/pages/otbntc.ht>.

contrast to the final revelation of the New Testament, which is characterized by **fulfillment**.<sup>43</sup>

### Evangelism as a Spiritual Discipline in the OT & NT

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the believer's highest call in ministry is to reproduce the life of Christ in others. Reproduction takes the form of evangelism to unbelievers and edification of the saints, lifestyle edification, and evangelism as a way of life.<sup>44</sup> It is generally referred to as a spiritual discipline in the NT, as Boa further reiterates:

In the progress of revelation, the OT lays the foundation for the fuller expression of the three-personed God of the NT. It has been said that "the Old is in the New revealed; the New is in the Old concealed." "Let us make man in our image according to our likeness." (Gen. 1:26) We have been created for community with him and with one another.<sup>45</sup>

When God wants us to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28; 9:1), it is not simply human multiplication; He calls us to nurture people spiritually by building into them, feeding them, protecting them, encouraging them, training them, and assisting in their maturation so that they can learn to do the same with other. Nurturing spirituality relates to a lifestyle of evangelism and discipleship.<sup>46</sup> In addition, Roger

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<sup>43</sup>David Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: The Theological Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 274-75.

<sup>44</sup>Boa, *Conformed to His Image*, 365.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., 417.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 367.



Keller cites Karl Barth's treatment of Jesus Christ, the Messiah in the OT and NT, as follows:

The content of the OT, according to Karl Barth, is no different from that of the NT. Both witness to Jesus Christ—the OT in expectation and the NT in recollection. They see (1) a togetherness of God and humanity, (2) a hiddenness of God, and (3) God present to humans as the coming God. There are differences between the two Testaments, however. Christ in the NT is the Christ who has come, and is thus the object of recollection. Also, the NT knows concretely and explicitly who it was that the OT expected. The OT will always be expectation, and the NT will always be recollection.<sup>47</sup>

Therefore, since Boa has determined that evangelism in the NT is a spiritual discipline, sharing or witnessing to the good news about the coming Messiah in the OT is a similar discipline. The issue is whether God's people in both Testaments are obedient to His calling. The word obedience in Hebrew is *shama* (שָׁמַע); it appears 1,160 times. It is also translated as “to hear,” “to listen,” or “to proclaim.” Proclaiming God's Word is to bless others. The Hebrew word to bless is *barak* (בָּרַךְ) and the noun blessing *barakah* (בְּרָכָה).

The same blessing came upon Noah and his sons: “Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth” (Gen. 9:1). God also established a covenant with Noah and his sons, and with their seeds after them (9:9). The covenant was to bless Noah's descendants who were obedient to the Lord, just as God told Adam and later Abraham. The covenant to

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<sup>47</sup>Roger Keller, “Karl Barth's Treatment Of the Old Testament As Expectation,” accessed August 10, 2015, [http://www.auss.info/auss\\_publication\\_file.php?pub\\_id=940&journal=1&type=pdf](http://www.auss.info/auss_publication_file.php?pub_id=940&journal=1&type=pdf). (P.170-73)

Abraham was through the line of Isaac and not Ishmael, although the later also became a great nation (17:20-21). Therefore, the descendants of Jacob were also blessed (28:3; 35:11). Jacob passed on the blessing to Joseph (48:4). God blessed Israel for obedience (Lev. 26:1-13) and punished them when they disobeyed God (14-46). Obedience includes walking in God's statutes, observing the commandments, and **doing** them (v. 3). It is sufficient to say that the way of obedience includes the constant teaching of children to observe the same statutes, meditations, prayers, and even repentance as spiritual disciplines to be observed. Even when they sinned but turned away from their iniquity and repented, God would remember his covenant with Jacob (vv. 40-45). Believers today practice evangelism as part of their spiritual disciplines.

Missionary Psalms 67 and 96 are just two examples of spiritual discipline that involve worship, meditation, praise, song, and prayer that all nations will know God and be blessed: "Sing to the Lord, bless his name; **tell** of his salvation from day to day" (Ps. 96:2).

In the NT, the fact that evangelism cannot be detached from prayers and the guidance of the Holy Spirit is a strong proof that spiritual discipline is mandatory. Paul often addressed people in the synagogue, the house of prayer; he also read the Word and fellowshiped with the brethren. The evangelization of the Jews is part of spiritual discipline. Paul and the Apostles often prayed for evangelistic opportunities: they prayed for speaking with boldness, to heal and perform miracles (Acts 4:23-31); Paul also prayed for the Israelites that they would be saved (Rom. 10:1). Paul asked the Ephesian church to pray for him to give him words fearlessly to preach the mystery of the gospel (Eph.

6:19-20), Paul asked the Colossian church to pray for him and his comrades that God might open a door for the Word; he wanted them to pray that he might proclaim clearly (Col. 4:3-4). He requested that the Thessalonian church pray that the message of the Lord might spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 3:1).

The commissioning of Paul and Barnabas by the Antioch church was preceded by worship, prayer, and fasting as integral parts of the sending out of missionaries (Acts 13:1-2), and the reverse process is seen in Acts 2:40-44: the Apostles testified, evangelized, baptized, and the Lord added them three thousand souls. They continued in the Apostles' teaching (the Word), fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers (perhaps celebration too); they were united and together. This illustrates the spirit of the disciplines.<sup>48</sup> Evangelism and prayer always go hand in hand, for the battle is not against flesh and blood but is very much spiritual: In evangelism, we are impotent; we depend on God to make our witness effective, as He is the one who does the conversion, that through our preaching of the gospel sinners will be born again. These facts ought to drive us to prayer. It is God's intention for us to do so. God means us to rely on Him alone, and to plead with Him to glorify His name. It is His way regularly to withhold his blessings until His people start to pray.<sup>49</sup>

Evangelism is one of the greatest privileges that believers are granted, along with prayer, studying the Word, and fellowship. They are the spiritual disciplines that no

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<sup>48</sup>Richard Foster, et al., *The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2005), 1986.

<sup>49</sup>J. I. Packer, *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God* (Nottingham, UK: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010), 132.

believer should miss. Healthy Christians need to live balanced, spiritually-disciplined lives. Churches need to create a conducive environment for evangelism and healthy church growth.

### The Great Commission in the OT & NT

The Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) is the mission to the Apostles and to the church in the NT:

18 And Jesus came and said to them, “**All** authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of **all** nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe **all** that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you **always**, to the end of the age.”

What makes this Commission great is that it represents the last words of our Lord Jesus Christ before he ascended to heaven. This imperative instruction is of such great importance because it is the continuation of what Jesus left behind; He wants us to grasp the relay baton from the Apostles and pass the same baton from generation to generation until He comes again. It is so important that all four Gospels and Acts contain this commission (Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:47-49; John 20:21, 21:24; Acts 1:8).<sup>50</sup> This commission greatness can be understood and appreciated if we will look at the significance of these four “all’s”:

1. “**All** Authority.” This Commission is by the authority of Christ, in heaven and on earth. No man has the right to cancel this commission (Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29).
2. “**All** the Nations.” The Commission is universal in scope. It is a universal command because mankind has universal problem (sin) and a universal need (salvation).

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<sup>50</sup>Some of the earliest manuscripts do not include Mark 16:9-20.

3. “**All** Things I Have Commanded You.” The Commission is great because it maintains the growth of the church. All believers are to embrace everything that Jesus has commanded the disciples to do. As each person is won to Christ, they are taught to win others.
4. “I Am With You **Always**.” The Commission closes with the greatest promise. This verse is the promise of the providence of God being present and active in our lives today.<sup>51</sup>

In the OT, the parallel commission two thousand years earlier was given to a man called Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3:

Now the Lord said to Abram, “**Go** from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. **2** And I will make of you **a great nation**, and I will **bless** you and make your name great, so that you will be a **blessing**. **3** I will **bless** those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you **all the families of the earth** shall be **blessed**.”

God made a promise to Abraham. The understanding of the promise is indispensable to an understanding of the Bible and of the Christian mission. These are the most unifying verses in the Bible; the whole of God's purpose is encapsulated here. God is the God of mission. God has promised to bless “all the families of the earth” through Abraham's seed (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). All believers are Abraham's seed by faith, and the earth's families will be blessed only if we go to them with the gospel. That is God's plain purpose.<sup>52</sup>

The NT commission is the continuation of the OT commission to Abraham. The question is whether at various times in the OT and NT eras, including our time today, we are fulfilling this Great Commission.

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<sup>51</sup>Heath Rogers, “The ‘All’s’ of the Great Commission,” accessed July 28, 2015, [http://www.knollwoodchurch.org/yr2012/d01\\_all.html](http://www.knollwoodchurch.org/yr2012/d01_all.html).

<sup>52</sup>John Stott, *Perspectives: On the World Christian Movement: The Living God is a Missionary God*, eds. Ralph Winter and Steven Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 3, 9.

Until the time of Abraham, the human history recorded three great tragedies: the fall of Adam and Eve; the universal flood; and the tower of Babel, resulting in the confusion of languages. Nonetheless, God preserved the line from Adam to Abraham via Seth, Enoch, Noah, and Shem. After Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the nation Israel was chosen to be the icon of all nations. Unfortunately, throughout the history of Israel—with the exception of the prophets—the nation did not consistently witness for the Lord. They disobeyed the Lord and the Lord had to use foreign nations to punish his own people. Israel and Judah fell into the hand of the Assyrians and the Babylonian respectively. The return from captivity revived the nation under Ezra and Nehemiah, but it was short-lived. The intertestamental period saw the Jews under the Greek and the Roman dominions. During the first century A.D. and the time of Christ, the Jews refused to become a blessing to the Gentile nations. In fact, they rejected the Messianic deity of Christ and the gospel, which first belonged to the Jews (Rom 1:16) but did not continue from the line of the biological descendants of Abraham. Paul was commissioned to bring salvation to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; 13:47; 28:28; Rom 3:29; Gal 3:8, 14). Gentiles who believe become the spiritual descendants of Abraham.

Joshua 1:8 says, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to **do according to all** that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” Meditating on the Word of the Lord includes its study and understanding, as well as embracing it in our hearts. **Doing** the Word of the Lord is to practice it as a spiritual discipline. The inward discipline includes meditation, prayer, fasting, and study.

The outward disciplines include simplicity, solitude, submission, and service. Service consists of sharing the Word of life with one another and sharing the message of God to the lost.

The promise of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost revived the people in Jerusalem as predicted by Jesus. The Jerusalem church had a total of 5000 men (Acts 4:4); this is a cumulative number that includes the 3000 in Peter's earlier preaching (Acts 2:41).<sup>53</sup>

The Jewish diaspora of 5000 after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in A.D. 70 unto every part of the world certainly has benefited the Gentile nations. In the past 2000 years, it multiplied to today's estimate of 2.4 billion Christians (total, all kinds) out of the 7.3 billion population in mid 2015, or 33.4%.<sup>54</sup>

The first-century churches as depicted in the NT books, from Acts to the Pauline epistles to the general epistles clearly indicate that the Jews and Gentiles were committed to fulfill the Great Commission, whether in personal evangelism or church missions. They too encourage us to be diligent in spreading the good news to all men (Acts 10:35; 14:27-28; Rom. 10:12-15; 1 Thess. 1:7-8; 2:15-16). Our forefathers have not kept the gospel to themselves; they faithfully passed it down from generation to generation without breaking the link. The gospel has now arrived to us and the least we can do is to

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<sup>53</sup>John MacArthur Jr., *Acts 1-12, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 130.

<sup>54</sup>Todd Johnson, Gina Zurlo, Albert Hickman and Peter Crossing, "Status of Global Christianity, 2015, in the Context of 1900-2050," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 39, No.1, accessed Aug 02, 2015, <http://www.gordonconwell.edu/resources/documents/IIBMR2015.pdf>.

pass it on to the people around us. Should the Lord have a special calling for us to reach the unreached, we should view it as a great privilege that we are part of the mission of God (*Missio Dei*).

## Evangelism Methodology in the OT & NT

### Old Testament

Before the fall, God intended for the posterity of Adam and Eve to be blessed when He commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. God is the first evangelist and he wants his creatures to continue in teaching their children to walk with God in the same intimate relationship that they had with Him in the Garden of Eden. Apparently, this close relationship with God did not last long. Before they were fruitful and multiplied, they fell into the temptation of the serpent and sinned against God. The very sweet relationship with God was suddenly broken and they were chased out of the garden. Prior leaving the garden, God made an animal to shed blood for its skin to clothe the nakedness of both Adam and Eve. This was the first sign of the salvation that was to come.

After the fall, the blessing that God pronounced, “be fruitful and multiply,” continued except that Eve, the mother of all living, would have her pain multiplied in child bearing.

In Gen. 4:26b Seth “began to call upon the name of the Lord.” In Gen. 5:21, we are told that Enoch walked with God. How did Seth and Enoch know God if not from their fathers and forefathers—including Adam and Eve—teaching them how to be close to God? So Adam and Eve in their fallen natures had actually imparted the teaching of God to their generation. Adam (5:3-5) lived long enough (930 years) to see the birth of



Enoch and even when God took him at 365 years old, Adam was still alive (vv. 21-24). Adam lived long enough to see his other posterity: Seth (5:6-8), Enosh (vv. 9-11), Kenan (vv. 12-14), Mahalalel (vv. 15-17), Jared (vv. 16-20), and Lamech (5:28-31). All these people were worshippers of God.

To explain God's redemptive plan in the OT, Jesus taught the two disciples: "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" Luke 24:27). Jesus thought that a correct understanding of the OT was essential truly to understand his life, death, and resurrection:

The fact remains that the Bible as a whole document tells a story, and properly used, that story can serve as a **metanarrative** that shapes our grasp of the entire Christian faith. In my view it is increasingly important to spell this out to Christians and to non-Christians alike — to Christians, to ground them in Scripture, and to non-Christians, as part of our proclamation of the gospel.<sup>55</sup>

Since God revealed his redemption plan progressively through the metanarrative, biblical theology instead of systematic theology is the better way chronologically to develop the Bible's Big Story. D. A. Carson is of the opinion that our proclamation of the gospel should be a subset of biblical theology.<sup>56</sup> The metanarrative or the grand story of the Bible is the progressive story of how God reveal himself through humans. The ultimate mission of God (*missio Dei*) is to bless all nations. God first made a promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 that in him all the families of the earth will be blessed. So we

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<sup>55</sup>D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 194.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, 502.

have not only a missional God but also a global God.<sup>57</sup> God later chose Israel to be his chosen nation to accomplish his objective. (Exodus 19:4-6) God later declared also to all peoples including Gentiles: “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other” (Isa. 45:22). God has, therefore, a twofold mission: first, to Israel’s children (Exod. 12:24-27; Deut. 6:4-9; Isa. 38:19) and, secondly, to the other nations (Isa. 66:19-20).

(1) Personal or Family Evangelism:

The examples of personal or family evangelism are Seth, Enoch, Abraham (direct evangelism from God), Melchizedek, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Judah, Moses, Joshua, Rahab, and Elisha to Ben-Hadad, king of Aram (2 Kings 8:7-15). Moses and Aaron warned Pharaoh of God’s judgment upon him and the Egyptians should Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go. Abraham built altars wherever he travelled and called on the name of the Lord (Gen. 12:7,8; 13:4, 18; 22:9-13). It is one of the ways that Abraham witnessed for the Lord to the surrounding nations. To his family, Abraham was to teach them his God that they might live in the ways of the Lord (Gen. 18:19).

(2) Mass Evangelism:

The examples are Noah to the people living while he built the ark; Moses to all the congregation of Israel in Egypt (Exod. 12:3), when all the people did as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron (12:50); and Moses to Israel at Mount Sinai. In addition, Jonah preached to the Ninevites, and Jeremiah sent Seraiah to Babylon to warn the latter

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<sup>57</sup> Stott, *Perspectives: On the World Christian Movement: The Living God is a Missionary God*, 9.

of the coming disasters that Babylon would sink and rise no more (Jer. 51:59-64).

### (3) Universal Evangelism:

The followers of God were to carry the message of salvation to other nations (Isa. 66:19; Ps. 67:2; 96:3). Psalms 66 and 96 are mission psalms. God in Gen. 26:5b states, “Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.” Abraham must have been zealous in spreading the name of the Lord, even though Moses did not record it in details. Because God’s ultimate wish is to bless all humanity. Isaac continued the universal mission of his father, Abraham (26:4), followed by Jacob (Gen. 28:13-15; 35:11-12; 46:3). Joseph was brought to Egypt by force, but he became God’s witness in a foreign land, a great nation at that time. Moses did wonders before Pharaoh and brought the Israelites out of Egypt. Hiram, the king of Tyre wrote a letter to Solomon blessing the Lord, the God of Solomon (2 Chron. 2:11-12); King Ahasuerus married Esther (Esther 1-9); Daniel and his three friends witnessed to Babylon’s king and his top officials about the true God (Dan. 1-3)—they helped Nebuchadnezzar to know the most high God. Daniel witnessed to the last Babylonian king, Belshazzar (Daniel 5), to King Darius the Mede (Daniel 6), and to King Cyrus of Persia (1:21; 6:28; 10:1). Daniel was the OT missionary prophet in exile. The Prophet Zephaniah prophesied that all the lands of the nations, in their own location, would worship the Lord (Zeph. 2:11; 3:9-10).

### (4) Migrant or Sojourner Evangelism:

During the OT time, the geographical location of Israel was at the crossroads of the Middle East international routes, between Egypt and Assyria or Babylon. Different

cultures, merchants, religions, nations, and people were meeting there, and people were confronted with different belief systems, and the temple in Jerusalem with the courtyard of the Gentiles would be the center of true worship (Isa. 2:2-4). Ten foreigners from all languages and nations visiting Jerusalem would take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, “Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. 8:22-23).<sup>58</sup> The Queen of Sheba visited Solomon because of Solomon’s riches and wisdom concerning with the name of the Lord (1 Kings 10:1-9; 2 Chron. 9:1-8).

(5) Living Witness:

Israel was to be the living example for all nations. What God did for Israel is a testimony of His attributes that He is the living God and the God of the living. Even when His name was profaned by the disobedience of Israel, God would vindicate the holiness of His great name (Josh. 2:9-14; Isa. 61:9-11; Ezek. 20:12; 36:23; 38:23; 39:7, 27-29).

## **New Testament**

Various methods of evangelism were practiced in the NT from personal witnessing, door-to-door, in an assembly (synagogue), to mass evangelism.

(1) Personal Witnessing or Evangelism in the Gospel of John and Acts:

“Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see’” (John 1:45-46).

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<sup>58</sup>Jiri Moskala, “The Mission of God’s People in the Old Testament,” *Perspective Digest*, accessed July 29, 2015, <http://www.perspectivedigest.org/article/38/archives/16-2/mission-ofgod-s-people-in-the-old-testament>.

Personal evangelism in Acts involving Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch: This is a perfect picture of a personal soul winner “in touch” with the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:26-28 and 35-37).<sup>59</sup>

Other examples of personal evangelism are: Jesus and Nicodemus (John 3:1-21); Jesus and Samaritan woman (John 4); Jesus and rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-31); Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19); Peter and Cornelius (Acts 10); Paul and Philippian jailer (Acts 16); Paul before Felix (Acts 24); and Paul before Agrippa (Acts 26).

(2) While in Ephesus, Paul did Door-to-door Evangelism in Acts:

“How I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20: 20-21).

(3) Street evangelism and market place evangelism (Acts 17:16-18):

(4) Mass Evangelism:

Peter preached to the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-41). Since his target audience was the Jews, and they already understood fairly well the concept of God, men, sin, and death, Peter went straight to the point of introducing Jesus as the crucified Christ (v. 36). The result was that three thousand souls were saved.

Paul preached to the Gentiles in Lystra (Acts 14:6-18), a pagan people who were not familiar with the Israel’s God; hence, Paul began to speak to them by introducing the living God who made the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all things that are in (v. 15).

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<sup>59</sup>“New Testament Evangelism: Bringing It Back to Basics”, NCLS Research, accessed July 28, 2015, <http://www.ncls.org.au/default.aspx?docid=397>.

On another occasion, in Athens (Acts 17:16-34), there were Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. While they appeared to be religious, they were polytheists; Paul began his preaching by proclaiming the true God who made the world and everything in it (v. 24).

Other examples of mass evangelism: Peter addressed the crowd (Acts 3); Stephen addressed the Sanhedrin (Acts 7); Paul in the synagogue in Antioch (Acts 13); Paul in the Iconium synagogue (Acts 14); Paul in a place of prayer in Philippi (Acts 16); Paul in the synagogue in Thessalonica (Acts 17); Paul in a synagogue in Berea (Acts 17:10-15); Paul at Corinth in a synagogue and in the home of a seeker (Acts 18); Paul at Ephesus in a synagogue and a lecture hall daily for two years (Acts 19); and Paul to the Jewish leaders in Rome at his rented home while under house arrest (Acts 28).

Today evangelistic methodology may be different (see Chapter Two), but whatever method we use, the message of the gospel is the same. While salvation belongs to the Lord (Ps. 3:8; Rev. 7:10), we are charged to be the witnesses of the gospel throughout our generation and we should set examples to the generation to come, all for the glory of God.

### Soul Winning in the OT & NT

#### Old Testament

The very first sign of blessing to human being is immediately after the creation of man and woman: “And God **blessed** them. And God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply** and fill the earth . . . .” (Gen. 1:28a). Teaching and witnessing to the children are the imperative of godly parents beginning in Genesis.

Raising faithful children became the first imperative of evangelism within the family and to all generations there after. Walter Brueggemann comments on Gen 1:28 that the creation narrative is a statement about *the blessing God has ordained into the process of human life*. The theology of **blessing** emerged out of the faith of Israel and was not derived from ancient Near Eastern texts.<sup>60</sup> Families are established by God through procreation: “Children are heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward” (Ps. 127:3). God wants parents to impart the same Christian values to our children and children’s children so that the future generations will be blessed.

**Noah** was the first evangelist recorded in the Bible. 2 Peter 2:5 (KJV) describes Noah as a preacher of righteousness. By faith, after being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen and in reverential fear, he constructed an ark for the saving of his household (Heb. 11:7a). Noah not only convinced his wife, his three sons, and his sons’ wives of God’s salvation plan, but he also evangelized the surrounding people. Noah took 100 to 120 years to build the ark and if so, he preached for at least 100 years, but none responded. Today we are living in the days of Noah; the Lord will return abruptly just as the flood came suddenly (Matt. 24:36-39). We want to be like Noah and preach the gospel even when men are not heeding the call so that our posterity will be saved.

**Moses** was tending the sheep of his father-in-law on the mountain of God when God called him from the burning bush. Moses was asked to rescue the Israelites out of

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<sup>60</sup>Walter Bruggemann, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching Genesis* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 36-37.

slavery in Egypt (Exod. 4:1-17). By faith Moses led the Israelites through the Red Sea (Heb. 11:29).

Moses personally exhorted to his brother-in-law Hobab, the son of Reuel, to enter the Promised Land. If he went, Hobab would share in the good thing that the Lord gave to Israel (Num. 10: 29-32). Moses wrote about Jesus (John 5:46-47; John 1:45). Moses predicted the coming Messiah, a prophet like himself (Deut. 18:15, 18).

Moses commanded the people of Israel to listen to the statutes and rules of God. He urged them to keep those statutes and do (practice) them or obey them completely (NLT), for that would be their understanding and wisdom in the sight of the peoples, who said, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people” (Lev. 4:5-7). The process of evangelism is, first, to hear the Word of the Lord, and then to understand it, keep it, and to obey it. Israel was to declare it to the surrounding nations that they might hear and be amazed by the good testimony of the Israel and their God. Our living testimony as believers must correspond to our faith in the Lord; then our preaching will be effective to our neighbors.

Israel was called to witness to their children (Deut. 6:7; 20-25). Israel was also called to faith, obedience, and repentance (Deut. 30:8; Lev. 5:5; Josh. 24:15). Israel was called to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation (Exod. 19:6). Israel was to bear testimony to the nations of God’s greatness (Deut. 4:6-8, KJV). Israel was to love the strangers or the foreigners in their land and treat them as their own, for they were once slaves in Egypt (Lev. 19:34; Deut. 24:17-18). There are many migrants in Singapore; we are to treat them as we treat our own citizens; we are also indebted to preach the gospel to them.



**Joshua**, meaning “Yahweh the Savior,” told the people they needed to choose whom they would serve, the LORD or the pagan gods. Evangelism is about asking people to respond to God’s instruction to fear him and to serve him in sincerity and faithfulness, and to put away all other gods (Joshua 24:14-15). Joshua met the Captain of the Lord of hosts, who is Jesus Christ (Josh. 5:13-15). Joshua’s allegiance to the Lord, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Josh. 24:15) should be the motto of every Christian home today, it is a godly family testimony to the people.

In Jericho, Rahab and all who were with her in her house were saved because her faith in the Lord. She must have witnessed or convinced her relatives to have the same faith in the God of Israel as she did (Josh. 2:8-14; 6:17).

Bearing fruit for the Lord is not optional: “They shall bear forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing” (Ps. 92:14). Whether young or old, it is important to win souls for the Lord. It will be too late to wait till old age to do so; one has to start from a young age or as soon as one is saved. This was the biblical basis of one of my sermons, “Bearing Fruit is not an Option.”

The psalmist declared the salvation and the glory of the Lord among the nations: “Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the nations” (Ps. 96:2-3).

Special joy is promised to the soul winner. When a Christian works to win souls, praying even with tears for souls, he will rejoice when lost sinners are converted to Jesus

Christ.<sup>61</sup> The Bible says, “They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him” (Psalm 126:5-6 KJV); “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth soul is wise” (Prov. 11:30, KJV).

**Isaiah** saw the great vision of God when the Lord asked, “Whom shall I send and who shall go for us?” Isaiah responded positively, “Here am I! Send me!” (Isa. 6: 8)

Isaiah spoke to the people vv. 9-10:

Keep on hearing, but do not understand;  
keep on seeing, but do not perceive.  
Make the heart of this people dull,  
    and their ears heavy,  
    and blind their eyes;  
lest they see with their eyes,  
    and hear with their ears,  
and understand with their hearts,  
    and turn and be healed.

Matthew Henry commented on the above passage: “God sends Isaiah to foretell the ruin of his people. Many hear the sound of God's Word, but do not feel the power of it. God sometimes, in righteous judgment, gives men up to blindness of mind, because they will not receive the truth in the love of it.”<sup>62</sup> Commenting on the same passage, Albert Barnes noted: “This shows the spirit with which ministers must deliver the message of God. It is their business to deliver the message, though they should know that

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<sup>61</sup>C. L. Cagan, “The Blessings of The Soul Winner,” accessed July 16, 2015, [http://www.rlhymersjr.com/Online\\_Sermons/2011/012311AM\\_BlessingsOfSoulWinner.html](http://www.rlhymersjr.com/Online_Sermons/2011/012311AM_BlessingsOfSoulWinner.html).

<sup>62</sup>“Matthew Henry, Concise Commentary,” Bible Hub, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/isaiah/6-9.htm>.

it will neither be understood nor believed.”<sup>63</sup> Christ quoted the same in Matthew 13:14-15, Mark 4:12, and John 12:40, which are passages about spreading the gospel. Paul said the same in Acts 28:26-27.

Other verses in the book of Isaiah that are related to evangelism are: God will be made known among the nations (Isa. 12:4); God will make Israel a light to the Gentiles, and to bring salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6); God will sprinkle many nations. The unreached nations will see and understand the salvation of our God (52:10, 15); and the word which goes forth from his mouth will not return to him empty (55:10-11). Isaiah was anointed to bring good news to the afflicted (61:1-2). Isaiah was to tell the kindness of the Lord, the deed is to be praised (63:7). Israel was to gather all nations and tongues and see the glory of the Lord (66:18-23).

**Ezekiel** was made a watchman. Ezekiel 3:17-19 says:

17 Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 18 If I say to the wicked, “You shall surely die,” and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, in order to save his life, that wicked person shall die for his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die for his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

This passage is perhaps the clearest of all Scripture of the continuous command to evangelize and reach lost souls. Ezekiel was told that he was a watchman for the house of Israel and he needed to warn unbelievers of their evil ways in order to save them from

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<sup>63</sup>“Barnes’ Notes on the Bible,” Bible Hub, accessed July 16, 2015, <http://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bnb/view.cgi?bk=22&ch=6>.

God's judgment. God said to Ezekiel that He would hold him accountable for those that he did not evangelize who died in their sins.<sup>64</sup>

The Lord told the prophet he had appointed him a watchman to the house of Israel. If we warn the wicked, we are not chargeable with their ruin. Though such passages refer to the national covenant made with Israel, they are equally to be applied to the final state of all men under every dispensation. We are not only to encourage and comfort those who appear to be righteous, but they are to be warned, for many have grown high-minded and secure, have fallen, and even died in their sins. Surely then the hearers of the gospel should desire warnings, and even reproofs.<sup>65</sup>

God declared to Israel that he had no pleasure in the death of the wicked; they should turn their way and live (Ez. 33:10-11). Repentance is universal and is for all people. The gospel we preach must include repentance towards God as one key element of being humble before the Lord.

**Daniel** cited the blessings of soul winner. Daniel 12:1-3 says:

1 At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, *everyone* whose name shall be found written in the book. 2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. 3 And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.

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<sup>64</sup>“Soul Winning & Evangelism,” Church Education Resource Ministry, accessed July 22, 2015, [http://www.cerm.info/bible\\_studies/Topical/soul\\_winning.htm](http://www.cerm.info/bible_studies/Topical/soul_winning.htm).

<sup>65</sup>“Matthew Henry, Concise Commentary,” Bible Hub, accessed July 22, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/ezekiel/3-17.htm>.

At the end God's people shall be delivered; everyone who is written in the book of life will be saved (12:1). God wrote their names in the Book of Life and God will deliver them. Many of those who sleep in the dust shall arise, some to everlasting life, some to everlasting death or contempt (12:2).<sup>66</sup> Soul winners will shine like the brightness of the sky and the stars forever and ever. What an incredible blessing that no believer should deny: they "will share in the glory of those they have helped to heaven, which will add to their own glory."<sup>67</sup>

The book of **Jonah** clearly indicates that evangelism is the work of God. God commissioned Jonah to go to Nineveh to convict the people there of their sins and lead them to repentance (Jon. 1:2). God called Jonah the second time to preach to people of Nineveh (3:1). Jonah's unwillingness to comply caused him to suffer in the belly of a great fish for three days and three nights, typifying Christ's three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40). Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh (Luke 11:30), and the result of Jonah's preaching was astonishing: "And the people of Nineveh believed God" (Jon. 3:5). It is estimated at least 120,000 souls were saved (Jon. 4:11). This was the biblical basis in one of my sermons, "Are You and Your Family on the Right Track?"

### **New Testament**

The concept of preaching the gospel or evangelizing has its origin in the OT. We

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<sup>66</sup>Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ From Daniel* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2012), 361.

<sup>67</sup>"Matthew Henry, Concise Commentary," Bible Hub, accessed July 22, 2015, <http://biblehub.com/daniel/12-3.htm>.

can recognize this from the following two NT verses:

(1) “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed’” (Gal. 3:8). Paul quoted Gen. 12:3 that the gospel was preached about 4000 years ago to Abraham.

(2) “For good news came to us just as to **them**, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened” (Heb. 4:2). Unless by faith, hearing the good news is of no benefit; the context of this passage is from the exodus generation (referring to “**them**” in 4:2), but it is certainly applicable to the hearing of the gospel today. The gospel can only be accepted by faith and we must stress this concept when preaching the good news.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the value of human soul. Jesus put a price tag on human soul, which is more than the value of the entire world (Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36; and Luke 9:25). In terms of GDP, it is worth more than USD 78 trillion per annum. It does not matter whether a person is young or old, rich or poor, highly educated or illiterate; his soul is most valuable. A poor man like Lazarus is very rich in the eyes of God, and the world riches man is a pauper if he has no eternal salvation in him. A soul winner can add value to a person’s net worth. Nothing could be more pleasing to God, than repentant souls, this is described in the trilogy parables in Luke 15. This was the biblical basis in one of my preaching “How Much One Soul Costs?”

In 1 Peter 1:12, Peter says that those who brought the good news are sent by the Holy Spirit from heaven; it is so wonderful that even angels are eagerly watching (NIV).

It is such a privilege for believers to evangelize, even angels are “enviously” watching.

The Word of the Lord that is the good news that granted new life endures forever. Some controversy does arise in 1 Pet. 3:18-20 and 1 Pet. 4:6:

**18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, **19** in which he went and **proclaimed** to the **spirits** in prison, **20** because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water (1 Pet. 3:18-20).

For this is why the gospel was preached even to those who are dead, that though judged in the flesh the way people are, they might live in the spirit the way God does. (4:6)

Some believe that there is a second chance for salvation even after death. I am of the view that it is not biblical; otherwise, there would be other verses in the Bible that support this very important doctrine of salvation. Furthermore, people would want to rely on this “second chance” and live according to their own will. I think that the key word is “proclaimed”; it is **not** proclaiming the gospel (*euangelizo*), but rather it is *prosagó* or *προσάγω*, which is “to bring near” or “to approach.” The word “spirits” in prison does not refer to human spirits, which are normally called souls. If so, it is to the fallen angels and the proclamation cannot be the gospel but is almost certainly a declaration of victory.<sup>68</sup> The gospel preached even to those who are dead should be read as those who

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<sup>68</sup>Wiersbe, *Ephesians—Revelation*, The Bible Exposition Commentary 2, 416. This view is also supported by: R. A. Torrey, *Difficulty in the Bible: Alleged Errors and Contradictions: Did Jesus Go Into the Abode of the Dead and Preach to The Spirits in Prison? Is There Another Probation After Death?* Ch. 24, Logos eBook; Thomas Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter and Jude*, New American Commentary 37 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003), 1 Pet. 3:19, Logos e-Book; David Walls and Max Anders, *I & II Pet., I, II & III John, Jude*, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 1 Pet. 3:19, Logos e-Book. It says that the “spirits” refers to angels. Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary of the Whole Bible*, 2430, comments that sinners as soon as they are out of the bodies, there is no redemption.

are *now* dead (see NIV and HCSB). Therefore, we must tell our non-believers that there is only one chance for salvation while they still live, and they must seize the opportunity to believe. As believers we must seize the opportunity to evangelize. There is no need of evangelism in heaven or hell.

Soul winning takes place when someone responds to the gospel, embraces it wholly, and is called into the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord (1 Cor. 1:9). It is the result of effective calling, which is defined by Wayne Grudem as "an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons people to himself in such a way that they respond in saving faith."<sup>69</sup>

Five thousand cumulative souls were saved during the Pentecost through the preaching of Peter. Hundreds of thousands of souls were saved at Jonah's preaching in Nineveh. However, the greatest soul winner is the Holy Spirit himself; without him, no conversion could happen. Preachers are merely channels and instruments that God uses to deliver the gospel message: "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14).

In order that the gospel is heard, it must be spoken and proclaimed; and the preacher must be sent. "How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?" (Rom. 10:14-15a). These verses are some of the clearest that show the duty of believers

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<sup>69</sup>Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 693.



to be sent and to spread the good news to the unreached. There had been reports and testimonies that miracles of dreams and visions of Jesus came to convert CAN seekers; even then someone has to introduce the truth of the gospel to them first.

Peter and Jonah were exceptional evangelists (*euangelistes*); they were endowed with spiritual gifts. For most of us, evangelism is a spiritual discipline and, although it is not optional, it is bestowed to us as a privilege, a divine-human co-operation.

There are other Bible verses that refer to soul winning without using the term *euangelion* or *euangelizo*. Some of them are: “Follow me, I will make you fishers of men” (Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17; Luke 5:10). In order to win some souls, Paul made himself a slave to all, and to the Jews he became as a Jew (1 Cor. 9:19-20, 22). Jude exhorts, “Save others, by snatching them out of the fire [of hell]” (Jude 1:23).

Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 9:37-38, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” I am particularly intrigued by the above passage; out of 100 Christians, only five percent (5%) win souls, up to twenty percent (20%) evangelize, while the rest eighty percent (80%) have nothing to do with evangelism.<sup>70</sup>

Instead praying for the lost, Jesus commanded us to pray first that the Lord of the Harvest would send out workers into His harvest. John MacArthur has this to say; it is possible to pray for the salvation of the loved one or a neighbor. But when we earnestly pray for the Lord to send someone to evangelize to them, we cannot help but becoming

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<sup>70</sup>“Evangelism Statistics,” Bible.Blog, accessed August 2, 2015, <http://bible.org/illustration/evangelism-statistics>.

open to being that someone ourselves. We place ourselves at His disposal.<sup>71</sup> Unless one is already in Hades like the rich man, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, he can only pray to send someone to preach to his loved ones on earth. We can encourage the 80% dormant Christians to evangelize, but at the end of the day they must see the urgency and avail themselves to be the workers in the harvest. Otherwise, they see no necessity to make the effort and stay contented or bear the guilt feeling for life.

The soul winner receives praises in heaven: He is wise, “The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and whoever captures souls is wise” (Prov. 11:30). The wise who turn many to righteousness are like the stars forever and ever (Dan. 12:3), and the soul winner’s feet are beautiful (Rom. 10:15). A commendation comes from our Lord himself, “Well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt. 25:21). These biblical bases provided texts for my last sermon “The Blessings of a Soul Winner.”

### Conclusion

The above research study confirms all the five goals set out in the introduction of this chapter: (1) Every believer is a witness or a spokesman of the gospel; evangelism is divine-man co-operation, a privilege given only to believers; (2) evangelism is a spiritual discipline and not a spiritual gift given to evangelists; believers should regard evangelism equally as the other major disciplines of praying, studying the word, and fellowshiping with the saints; (3) since the Great Commission is for every believer, we are not doing it alone because the Lord has all the power and authority, and he had promised to be with

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<sup>71</sup>MacArthur, *Matthew 8-15: New Testament Commentary*, 117.

us until the end of the age; (4) evangelism methodology in the OT and NT is for believers to adopt. Personal and relational witnessing is dominant in the OT and NT and is most suitable for believers today; (5) while conversion is of the Lord, soul winning is encouraged and blessed—it is God's plan.

It is also obvious that evangelism in the OT and NT has to be intentional in order to achieve, or at least to play a part in the two, the OT and NT Great Commissions. It is further ascertained that evangelism is a spiritual discipline that needs constant prayer, meditation on the Word, and the support of the fellowship of the saints to encourage and to pray for one another. Above all, the role of the Holy Spirit is of paramount importance, as salvation belongs to the Lord (Ps. 3:8; Jon. 2:9; 2 Pet. 3:15; Rev. 7:10).

The above sets out the biblical and theological foundations of intentional evangelism; the mandates are loud and clear. The Great Commissions in both the OT and NT are here to stay whether the church likes it or not. Not fulfilling the Great Commissions leads to the Great Omission of disobedience.

Churches must create a conducive environment for evangelism to its members and become evangelistic and disciple-making congregations. Only then we can be called the salt and the light of the world.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE PROJECT REPORT**

This project was planned and implemented to develop intentional evangelism at LBPC Singapore, the church that I have been attending as a member for the past thirteen years. The implementation topics are as follows:

1. Ministry Journal—Chronological and Detailed Records of What Transpired from Beginning to the End.
2. The Participants—the Church Members, including Some Non-members.
3. The Interviews—What was Learned From the Pioneers About the Church?
4. The GSED Seminar and the Implementation of the Sermon Series.
5. Measurement Instruments and Measurement Tools.
6. Pre-test and Post-test Surveys.
7. Unforeseen Causes.

One of the goals of this chapter is to assess the successes and the challenges of LBPC in evangelism from four pioneers of the church since or near its inception who had been with the church or already left the church, but remain knowledgeable about the past and present of the church's history.

The six-sermon series was the prerequisite for the D. Min. project; in addition, it was combined with the GSED seminar, which was predominantly teaching on evangelism and discipleship. The sermons were designed to take the lead on the topic of

evangelism as well as to complement the teaching part. The success of the preaching and teaching seminar is evidenced in the post-test survey results.

The pre-test and post-test were designed to monitor the improvement, if any, on members' receptiveness to intentional evangelism, before and after the GSED seminars, including the sermons delivered. The Spiritual Health Thermometer Scale (SHTS) survey included in the pre- and post-tests to draw the correlation between evangelism and spiritual discipline, i.e., to determine if evangelism is part of the spiritual disciplines like studying the Word, praying, and fellowshiping with the saints.

#### Ministry Journal—Chronological and Detailed Records of What Transpired from Beginning to the End

#### **January 2015:**

The idea of conducting a GSED seminar was my proposal during a combined fellowship meeting on 21 January 2015 attended by three key pastors, heads of the NBC, and leaders of all fellowship groups. I had (with my co-trainer) conducted GSED seminars in North Asia and South East Asia, including Singapore, and also in two European countries in 2013, for nearly 2400 church leaders, members, and Bible college students. LBPC had been neglected. I felt compelled to propose the seminar since the situation of evangelism in our own church was found wanting. My proposal to conduct this seminar did not find any objection, and was immediately accepted at the meeting; the month of September was assigned as the earliest available and suitable time without competing major programs planned by the church. As this would become a church-wide seminar, one pastor estimated that the number of participants would be in excess of one

hundred. I would have been more than happy if we had ninety, or 10% of the weekly English services' attendance. With this approval from the church, I therefore had the opportunity to change my dissertation topic to "Developing Intentional Evangelism at LBPC Singapore." Booking of the multi-purpose hall as the venue, and related rooms for lunch and teatime, were confirmed from the church administration.

### **February 2015:**

My supervisor approved the new project proposal in early February. In mid-February, the IRB (Institutional Review Board of UU) application was submitted.

During that time, I approached the senior pastor of the church to conduct a church-wide survey on personal witnessing, as this had not been done in the church before. The survey would not only show the state of members towards evangelism, but would also show their interests in evangelism training. Without hesitation the suggestion was accepted.

### **March 2015:**

The church's personal witnessing survey was launched on March 15, 2015. I was asked to write the introductory letter entitled "Personal Witnessing" (see Appendix 7). Some of the articles were direct quotations from Dr. Stephen Olford's introductory section in his book *The Secret of Soul Winning*. I originally wanted to publish the entire "Introduction" of the book, but the letter of consent came a few days late and the church could not wait. The consent letter from the publisher B & H, via Dr. David Olford (Stephen Olford's son), allowed the church to publish the entire section. Following the

introductory letter was the pastor's letter on the personal witnessing survey (see Appendix 8).

#### **April 2015:**

By the end of the survey submission on 28 April 2015, 228 or about 25% of the church's weekly attendance of 900 responded. The summary of the results is included in Appendix 9. The survey results show that while almost all respondents accepted Christ due to witnessing by others, less than 20% of "Lifers" do intentional witnessing. 33.3% are willing to be trained in personal evangelism; almost 90% are willing to be (1) encouragers in evangelism (39%); (2) soul winners (37%); (3) change their mindsets (43%); and bring culture change (21%). The survey revealed that up to 3% of the respondents were not born again or not sure of being born-again Christians.

Meanwhile at the end of April, I obtained IRB approval. Included in the approval were the pre-test and post-test survey questionnaires, and the Informed Consent Interview letter.

#### **May 2015:**

I immediately began the interview process. Three pioneers were interviewed in May 2015. One other was interviewed in mid-July, making a total of four interviews. The results of the interviews are narrated in the Interview section of this chapter. In essence, all the interviewees believe that LBPC became one of the fastest growing churches in Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s due to the success of an aggressive outreach ministry among the youth through the fellowship groups, the Sunday school, Varsity Christian Fellowship, gospel tracting, and evangelistic meetings. Their main concern now is the

third generation members who are not willing to witness or uninterested in witnessing due to supposedly other more important priorities such as studies and acquiring advanced knowledge from the Internet.

During the month, I approached about ten brethren to form the seminar committee. Praise the Lord, all of them agreed.

### **June 2015**

In early June the seminar committee was formed from ten selected brethren, including myself, from Youth Fellowship (YF), Men's Fellowship (MF), Ladies' Fellowship (LF), Evangelism & Discipleship Dept. (EDD), and Audio Visual Dept.; additionally, one elder who is supportive of outreach work agreed to sit on the committee. I am indebted to them for their cooperation and dedication that made conducting a first-time seminar like this an enjoyable and blessed project. I only needed to call two meetings, as actions could be dealt with expeditiously outside the meetings. LF was in charge of food and beverage (F&B), EDD the finance, and MF the logistics. YF was in charge of advertising posters, e-registration, and the constant update of registration status. Interactive or pull-up posters (see Appendices 10A and 10B) were displayed on the day of registration at strategic locations. Besides the seminar committee meetings, the chairman of EDD also called one meeting in mid-June. Among other things, the preparation and progress of the seminar and the budget were discussed.

### **July 2015:**

The e-registration began on Sunday 5 July 2015 and continued to 31 August 2015. The launching of the e-registration was accompanied with a newsletter detailing the



March survey results and to promote the seminar to be held on September 19 and 24 (see Appendices 9 & 9A). By end July, only 22 registered, far short of 90 or 10% of regular weekly attendance of the two morning worship services.

### **August 2015:**

A second committee meeting was held in early August to review the registration, and a division of labor was reinforced. The elder was to canvass at the session or elders' meeting to encourage members of their departments to register for the seminar. Inserts for the Sunday Weekly were published from early July until the end of August. I shared a PPT presentation of what to expect in the seminar during one of the Tuesday night corporate prayer meetings; later several senior members saw the benefits and promised to register. We made similar short sharing at the MF and LF meetings, and GAF outing, but without the PPT presentation. YF introduced manual e-registration during the interval between the first worship service and Sunday school, and before and after the second service. This initiative went on for three consecutive Sundays from August 16 and gained considerable momentum. Praise the Lord, by the August 31 deadline, there were nearly 100 registered.

### **September 2015:**

As the venue could hold 120 people, we decided to extend the e-registration without further announcement until September 18. By the eve of the first day of the seminar, 114 had registered. There were six cancellations due to unforeseen circumstances, and about 10 teens in the 12 to 17 year-old age group did not turn up as they were signed up either by their SS teachers or parents. The first day of the seminar

was attended by 96 people, and the second day 83 persons. Total participants attending one or two days were 110 persons; the number of participants attending two successive days was 70. About 11% of the attendees were non-members. The percentages of various age groups are: 3% between 12 to 17; 20% between 18 to 24; 26% between 25 to 50; 43% between 51 to 65; and 8% above 65. The ratio of male and female participants was about 48:52. Email and SMS were used to obtain confirmation of attendance.

Out of the 96 people who attended the day 1 seminar on 19 September 2015, 69 submitted the pre-test form, which constituted a 71.9% response. Out of the 83 persons who attended the day 2 seminar, 73 submitted the post-test forms. However since 12 of them did not take part in the day 1 pre-survey, and in the interests of more accurate statistics, only the 61 who completed both pre and post-surveys were measured, which constituted a 73.5% response.

We divided the participants into 12 different groups from A to M (excluding group I). The elderly or seniors were in front rows, with the teenagers or youth groups at the back. This was to facilitate the visibility of the older participants. There were 7 to 9 persons in a group. About 10 of them who had been trained in the GSED previously were spread out into various groups in order to facilitate group discussions. The day 1 preaching and teaching schedule is shown in Appendix 11. Our senior pastor opened the seminar with ten minutes of exhortation and prayer. He quoted Matt. 4:19, "Follow me, I will make you fishers of men." This was followed by my first exhortation entitled, "The Awesome Gospel" (Romans 3:21-26) for about 30 minutes. After lunch break, I delivered the second sermon entitled "Hell Pleads for the Gospel to the Living Lost" (Luke 16:19-

31) for about 22 minutes. Details of the sermon series are in Appendix 14. Due to a tight schedule, the third sermon was brought over to the day 2 seminar. Day 1 total time for the seminar, including two sermons, was 390 minutes or 6½ hours. The teaching portions were divided into about 20 topics or “chunks,” and were shared with my co-trainer (CT). Praise the Lord, there were no dull moments and I believe that participants were kept attentive; the group discussions helped to heighten the spirit of learning.

During the marking of attendance prior to the start of the day 1 seminar, each participant was given the pre-test survey form. Upon submission of the form whether or not it is filled up, each of them received the seminar workbook. At the end of day 1, the topics covered of the workbook were on schedule, with the exception of the third exhortation that was postponed to day 2. Each seminar day was divided into four sessions; the first session was 1 hour and 45 minutes, from 9 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. with 15-minute intervals; the second session was 1½ hours from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. was a lunch break. The third session was 1 hour and 45 minutes, from 1:30 p.m. to 3:15 p.m., followed by a 15-minute interval. The last session was 1½ hours, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The day 2 seminar was held five days after day 1 on a Thursday, which was a public holiday. On this day, there were 83 participants, 70 of which had attended the day 1 seminar. 61 filled up the post-test survey, or 73.5 %. The seminar began with the third sermon on Ps. 92, “Bearing Fruit is not Optional”; time taken was 30 minutes. The fourth sermon was at the beginning of second session, “How Much is a Soul Worth?” (Matt. 16:26 with the illustration from the prodigal son in Luke 15.) It was about 25 minutes.

The fifth sermon was at the beginning of the third session, “Are You on the Right Track?” (Jonah 1:1-3). It was about 30 minutes. As time was tight, the sixth sermon was postponed to the trainer seminar on 10 November 2015. In addition to the workbook, we utilized two textbooks, *The Story of Hope* (TSOH), and *The Way to Joy* (TWTJ). TSOH is for evangelism, and TWTJ discipleship. Due to the unhealthy air from Indonesian forest fires that started from the beginning of September, two outdoor activities were cancelled and moved indoors.

Total expenses for day 1 and 2 seminars were S\$4,200, within the budgeted amount of S\$4,500. The church approved the budget from the EDD expense line. Main expenses were the workbook, two textbooks, boxed lunches, and other refreshments. LF is highly commended for all the excellent F&B arrangement. MF brethren did equally well in the administrative and logistical aspects of the seminar. My CT did very well in providing the professionally-printed workbook with more than sufficient copies for all attendees.

I was really humbled by the attendance, which was beyond expectation. With God’s help, I believe that we executed the two-day seminar well; the results of the pre- and post-test surveys, including the SHTS test, are the best mechanisms to assess the success of the seminar and whether it achieved the objectives.

### **October 2015:**

I began collation of pre- and post-test survey results using XL files. I also prepared the November 10 trainer seminar by inviting those who attended the two-day

seminar via email and SMS to participate. By the end of October, 23 had signed up.

Many who attended the basic two-day seminar felt that they were not ready to become GSED trainers yet and some wanted to practice evangelism before becoming a trainer.

### **November 2015:**

21 people attended the full-time trainer seminar on 10 November 2015 and at the end of the day received the certificate from our senior pastor. Participants included one pastor, one elder, and one deacon. One third of the participants were from MF. 19 church members and 2 non-members, 13 males and 8 females, 6 were from the age group 24 to 50, and the rest above 50. They were challenged to begin training even on one-to-one basis with someone who is keen to know about GSED. Some had suggested starting with their small group NBC and SS. The trainer seminar was held in a classroom with table and chairs. At the beginning of the seminar, the group was led to a long corridor, which had markings of 1 through 10 on the floor. They were asked to stand on the number they felt confident in teaching/conducting in the GSED seminar. The result was a skewed distribution towards scale 2-6, with no takers on 7-10. At the end of the day, with the same activity, the distribution was skewed towards the higher numbers, with most participants choosing between 4-6, none below 4, and 4 of them occupying number 7 to 9. Therefore, the confidence level of the participants had increased. I delivered the final sermon before the floor scale exercise for about 35 minutes.

On 28 November 2015, I was invited to brief two NBCs about 30 persons. This was the introductory presentation before they began the bible study with TSOH and

TWTJ in 2016. The pastor in charge of these two NBCs has decided to use GSED textbooks for discipleship training.

### The Participants

Besides the four candidates for the interviews who are the pioneers of LBPC or ex-LBPC members, the majority of the 110 candidates were participants from the two-day seminar held on 19 & 24 September 2015. 89% of the participants were LBPC members; the remaining 11% were non-members. Non-members are either currently worshipping at LBPC or brought in for the seminar by members. The ratio between male and female was about 48:52. Their age groups are 9 persons >65, 50 persons 51-65, 30 persons 24-50, 18 persons 17-24, and 3 persons 12-17. With a minimal number of teens and youth, the seminar was geared to the adult audience. Among the participants were 2 pastors, 1 elder, 4 deacons, 3 ex-deacons, and about 10 SS teachers. All fellowship groups were represented; GAF, MF, LF, and YF leaders were attending, and AF, YAF, and LTF members were present. Participants were recorded by marking attendance on day 1 and day 2 seminars, and by submitting the pre-test and/or post-test surveys.

Based on the pre-test survey, in terms of the number of years as Christians, only one <2 years, four 3-6 years, six 7-10 years, twenty-one 11-20 years, and thirty seven >20 years. The profiles of participants showed more maturity or longer years as believers. In terms of multi-generational status, 41 were first-generation Christians, 21 second-generation, 3 third-generation, and 4 were fourth-generation Christians.

The Interviews—What was Learned From the Pioneers about the Church?

The purpose of the interviews was to explore the history and current state of intentional evangelism at Life B-P Church, Singapore. Four elderly church pioneers were interviewed; they included a pastor, elder, and former leader of the church, some of whom are no longer with the church, but are still closely related or attending or ministering in other BP Churches. All of them read and agreed to sign the *Informed Consent to Participate in A Research Study* form in Appendix 6. All of them consented to the use of audio recording, but due to confidentiality and privacy matters in one of the interviews, I voluntarily erased it in front of the interviewee. The fifth person was not in good health, and I therefore skipped the interview. The four interviews are believed sufficient enough to arrive at the objective of knowing about the church. Each interview lasted between 1 to 1½ hours either inside or outside the church, at the interviewee's office or home.

There are three sections to the interview questions representing three stages: (1) The B-P Formative Years (1950-1970); (2) B-P Growing Years (1971-1990); and (3) B-P Maintaining Years (1991 to date). Each stage had five questions. Stage one questions included:

1. Describe your relationship with LBPC in its inception year.
2. Describe the B-P movement in Singapore in the 1950s and 60s.
3. What impressed you most in those struggling years?
4. How was outreach carried out? What was the vision and mission then?
5. What did they do right that God made the increase in numbers?

Stage 1—The Formative Years (1950-1970):

Responses from the four interviewees:

Interviewee 1:

I came to Life Church Prinsep Street and one SS school teacher Dr. Timothy Tow, who later became the pastor, witnessed to me in 1953. There were dialect services, Hokien and Teowchew. I was baptized in 1954. Dr. Tow came back from his seminary study in USA in 1950 and started the English service with 30 to 50 members. In late 50s the Gilstead Rd. premises were acquired and a sanctuary with a 750-seating capacity was built and the first English service was inaugurated in 1963. We were zealous in witnessing to non-believers; we even preached in many street corners and evangelized to people in the street. We also witnessed to the neighborhood where there were squatters. The leadership under Rev. Tow impressed me most; the outreach ministry and house-to-house visitation was an important ministry. We have very strong youth fellowship. The young people were challenged by the pastor's message; Rev. Tow did not lord over people and he received full support from the young people and he was the spiritual leader of the church. When he challenged members to give for the building fund, the people gave sacrificially, because we saw Rev. Tow lived by his word, he practiced what he preached, and became exemplary to the entire congregation. The building fund, including the interest-free loans from members was able to cover the construction cost of the building. When the church building was completed, the outreach ministry expanded to West Malaysia. Churches were planted in successive places. There were a total of 60 outreaches in Singapore and West Malaysia.

Interviewee 2:

I am a third-generation Christian; my grandfather came to Singapore and attended Life Presbyterian Church and we the children had no choice but to attend church services. Being educated in English, we children could not understand the high-class Teochew service. So sometime we disappeared and attended another Presbyterian English service across the street. Rev. Tow came back from USA and was asked to set up an English service so that the teens and youth who were English educated will not feel out of place. We worshipped at the English service for twelve years and moved to Gilstead Rd. premises in 1962 when the building was completed. Before 1962, our house became the venue of session meetings, prayer meetings and so on. Everybody was passionate in evangelism and tracting in the streets, including Orchard Rd. and where there were many people. We invited our schoolmates to attend the YF and the choir.

Interviewee 3:

I am a third-generation Christian, I have eight other siblings; we stayed in a farmhouse during the Japanese occupation. We went to the nearest church in Hougang area; as we were still too young to walk, we were carried in baskets by the "coolies." Later we moved to Life Presbyterian Church at 142-144 Prinsep Street, a Teochew service. I loved to sing English songs. What I did not like was the SS teachers who were themselves primary school teachers and who used 4-foot long canes to discipline SS students. Dr. John Sung converted my father, including Dr. Timothy Tow. Dr. John Sung laid hands on my father's head and he became very serious with God. I attended another nearby church for



SS but came back to Prinsep Street in 1950 when my father became a deacon. My father would gather all his children at night for prayer before we went to bed. In 1950 the English service started as an evening service by Rev. Timothy Tow, until in 1962 when we moved to Gilstead Rd. Ps Wilson Wang, who was invited to speak at our church camp in 1954, converted me, and I surrendered to the Lord. In 1958, I went overseas to study theology in USA. I was in the same class as Dr. McIntire's son. Halfway through my basic degree, I switched to study at the Moody Bible Institute to study missions. My experience with finances is that whatever I earned, I never had enough but I lacked nothing. When I came back in 1963, there were already seven B-P churches, all pastored by Rev. Tow. Rev Tow was a gifted linguist; he spoke English, Chinese, and several Chinese dialects. He also taught at Chin Lian Bible Seminary and was involved in Dr. McIntire's ICCC. My priority was to first to become a missionary, but I became an assistant pastor in LBPC as well as another B-P church. In 1958, when LBPC building was under construction, the membership grew to 150 and we needed S\$150,000 for erecting the building. Rev. Tow's focus was evangelism; we used to have evangelistic meetings for a stretch in a week. Family worship, Bible camp, youth fellowship, and Bible memory verses were instituted. By 1970 the number in B-P churches grew to 1,500 in seven churches. The SS attracted the most number of people and converts.

Interviewee 4:

I am the fourth-generation Christian and over 150 years, there are seven generation Christians in the family tree. My forefathers were in China. I came to Singapore at the age of 16 with my grandmother. My father was converted through the revival meetings of Dr. John Sung, at the age of 33 and he dedicated his life to become an evangelist. He was an itinerant minister, not attached to any church for financial support and completely lived by faith. I joined LBPC in late fifties, became a SS teacher and a deacon one year later, and an elder three years later. In 1973, I served in another B-P Church as founding elder. The greatest impression I had on LBPC was the local outreach and E-band. Driven by the love of God and clear vision, we were able to attract people to worship and fellowship. The one vision to evangelize was the right thing the church did and the Lord made the increase in numbers.

Stage 2—The Growing Years (1971-1990):

Questions:

1. Growth continued and then plateaued; what happened? (External and internal factors).
2. Was evangelism still viewed as an important drive of the church?
3. How was the state of E-band (Evangelistic Band)?
4. How many B-P churches were established at its peak? (The number of churches vs. the total number of members).
5. Can you elaborate the dissolution of B-P Synod and its effect there after?

Responses from the four interviewees:

Interviewee 1:

In 1970 LBPC congregation grew to about 400 and was still growing until the eighties. In 1988 the B-P Synod was dissolved due to disagreement and views on the charismatic movement and tongue speaking. There were more than thirty B-P churches (including Chinese services), with membership of about four to five thousand. Rev. Tow was a strong believer that a church must be missions minded. E-band was the church's ministry, though led by various church sessional leaders, but Rev. Tow was on top of the evangelism and missions ministries, S\$100,000 was set aside for missions. E-band members were in their thirties, YF and AF age. The average age of the church members was about thirty years old. B-P were the fastest growing movement in Singapore. Dr. Bobby Sng, the Director of Fellowship of Evangelical Students (FES) Singapore wrote a book *In His Good Time* confirmed this growth.<sup>1</sup>

Interviewee 2:

In this period B-P churches have grown to about 31, 10 in Malaysia, 4 in Indonesia, 4 in Australia, 3 in Cambodia, 1 in Thailand, 1 in Myanmar, 1 in London.

The Synod was dissolved on 30 October 1988 "due to strong dissensions and differences in interpreting the Doctrine of Biblical Separation, Fundamentalism, and neo-evangelicalism."<sup>2</sup> "From a little mustard seed of 30 members in 1950, LBPC had grown into a tree of more than 50 churches (world wide) and missions, including FEBC, by 1988."<sup>3</sup>

Evangelism and missions were still the important ministries of the church. E-band was an entire church ministry involving most members.

Interviewee 3:

Rev. Tow stressed evangelism through evangelistic meetings with outside speakers. It was the continuation of John Sung's ministry. E-band was not successful in the English session; perhaps it was more for the Chinese session. Chinese-speaking leaders were John Sung's converts. I was in the English-speaking session and not involved in E-band. SS's

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<sup>1</sup>Bobby Sng, *In His Good Time: The Story of the Church in Singapore* (Singapore: Bible Society of Singapore, 2003), 228-32.

<sup>2</sup>Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, *50 Years Building His Kingdom: Life Bible-Presbyterian 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Publication* (Singapore: Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, 2000), 29.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 29.

ten-point system was introduced for those bringing new friends to the SS scored points. Bible camp was one week long and three messages a day, equivalent to the number of six months' worship services. The SS won the most souls. Sunday was dedicated for the Lord in entirety; worship service was in the morning and the SS was in the afternoon. Our young people were fully occupied on Sundays.

Interviewee 4:

The dissolution of the Synod was more of personal issue rather than doctrinal. Nonetheless, evangelism was still the mainstay of the church but with less vigor. The number of B-P churches in this period is listed in the 50 Years B-P Magazine (25 churches). The church during this period focused on missions overseas; there were more than one dozen missions stations set up all over the world including London and Africa besides Asia. But strangely, China was always omitted; the political situation did not allow the church to send missionaries there.

Stage 3—The Maintaining Years (1991 to date):

Questions:

1. What is the state of B-P movement in this period?
2. What are the challenges vis-à-vis with the Bible College? How has this affected the B-P movement?
3. Do you have any concerns of the future of the B-P and if so what do you think should be done?
4. What is the role of evangelism in B-P churches today? How do you rate its effectiveness?
5. Final advice to younger generations; what is it?

Responses from the four interviewees:

Interviewee 1:

While LBPC is still viewed as the mother church and the engine of B-P movement, unless someone takes the lead, it would be difficult now to re-gather the Presbytery, especially that different churches have used different versions of the Bible. We have never considered that we have arrived in terms of evangelism and the Great Commission is yet to be fulfilled. Externally we have to face the “religious harmony act” and internally we need to reinforce the Great Commission. One comforting scene is that more young people are interested in the “short term” missions. B-P’s separatism posture may have become an isolation issue. My advice to the younger generation is more towards the responsibility of the pulpit ministry, the preaching of the Word of God. The young people now a day want to see messages that are relevant to their lives and they are facing problems that could not be adequately addressed. We are losing them to other churches. I

am not saying losing to megachurches but to other non-BP churches that are considered sound but they have youth pastors to look after them.

Interviewee 2:

The conflict with FEBC does take up much precious time and the Great Commission was somewhat neglected. Nonetheless, according to the 50 Years bulletin, by 1995, the tree had grown into 150 churches and parachurch groups around the world. FEBC had contributed in no small way in the expansion of the church.<sup>4</sup> My advice to the younger generations is to be fervent with the Lord and to serve Him as we already have the legacy to emulate.

Interviewee 3:

My concern at this stage is that many B-P churches had been very fervent in overseas missions work and less local outreach work. It should be both, we should keep to the Great Commission of the Lord to evangelize, discipling and to teach the correct doctrines to the younger generations. I have seven fold objectives that the church need to adhere to, i.e., WFEIDMS. It is the acronym for Worship, Fellowship, Evangelism, Indoctrination, Doctrines, Missions (local and overseas), and Sunday school. This was the basis of B-P church success and the cycle must go on. By and large most B-P churches are still fulfilling the Great Commission of the Lord; the question is whether it is strong enough.

Interviewee 4:

The church growth had been mainly due to overseas missions. Evangelism had become rather cold. My worry is the third-generation Christians; they are not walking in the steps of their parents and grandparents. They are more well to do and had become worldlier, and they move to other churches. With this, they are less likely to evangelize and bring friends to the church. We need to instill within them the importance of the Great Commission of the Lord.

Evaluation of the Interviews:

All the four interviewees agreed that LBPC and the B-P churches were the fastest growing churches in Singapore in the seventies and eighties. This was the result of aggressive evangelism and outreach programs the church had conducted. Evangelistic

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 29.

meetings and SS played an important role in bringing non-believers to Christ.

Evangelism under E-band was organized not as a department but mobilized for the entire church ministry. The young people were motivated to ignite the gospel fire in the neighborhood and the schools. The situation was rather different in the 1990s; less local outreach emphasis coupled with the dissolution of the Presbytery Synod and later the VPP issue with the FEBC did not bode well for evangelism. Furthermore, in the 1980s, the emphasis was on foreign missions instead of local outreach. As the young people of the 70s and 80s grew up and set up families, they were less keen to do evangelism and found it to be a chore; even worse, there was no succession plan to build up the youth group to carry out the evangelism fervor. All other church activities became more important and the challenge of evangelism was therefore no more a priority.

I would like to add a section written in the 50-year anniversary publication. The elder who wrote the article on the history of the LBPC and the B-P movement says:

The writer has been mindful of what our founding pastor said during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the FEBC in 1992. He warned that “there is not only the danger of the founding fathers losing contact with the younger churches, but of younger churches coming up not to know the faith of their fathers” for this church “which was founded to withstand the flood of modernism and ecumenism might well be carried away by it.” He further quoted Dr. Clyde Kennedy, a president of Shelton College, that “if the Church today will study its own history, she will not let history repeat itself.”<sup>5</sup>

#### The GSED Seminar and the Implementation of the Sermon Series

Day 1 seminar covers “The Why,” which includes the good soil parables of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, the Engel scale from -12 to +12, initial contact and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 29-30.

relational evangelism, the problem of worldview noise, and three case studies in the book of Acts, and worldview noise in one's host culture. In addition, the process of peeling the worldview onion, identifying the gospel knowledge deficiencies, and penetrating worldview noise with the Bible's redemptive story were taught.

Day 2 covers "The How," which includes *The Story of Hope* Bible study book and its practice of telling and teaching some key events, practice using the Chronobridge to help unbelievers embrace the gospel, and leading them to a personal faith response. In addition, we studied *The Way to Joy* discipleship textbook, and practice leading a lesson, and helping new believers to structure and share their faith stories. The day 1 and day 2 seminar schedules are in Appendix 11.

At the end of day 1, all participants were given a practical homework assignment to evangelize to 3 non-believers that they already knew. If none, they were encouraged to join the door-to-door evangelism for contact evangelism. At the end of day 2, they were challenged to disciple at least one young believer or spiritually subordinate believer, or to disciple some one they had brought to Christ.

My six-sermon series was designed to reinvigorate the importance of evangelism at LBPC, the very purpose for which the church exists on earth. Evangelism is the privilege that believers are accorded and to no other creature on earth; angels in heaven had the pleasure to co-operate with God in soul winning, but they are not commissioned to do so. God's sovereignty is to save souls, but a believer's responsibility is to cooperate with God in delivering the good news to those still outside the kingdom, especially the unreached.

The **first** sermon entitled “The Awesome Gospel—How the Gospel Came About” is for participants to understand the origin of the gospel, and how God the Almighty initiated it. Knowing how the gospel came about, we can identify with Paul, when he says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation. . . .” (Rom. 1:16) and when he says, “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:16b). I used Romans 3:21-26 as the text. These verses are some of the most critical and fundamental in the Bible. Most of us are only familiar with “What is the Gospel.” There are at least three NT texts that describe the gospel. The first is John 3:14-18, the second 1 Cor. 15:1-5, and the third Ephesian 2:1-10. Without an awareness of how the gospel came about, there is no gospel to talk about. Before a person can be justified, he must be redeemed (v. 24); God must be “propitiated” or appeased (v. 25), and then he is justified (v. 16).

There are four elements involved in the propitiation of God: (1) the **Offender**; (2) the **Offense**; (3) the **Offended**; and (4) the **Offering**. Four things must take place at the same time:

1. The **Offender** needs to be pardoned (v. 24, redeemed).
2. The **Offense** needs to be removed (v. 25, remission of sin).
3. The **Offended** needs to be appeased (v. 25, propitiated).
4. The **Offering**, Christ needs to be sacrificed (v. 25, in his blood).

Only the blood of Christ can fulfill all the above events. The cross of Christ became the place where God’s love for men, God’s wrath for sins, and the righteous

judgment of God met. Thus salvation is the sovereignty of God and none of man's doing (this sermon accompanied the PPT presentation).

My **second** sermon was delivered at the beginning of the afternoon session. The title was "Even Hell Pleads for the Gospel to be Preached to the Living Lost." The text is taken from the parable of "The Richman and Lazarus" (Luke 16:19-31). It is a three-character story, two of who are named, Lazarus and Abraham. The rich man represents the Pharisees in general, the lovers of money who believed in the prosperity gospel, i.e., if God blessed us materially and socially, and as the descendants of Abraham, we must be saved physically and spiritually. Lazarus, who had no possessions, was oppressed and had no status in the society, which must have been the result of the curse of God. No doubt that the riches and status of the rich man was a privilege from the Lord, and he took it as a matter of fact and did not bother to help his underprivileged fellow brethren. The best that he could offer was the bread that he used to wipe his smudged fingers. His action of ignoring his fellow men reflected his attitude of dishonoring God (Matt. 10:42). He ignored the Word of God, the gospel, and lived a self-centered life (vv. 29, 31).

In the afterlife, the roles on earth are reversed. The poor Lazarus, who could only seek the mercy of the Lord and desire only to have the crumbs from the rich man's table, became an instant "VIP" at his last breath. Angels escorted him to Abraham's bosom in paradise, whereas the rich man was in torment in hades. The rich man did not even have the opportunity to enjoy his last pompous burial on earth. He was escorted right into hell as he breathed his last. In torment, he realized what he had done wrong and that he had no relationship with father Abraham; his power on earth could not help him reverse the



situation. He became compassionate to his five brothers, who must have lived on earth just like him before. The rich man in hell pleaded for mercy for his own brethren.

Abraham's answer was simple: believe in the Word of God and his salvation plan.

Otherwise neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead (v. 31b KJV).

My **third** sermon was delivered at the beginning of day 2 seminar on 24 September 2015. I spoke on Psalm 92 and the topic was "Bearing Fruit for the Lord is not Optional" (the focus is on vv. 12-14). The righteous are described as a palm tree, and like a cedar of Lebanon, planted in the house of the Lord, flourishing in the courts of our God; it shall still bring forth fruit in old age, and shall be fat, and flourishing. The palm tree grows in the hot desert, and the roots grow deeper beyond the thick sand layers where waters and nourishment are found. It can be 10 meters tall and in an upright position. When a sandstorm comes, it may fall to one side, but never be uprooted. When the storm ceased, it slowly returned to its upright position, signifying the upright character of believers. It could bear fruit as much as 300 kilograms per tree; the older the tree, the sweeter the fruits. Believers are also described as cedars of Lebanon. In contrast, they grow in a cold mountain climate. They can reach 30 meters high with leaves spread like an open umbrella. The tree trunk diameter could reach 3 meters. Cedar wood is one of the toughest woods and has the greatest resistance to decay. It was used in the construction of the Solomon temple and the throne in his palace. Its bark is the source of good embalming agent. Cedar trees can live more than 1000 years, signifying eternal life compared to short life of grass in their physical lifetime.

The key verse is v. 14a, “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age.” Believers where ever they are situated, as long as they are planted in the house of the Lord, they are cared for by the Lord and they will still bear fruit in old age. Lest it is misunderstood that only when we are old we will serve the Lord and bear fruit for him, the word “still” signifies that unless we start serving the Lord when young and bear fruit, it may be too late to serve when we retire, when everything starts from ground zero. Therefore, bearing fruit is for the young and when we grow old in age, we will continue to be fruitful for the Lord.

My **fourth** sermon was before the second morning session entitled, “What is the Worth of a Human Soul?” (Matt. 16:26 with parallel parable text of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15). We are familiar with this verse: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” Many times we are not sure what “gaining the world” means. Spiritually, it is only imagery that it is not worth it to love the world and lose one’s soul eternally. To make it more realistic, Jesus put a price tag on each man’s soul whether he was rich or poor, young or old, educated or illiterate. It is worth more than the value of this world. What is that value? Economists will use the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to calculate it; it was worth USD 78 trillion in 2014.<sup>6</sup> If one were born in 2014 and lives 80 years it will be  $USD\ 78 \times 80 \times 1.05^{80}$  (2% growth and 3% inflation per year). It works out to be an astronomical number of USD 312 quadrillion (15 zeros). The current world’s riches man

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<sup>6</sup> World GDP, “2015 Economy, The World Bank Data,” accessed December 9, 2015, <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/4.2>.

has a net worth of USD74 billion. Assuming he came to Jesus and was asked by him to sell all he has and give to the poor, with 7.4 billion people in the world, everyone would receive just USD10. It is a 20-minute work in an advanced country and a 10-day living expense in the world's poorest country. That is all. Brethren, his total asset is less than one thousandth percent of the world GDP. If Lazarus were living today, his soul would be worth USD78 trillion; he is spiritually richer than the richest man in this world. Alternatively, if the world richest man is not a believer, he will die a pauper.

The **fifth** and the last sermon on day 2 was delivered at the beginning of the afternoon session. I gave the title "Mr. Mrs. Jonah and Jonah Jr.—Are You on the Right Track?" The sermon is accompanied with a PPT, with the text taken from Jonah 1:1-3. From the map of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Gath-Hepher was the hometown of the prophet Jonah. When God called him to go to Nineveh, the great city of Assyria, to preach the gospel of repentance, instead of heading towards the northeast, Jonah went in the opposite direction towards Joppa. Joppa was situated on the northern tip of the region of Philistia, which was occupied by the Philistines bordering the kingdom of Israel. Jonah could possibly have gone to the northern seacoast territory of Phoenicia, but it was too close to the city of Nineveh where he was supposed to go. By going to Joppa, Jonah must have thought, at least it was a breathing place before he went any further. It was the place of the Gentiles, and the Lord must have been dwelling in his people's territory and would not bother the city of the Gentiles. Jonah boarded a ship bound for Tarshish, some 2500 miles in the south of Spain. This was five times farther away than Nineveh. He thought he was now physically safe.

Many Christians do not wish to evangelize; they would rather live quietly and as long as they feel they are spiritually saved, that is what matter to them. Kenneth Boa, the author of *Conformed to His Image*, says, “The greatest threat to Christianity is Christians who are trying to sneak into heaven incognito without ever shared their faith.”<sup>7</sup>

1. 95% of Christians have never led some one to Christ.
2. 80% of all Christians do not consistently witness for Christ [LBPC SURVEY >80%]

Back to the story of Jonah, what are the applications here for us?

1. Are you running away from God’s will?
2. Are you running away from God’s love for others?
3. Is LBPC your Joppa? Mr. Mrs. Jonah and Junior!

You think LBPC is a safe place, as there is less pressure to evangelize than in some evangelical churches. The moment the church turns on the heat for evangelism, I might as well move to Tarshish.

4. Beware of the “LINES” of the devil!

In Genesis, the devil deceived Eve through its lies. Nowadays, it deceives even believers through its “lines,” even using the lines of Jesus. Many believers are convinced by the devil that as long as they live a life that Jesus called “You are the salt of the earth.” A good living testimony is enough. The fact of the matter is that is not enough. There are people of other religions that could live with even better testimony than Christians. Jesus

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<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 398.

did not stop there; he immediately charged believers that we are the light of the world and we are to preach the word if we want to shine on this earth.

My last or the **sixth** sermon was delivered on the trainers' seminar on 10 November 2015, which was on Tuesday, a public holiday in Singapore. The title of the sermon is "How to Become a Soul Winner?" First and foremost, we must be committed to the Great Commission of our Lord. It is not only written in Matt. 28:18-20; it is also written in the other three Gospels. It is in Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-49, and in John 20:21-22. The Great Commission is also in the Old Testament in Gen. 12:1-3. The Great Commission is a charge to every believer; it is therefore not negotiable. By fulfilling the Great Commission, we are also part of the fulfillment of God's early covenant with Abraham in Gen. 12 that "in thee all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Second, we are not making disciples for ourselves; we are making disciples for the Lord. Salvation belongs to the Lord and only the Holy Spirit can convert a sinner. As the sovereignty is with the Lord, initiation of saving souls lies with the Lord. As Stephen Olford said: "Soul winning is God's work. From start to finish, He must plan and carry it through. My business is to be in line with His will. Winning men and women to the Lord Jesus Christ is not a matter of trial and error but of being led by the Holy Spirit."<sup>8</sup> Soul winning does not have to be a burden, for the burdens are lifted by the Lord. We need not worry about the word to speak, for the Lord will provide what to say. We need not worry about rejection, for the Lord will bear all the brunt. We are not fighting the spiritual battle

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<sup>8</sup>Stephen Olford, (with David Olford), *The Secret of Soul Winning* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 2.

with the devil, for the Lord had already declared victory over Satan when he was crucified, died, and resurrected the third day. Like the, we are claiming souls already given to us by the Lord. Brethren, the fight had been won.

Third, the blessing of a soul winner is tremendous. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself promised that He will be with us always: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:20b). What is more precious than to have the Lord staying with us all the time of our lives? Dan. 12:3 says, “And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” What more, when every time one soul repents, God is glorified, Christ is magnified, and we should be the most satisfied people on earth.

#### Measurement Instruments and Measurement Tools

The two instruments used were the pre- and post-test questionnaires on personal background, i.e., age group, gender, number of years as Christians, and multi-generational Christians in the family. In the pre-test survey, it was followed by four personal faith and witnessing habits. Three of them could have more than one choice. They were “the greatest influences leading to the faith in Christ,” “my main concerns or worry in sharing the gospel,” and “willingness to improve my witnessing life.” One important question was on “my personal witnessing frequency” in the past one year. The ideas were gathered some from evangelism surveys, books or websites, but they were designed and applicable to LBPC situation. On the post-test survey, the original questions on the frequency of witnessing were deleted; instead of filling up the post-test survey one month after the seminar, it was forwarded to the end of day 2 seminar, i.e., the attitude

towards personal witnessing after attending this seminar is more important. Improvement in attitude will have improved frequency of sharing the gospel.

Besides the pre- and post-test personal witnessing survey, there was one more survey, which was the “Spiritual Health Thermometer Scale” or SHTS survey, a 23-item check list on Spiritual Disciplines (SD) by Wang Ming-dao, (1900-1991) a Chinese pastor. I have adapted the list into a 10-scale survey. This survey was included and stapled together in both the pre- and post-test witnessing survey. The rationale was to find the correlation between SD and Evangelism habit of the same respondent.

The survey was completely voluntary and anonymous. To ensure non-traceability, no names were recorded. The following statement was written at the beginning of the pre- and post survey forms: “The purpose of this survey is to explore the ‘Current state of intentional evangelism at Life B-P church, Singapore.’ Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous” (See Appendices 2 and 3).

At the end of the survey form, again it was repeated that the survey was anonymous (non-identifiable) and voluntary, so names should not be included. At the bottom of the survey form, there was a stamp of Life B-P Church, with the senior pastor’s signature. This was to give assurance to the participants that the church sanctions the surveys, and I need not spend too much time to explain to the seminar participants the rationale, other than the dual purpose of the surveys for my research study as well as valuable inputs for the church. Results of the surveys were tabulated in an XL file and important data were presented in a chart form in order to see clearly the contrast between pre- and post-test to facilitate evaluation.

### Pre-test and Post-test Surveys

As participants arrived from 8.30 a.m. and initialed their attendance, they were given a pre-test survey form, which had two parts; the first part was the Pre-seminar Personal Witnessing survey, and the second part was “Spiritual Health Thermometer Scale” survey. The purpose of the pre-test or the pre-seminar survey was to explore “The current state of intentional evangelism at LBPC, Singapore.” The participation was completely voluntary and anonymous. Participants needed about 10 minutes to complete the survey, and upon returning the survey forms, whether or not the forms were filled up, they were given the GSED workbook and then directed to their designated group seat. The personal witnessing survey was approved by the IRB, and stamped and signed by the senior pastor of the church.

Out of the 96 people who attended the day 1 seminar on September 19, 2015, 69 pre-survey forms were received, which constituted about a 72% response. All the 69 participants filled in the first section, but only 54 filled in the second section. The key measurement is B6 (see Appendix 2). The frequency of witnessing compared to the church survey, was as follows: once a week, 4 persons (5.8% vs. 4.4%); twice a month, 11 persons (15.9% vs. 8.8%); once a month, 11 persons (15.9% vs. 21.5%); twice a year, 20 persons (29% vs. 26.3%); once a year, 11 persons (15.9% vs. 18.6%), and none, 12 persons (17.4% vs. 20.2%). The comparative percentages are quite consistent with the church survey that was conducted in March 2015. The improvement is seen in that those witnessing twice a month had increased from 8.8% in March 15 to 15.9% in the September pre-test. If we take those witnessing once a week and twice a month as



intentional witnessing, the number in the pre-test is 21.7% vs. only 12.2% in March 2015. The reason could be that participants of the GSED seminar are more evangelistically inclined than the church average in the intentional category. Although 17.4 % did not witness at all in the past one year, all the 69 respondents were willing to be trained in personal evangelism (33%), to be an encourager in evangelism (20%), to have a change of mind (19%), to bring about culture change (4%), and to be a soul winner (24%). First-generation Christians had higher score in SHSC “witnessing” of 7.9 points; the second generation scored 7.0 points, and the third and fourth generation scored an average of 6.7. This seems to substantiate the concern of the interviewees that the third and older generation Christians are less interested in witnessing.

The second section of pre-test survey is Spiritual Health Thermometer Scale (SHTS), its results are in Appendix 12. The lowest average score is item 1, on “prayer,” 6.3 points; the highest score is item 23, eager on the Lord’s return, 8.4 points. The average score of all the total 23 items is 7.56 points. Generally, those practicing intentional evangelism have a higher score on the SHTS score of 8 points and they had been Christians 11 or more years. For the rest who are not doing intentional evangelism, the total average score is 7.4 points. This shows that there is a correlation between the spiritual discipline and evangelism.

The post-test survey forms were distributed before the lunch break on day 2 of the seminar. Participants were asked to fill out the survey forms and indicate whether they had participated in the pre-test survey. Out of the 83 who attended the seminar, 61 participated in both the pre- and post-seminar surveys. On the first section of the survey,

33% indicated that their attitude about witnessing had greatly improved, 49% improved, 16% slightly improved, 2% remained the same, and none worsened. The second section of the post-test survey results, i.e., SHTS is also found in Appendix 12. The lowest average is still on item 1, “prayer,” but it improved to 6.9 points vs. 6.3 at the pre-survey. The highest average score is item 21, “happy in the company of devout Christians” and item 23, “eager on the Lord’s return.” Each scored 8.5 points from 8.3 for item 21, and 8.4 for item 23 in the pre-survey. The average score of all the 23 items is 8.0 compared to 7.6 in the pre-survey, an increase of 5%. The greatest increase of 10% was the item on “much consideration of others,” and the least increase was .4%, item 22, on “hearing admonition.” It is also noted that those who experienced with “greatly improved” attitude on evangelism had generally higher score on SHTS of 8.5 points. Whereas those with “improved” attitude in witnessing had a SHTS score of 7.8 points. These categories of people comprise 82% of the total respondents; the “greatly improved” constitutes 33% and “improved” 49% (see Appendix 13). Those with “slightly improved” have SHTS average score of 8.1 points. Most of them put a high mark on item 15, which is “Happy to witness for the Lord,” and therefore it is assumed that they had a positive attitude in witnessing and, after the seminar, they could only gain marginal or incremental improvement.

#### Unforeseen Causes

Generally, the implementation of the project was considerably smooth, on time, and within expectations. The cooperation and creativity of the committee members were exceptional and the final number of registrants was beyond expectation. However, there

were several unforeseen causes and circumstances that could have affected the overall success of the project, even if only slightly.

The obvious lack of teen and youth attendants was the neglect of briefing or pre-seminar presentation to this age group. It was taken for granted that with 12 LTF registrations, they must be willing participants. However, as later found out, they were “unwilling” teens registered by their SS teachers or parents. God willing, next year, we may want to conduct GSED for LTF and YF groups. They must be trained from their youth in evangelism, as they are the future leaders of the church. This group is likely to become the missing link in propagating the gospel within and outside the church.

Some adults could not attend the seminar, for they were committed to another program running concurrently on day 1 of the seminar. Communication with other program personnel needs to be more transparent, and the church should not run two major programs at the same time.

The seminar was completely funded by the church; this has made some members lacking a personal commitment to being serious in attendance. In the future, perhaps a small fee may be imposed to ensure genuine registration.

On the more positive note, two NBCs have decided to use *The Story of Hope* (TSOH) and *The Way to Joy* (TWTJ) textbooks from January 2016. This should promote more awareness in evangelism and the building up of an evangelistic culture.

### Conclusion

The project of interviews and the seminar were executed to the best of my knowledge and ability. The interviews revealed the strengths and weaknesses of LBPC

vis-à-vis intentional evangelism. Much work still need to be done if the church is heading towards church-wide intentional evangelism as a way of life. Through the seminar, the goal to create an environment conducive for evangelism and training members in GSED had been initiated. The achievement is through the 110 members or more than 10% of weekly attendance of LBPC participated who will be the agent of culture and mindset change within the church environment. More than 70% of the participants submitted the pre- and post-tests surveys. The survey confirmed that there is a correlation between spiritual discipline and evangelism. Through the two-day basic seminar, more than 90% of the respondents felt that their attitude towards evangelism had improved in a varying degree from greatly improved, improved, to slightly improved. 21 brethren were trained in the trainer seminar, and their confidence level to teach or train others in GSED had also improved considerably. With these 21 qualified trainers, the opportunity to train other members of the church is greatly enhanced. Finally, the six-sermon series was accomplished within the two-day basic training and the trainer seminar over a span of 52 days. Recommendations to the church are made in Chapter 5 on how to proceed from here and to press on with the Great Commission for the glory of God.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this project was to develop intentional evangelism at Life Bible-Presbyterian Church, Singapore. Four goals and sub-goals were set to accomplish the purpose. The goals will now be evaluated in this concluding chapter.

The **first** goal was to review the various literature past and contemporary on the approaches in evangelism. More than one dozen books were read, and dozens of contemporary works available on the Internet were consulted. Almost all agree that evangelism is an important element to a healthy church. Although not many include evangelism as a spiritual discipline in their works, it does not mean that they disagree with the concept. As a matter of fact, many authors agree that evangelism is the primary reason that the church exists on earth and is an important element that contributes to a healthy church. Without it, the church merely exists and eventually will decline or disappear. To find out why such a low percentage of church members are evangelizing is documented under the sub-heading of “Churches Not Evangelizing—A Fact” in Chapter Two. I have chosen authors like John Rice, Mark Dever, and Kenneth Boa for their insightful study. It is a fact that churches are lethargic in submitting to the Great Commission of the Lord. Among others, churches are self-centered and audience-focused instead of Christ-centered and soul-focused. Many churches’ activities were not geared to the evangelization of the lost. Church leaders usually began their ministry fervent in evangelism, but as they progressed over the years they had undertaken other less

demanding ministries. They became preoccupied by maintaining the edification of the saints rather than searching for the lost souls. While they know full well the importance of evangelism, this legacy had not been passed down for two reasons: (1) Younger folks had not been trained in evangelism to carry on with the gospel chain; and (2) As the leadership stopped being intentional in evangelism, younger believers followed suit.

More than a half dozen evangelism methodologies were discussed. ABWE's GSED was found to be most suitable for LBPC, due to its relational approach. Dr. Stephen Olford's strategy of evangelism, i.e., "keeping in line with His will" is a prerequisite to become a soul winner. Chapter Two recorded the detailed findings of the first goal and sub-goals.

As evangelism is a very wide topic with hundreds of books written and available in the market, in order not to be distracted, I chose about eight classic volumes written by authoritative authors such as J. I. Packer, John Rice, Mark Dever, Thabiti Anyabwile, Paul Little, Bill Bright, James Kennedy, and Stephen Olford. On evangelism methodology, I was able to include all the major tools like Evangelism Explosion, GSED, Four Spiritual Laws, Bridge of Life, and Kairos. What is inadequate in this chapter is perhaps finding a definition of "evangelism" that covers both the OT and NT fundamentals. No authors have so far come up with a comprehensive definition, even though we know that the entire Bible is the progressive unfolding redemption plan of God for men.

The **second** goal was to research the biblical and theological mandates for evangelism in the OT and NT. Five topics were discussed: evangelism, evangelism as a

spiritual discipline, the Great Commission, evangelism methodology, and soul winning. Chapter Three revealed that the entire Bible mandates evangelism for every believer; using the biblical theology narrated in Luke 24:14-27, the Bible is a gradual revelation of God's salvation for men from Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 22:21 through the sacrificial death of His only Son Jesus Christ, the anointed Messiah and the Savior of the world. Furthermore, evangelism is a spiritual discipline for every believer, the Great Commission is for every follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, the principles of evangelistic methodology are still valid today, and soul winning is God's plan for every one of His disciples. In the OT, the examples of biblical characters from Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, and the Major and Minor Prophets were documented; they were contemporary witnesses from their eras. In the NT, the Synoptic Gospels, Acts, John's Gospel, the Pauline and General Epistles, and Revelation were presented as foundational for evangelism. The continuities and discontinuities between the OT and NT were discussed. While the research in this chapter is extensive, more could have been dealt with concerning the continuities and discontinuities between the OT and NT. The Great Commission (GC) of Matt. 28:18-20 in the NT is as universal as the OT great promise to Abraham Gen. 12:1-3 two thousands years earlier. As a matter of fact, the NT GC is the continuation of the OT commission to Abraham. The great question to churches today, is whether we are fulfilling this Great Commission of 4000 years old origin. The findings are revealed in Chapter Three.

The **third** goal was to report the process of implementing the project. Chapter Four detailed the chronological records of what transpired from the beginning to the end. Although it was challenging at times, but with the cooperation of the church leaders, the

committee members, and by the grace of God, the goal was achieved. Besides recruiting the seminar committee, I conducted the interviews of four pioneers of LBPC on the successes and challenges of evangelism at the church. Since the fifth pioneer was medically unwell, I therefore skipped the last interview. This was after concluding that the first four interviews were sufficient to achieve the objective of the research study. I conducted the pre-test and post-test surveys to the participants of GSED seminars (two-day basic and one-day trainer seminars) on personal witnessing habits and on the spiritual health or discipline of seminar participants. The participants were nearly 90% LBPC members; most of the non-members are attending LBPC services. On average, there was about 73% participation on each of the two surveys, which exceeded my expectation of 50% target. This gives a fairly accurate assessment of the survey data.

The seminar could best be held in mid-year instead of towards the end of the year. The back loading caused a rush to complete the analysis of the survey results and the writing of the related chapter. The dates were chosen in the combined fellowship/NBC meeting early in the year after considering that there was no major event in the church; by divine appointment, the unforeseen general election in Singapore was held one week before the seminar date, which could have had major negative impact on the seminar if it was held on the same day.

I preached a series of six sermons on evangelism topics to heighten its importance and blessings. Due to lack of time, I completed five sermons during the two-day basic seminars; the sixth sermon was delivered during the trainer seminar one and a half months later. The **first** sermon was an exposition of “how” the gospel came into being



(Romans 3:21-26); it is in this passage that the love of God and His righteousness meet, when God himself put forward the propitiation of Himself by the blood of Jesus Christ through faith. Only after understanding this concept of reconciliation, the “what” that the gospel is becomes meaningful.

The **second** sermon, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, narrates the reality of hell and how those in hell plead for evangelism to the living lost. This should wake us up as we have non-believing relatives, loved ones, and friends who, unless they believe in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, are destined ultimately to be in the same state of the rich man—hell. Just as our Lord in heaven would want every soul to be saved, our loved ones who are in heaven too would want us to evangelize to the living lost.

The **third** sermon of Psalm 92:14 should convince believers that it is not optional to bear fruit for the Lord even in old age. Bearing fruit should begin when we are young and not wait until we retire.

The **fourth** sermon was the value of a soul. I have used the analogy of Matt. 16:26, where Jesus placed a heavy price tag on every human soul; it is more than the economic value of this world. I used the world gross domestic product (GDP) to illustrate in more concrete numbers that we can appreciate why the Lord considers every soul as precious in His sight.

The **fifth** sermon was on Jonah 1:1-3. After receiving a commandment from the Lord to preach to the Ninevites, Jonah went in the opposite direction to the port of Joppa, just outside the territories of Israel and Judah. I challenged Lifers on whether we make LBPC the Joppa of our life. Jonah ran away from God’s will to evangelize the Ninevites;

we too are not heeding the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ as He commanded. Such an attitude is also equivalent to running away from the love of God to the non-believers around us, many of whom are also our loved ones. The only way to please God is to make a U-turn and to go to places or persons with whom He had wanted us to share the gospel.

The **sixth** or the last sermon was on the blessings of a soul winner and how to become one. The Great Commission (GC) was expounded. Our commitment to go and preach the gospel is to the Lord; without Him there is no gospel to preach to non-believers. Similarly, our commitment to disciple believers is from the Lord; without Him there are no believers or a body of Christ to disciple. The GC carries one of its greatest promises that the Lord is with us always until the end of the earth. Without fulfilling the GC, no one could experience His great promise. Daniel 12:3 is another great blessing that soul winners are like stars shining as the brightness of the firmament forever and ever.

The sermon series was to my knowledge delivered as planned and met the dissertation criteria. The applications of each sermon were most relevant to LBPC. However, due to time constraints, expositions could not be delivered complete within the 30- minute time frame for each sermon. I therefore reduced the introduction and the context of the passages to the bare minimum. The PPT in some of the sermons also helped to reduce the more lengthy explanation. Although not in the post-test survey, one respondent wrote in the remarks, “helpful sermon(s) and practical.” Due to the time overruns at the two-day basic seminar, only five sermons were delivered. The sixth sermon was postponed until the trainer seminar in November. The topics of becoming a

soul winner and its blessings were most relevant to the 21 trainees as they were ready to become trainers and exemplary as soul winners. More could have attended if not due to prior appointments. The timing of the trainer seminar was another issue, as there were no other suitable dates or Saturdays when the largest classroom could be booked. It is preferable that the trainer seminar should immediately follow the basic training, and more could have joined.

On the seminar registration, to prevent absenteeism, we should have specified registration by the intended participants only. Teen and youth registrant absentees, between 11 to 17 years old, warrant concerns. Perhaps there should be a separate GSED seminar targeted for this important group.

The **fourth** and last goal is to evaluate the results of the project and draw a conclusion. Each of the goals and sub-goals established at the beginning of the project proposal was evaluated. This included the pre-test and post-test results, the spiritual discipline vis-à-vis evangelism, and the recommendation to LBPC on further evangelism efforts. I did not separate the effects of preaching and teaching in the surveys. The effectiveness of the pre-test and post-test were combined in the seminar itself. The spiritual health in relation to the evangelism habit was also derived from the pre-test and post-test results of SHTS survey. The comparison of the pre- and post-tests of SHTS is shown in the line chart of Appendix 12. The post-test result shows that in all the 23 items of spiritual disciplines measured, there was a general increase vis-à-vis to the pre-test survey. The post-test average score of all items was 8 compared to 7.6 in the pre-test survey, an increase of 5%. Appendix 13 post-tests show that the seminar had resulted in

33% of the respondents being “greatly improved” in their willingness and attitude to evangelize, and 49% marked an “improved” attitude. They comprised 82% of the total respondents. The remaining 16% said, they were “slightly improved” and less than 2% said “the same.” Those with “slightly improved” had an SHTS average score of 8.1 points and most of them put a high mark on item 15, which is “happy to witness for the Lord”; i.e., they already had a positive attitude towards evangelism and, after the seminar, they could only gain marginal or incremental improvement. Overall post-test results were very encouraging, which reflected the effectiveness of the seminar. Further details of the survey results are recorded in Chapter Four and the accompanying appendices 12 and 13, each with two line charts.

The post-test survey could have been more realistic had it been given a longer lapse time for the respondents to practice evangelism after the seminar. However, as time was not on the researcher’s side, the “qualitative” attitude of witnessing of the post-test (Question 5 in Appendix 3) was used instead of the “quantitative” numbers as in the pre-test survey (Question 6 in Appendix 2). To administer the delayed post-test survey would also have required much greater effort and manpower to collect the survey forms one by one or to submit to a designated lot box; in this case anonymity could have been compromised.

In evaluating the above goals and sub-goals, while they were extensive and useful, but with limited participation from the session, i.e., the elders, deacons, and pastors, the impact could have been higher. Out of the 30 people in the session, or 63 if including their spouses and coworkers, only 10 comprised one elder, four deacons, two

pastors, two spouses, and one coworker participated or 16%. One of the goals could be to aim 50% of sessions, their spouse, and coworkers' participations. This will generate greater impact in the future implementation of evangelism programs in the church. In retrospect, I should have included this as one the goals of this project.

It is heartening to learn that two NBCs will adopt the Good Soil textbooks; *The Story of Hope (TSOH)* and *The Way to Joy (TWTJ)* will be used from January 2016 and will last for one year. The NBCs are under one pastor, who had not attended the seminar, but has studied the materials and found them useful for discipleship. This is certainly one positive outcome of the seminar, outside the original goal or sub-goal of the project. It is certainly hoped that this initiative will result in more adoption of the textbooks as Bible study tools for the SS classes of the church. The textbooks will achieve two-fold objectives: (1) it will give believers the assurance of salvation through the entire Bible; and (2) non-believers and seekers will understand the meta-narrative of the entire OT & NT story of redemption, and the eight essential gospel concepts, and be saved.

In self-evaluation, my strength has been the passion to evangelize for the Lord, but I have to be reminded continually that it is the Lord's work and I have to be in line with the Lord's will. What I need is the patience to teach and to influence others in LBPC to change their mindsets and uphold an evangelistic culture.

In regard to leadership quality, as I looked back, the Lord has made it possible for me to organize a project that had not been done before in the church. While the DMIN modules on leadership helped, it was the cooperation of the committee members and volunteers as they saw the value of evangelism in the church that motivated them to help

build up and organize the seminar. I was particularly humbled by the attendance, which was beyond my expectation. Even though I had targeted 100 and 110 attended, I frankly had very little faith in achieving that number. I still need to develop the art of persuasion if more projects are forthcoming.

On preaching and teaching, while there had been creativity in some sermons, like using the GDP analogy in sermon no. 4, the Joppa of our lives in sermon 5, and the exposition of the Great Commission in sermon no. 6, overall they are still lacking creative ideas in the other sermons utilizing other preachers' insights or commentaries. I need to work towards preaching that is "anointed" rather than just rhetorical persuasion. In the sermon series, I was able to derive practical and relevant applications for the audience; however, it was not always the case. I need to spend more effort in studying and understanding the target audience in order to be more effective in future sermons.

Finally, I need to practice building up greater faith in what the Lord has set for me to achieve His plan. While planning for the seminar, I had too many concerns and worries about the negative comments made by people. I should continue to trust in the Lord for the project is the Lord's. After prayer, soul searching, and action, the Lord will do the rest and problems will be resolved. Amen!

In addition, I would like to recommend to LBPC leadership on how to enhance the evangelism efforts from here:

1. **Engage Teen and Youth Pastor:** Teen and youth between the ages of 11 and 17 are at the tender age of "good soil" category. They are the future leaders of the church. According to US statistics, 85% of believers became Christians at the age of 14 or

below, and 95% between the ages of 15 to 30.<sup>1</sup> Although more than ten teen and youth registered for the GSED seminar, likely by their SS teachers and parents, almost all of them failed to show up. While we could do a separate survey on the habits of witnessing by this age group, it is not presumptuous to predict that they do not practice witnessing and are therefore uninterested in attending an evangelism seminar. My strong suggestion is for the church to consider seriously engaging a teen and youth pastor committed to evangelism. It is a long-term investment that will bear fruit in the long run. The concerns from the four LBPC pioneers during the interviews suggest that the third and subsequent generation youngsters are not concerned about soul winning. Their priority is to win status in the competitive world. Unless we create an evangelistic environment and change their mindsets, our future leaders will at best be a weak link in carrying out the Great Commission.

2. **SS Teachers:** SS teachers, especially those in the teen and youth classes, should best be trained in GSED and be familiar with the two textbooks for Bible study in their SS. The two textbooks; *TSOH* and *TWTJ*, give us a systematic approach in chronological order to the redemption narrative from Genesis to Revelation. In addition, with eight gospel concepts, our teens and youth will be grounded in the salvation of the Lord.
3. **GSED Trainers:** 21 trainers were certified in GSED in November 2015; they should at the earliest possible time conduct GSED seminars within their ministries, whether in the Fellowship group, NBC, or even for SS classes. The multiplying effects will therefore be enhanced.
4. **Annual Evangelism and Discipleship Seminar:** Besides smaller scale GSED training in 3. above, the church should conduct an annual E & D seminar for church-wide participation so that more members can be prepared as GSED trainers.
5. **Future Survey:** Since evangelism is a spiritual discipline, a future church survey on the spiritual health of members should include the evangelism habit to help gauge members' vitality in witnessing.

In **summary**, it has been a great experience doing this project; personally, I have benefited very much spiritually. I was able to relate better with like-minded supporters and helpers. I believe that this project has also impacted the lives of the seminar

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<sup>1</sup>“When Americans Become Christians,” *Mission Mobilizer*, accessed Dec 01, 2015, <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ages.htm>.

participants in evangelism and the spiritual disciplines; may all of us be aflame for the Lord and be contagions to the people around us. My wish to those who read this dissertation will find it useful and be encouraged to fulfill the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!



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## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **CALENDAR**

- (1) January 2015: Completion of the new project proposal.
- (2) February 2015: Approval of project proposal. Applied for IRB approval.
- (3) March 2015: Began reading literature.
- (4) April 2015: Approval by IRB.
- (5) May 2015: Interviewed three pioneers of LBPC.
- (6) June 2015: Formed seminar committee and first meeting.
- (7) July 2015: Interviewed the fourth pioneer of LBPC. Began e-registration of GSED seminar. Completed Chapter Two.
- (8) August 2015: Second committee meeting. Canvassing to all ministries for GSED registration. Completed Chapter 3. End of e-registration.
- (9) September 2015: Conducted GSED two-day seminar with pre-test and post-test and delivered five sermons.
- (10) October 2015: Tabulated tests results and wrote Chapter Four.
- (11) November 2015: Submitted Chapter Four. Conducted GSED trainer's seminar and delivered the sixth sermon. Completed Chapters Four.
- (12) December 2015: Submitted Chapter Five. First draft of dissertation.
- (13) January 2016: Final draft of dissertation.
- (14) March 2016: Defend dissertation.
- (15) May 2016: Graduation.

## APPENDIX 2

### PRE-TEST (PRE-SEMINAR)

#### Personal Witnessing Survey 2015

The purpose of this survey is to explore "The current state of intentional evangelism at Life B-P church, Singapore." The researcher is Tan Thiam Hong, a Life B-P church member, currently a D. Min. candidate at the Union University in Jackson, TN, USA. Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous.

#### A. PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. Age range ( )
  - a. Below 18
  - b. 18-25
  - c. 26-40
  - d. 41-50
  - e. 51-60
  - f. Above 60
  
2. Gender ( )
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
3. Number of years as Christian ( )
  - a. Less than 2 years
  - b. 3-6 years
  - c. 7-10 years
  - d. 11-20 years
  - e. More than 20 years

4. Multi-generational Christian (\_\_\_\_\_)

- a. First generation
- b. Second generation
- c. Third generation
- d. Fourth and higher generation

B. PERSONAL FAITH AND WITNESSING TO NON-BELIEVERS

[In the following questions 5, 7, & 8, you may circle more than one]

5. The greatest influences leading to my faith in Christ were:

- a. Witnessed to by some one
- b. Family influence
- c. Gospel Sunday
- d. Sunday service
- e. Sunday school
- f. Fellowship group
- g. NBC (Neighborhood Bible Communities)
- h. Church camp
- i. VBS (Vacation Bible School)
- j. Gospel tract
- k. Christian literature/magazine
- l. Others: (please specify)

--

6. My personal witnessing to non-believers is done about: (\_\_\_\_\_)

[Please choose one that describes your state in the past one year]

- a. Once a week
- b. Twice a month
- c. Once a month
- d. Twice a year
- e. Once a year

f. None

7. My main issues in sharing the gospel are due to:

- a. Fear of rejection
- b. Fear of strained relation
- c. No unbelieving friends or relatives
- d. People in my circle are not doing it
- e. Don't know how
- f. Unable to answer their questions
- g. Not to pressure others
- h. Not effective
- i. Not a good communicator
- j. No training
- k. Shyness
- l. Boring
- m. No time
- n. Too old (age)
- o. Don't feel the need
- p. Others: (please specify)

--

8. I am willing to improve my witnessing life to:

- a. Be trained in personal evangelism
- b. Be an encourager in evangelism
- c. Have a changed mindset
- d. Bring about culture change
- e. Be a soul winner
- f. Others: (please specify)

--

**You have reached the end of the survey. This survey is anonymous (non-identifiable) and voluntary, so do not write your name.**

**Your input is valuable to the church and the researcher. Thank you very much for your participation and may the Lord bless you!**

**Should you have further questions please contact the following:**

**Researcher: Tan Thiam Hong email: [thiamhongtan@gmail.com](mailto:thiamhongtan@gmail.com)**

**Researcher Supervisor: Dr. James Patterson email: [jpatters@uu.edu](mailto:jpatters@uu.edu)**

**Or Institutional Review Board Office email: [irb@uu.edu](mailto:irb@uu.edu)**

I participated in the  
19 Sep (day one) pre-  
seminar survey, tick one:

Yes	
No	

### **APPENDIX 3**

#### **POST-TEST (POST-SEMINAR)**

##### **Personal Witnessing Survey 2015**

The purpose of this survey is to explore the “Current state of intentional evangelism at Life B-P church, Singapore”. The researcher is Tan Thiam Hong, a Life B-P church member, currently a D. Min. candidate at Union University in Jackson, TN. USA. Your participation is completely voluntary and anonymous.

#### **A. PERSONAL BACKGROUND**

1. Age range ( )

- a. Below 18
- b. 18-25
- c. 26-40
- d. 41-50
- e. 51-60
- f. Above 60

2. Gender ( )

- a. Male
- b. Female

3. Number of years as Christian ( )

- a. Less than 2 years
- b. 3-6 years
- c. 7-10 years
- d. 11-20 years
- e. More than 20 years

4. Multi-generational Christian ( )

- a. First generation
- b. Second generation
- c. Third generation
- d. Fourth and higher generation

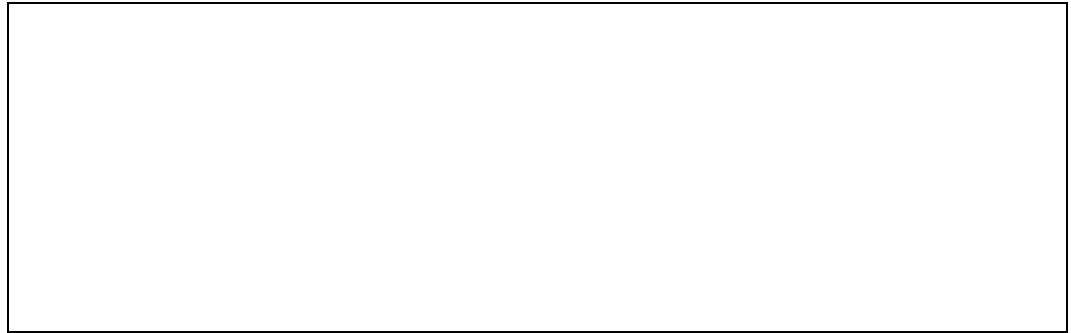
B. PERSONAL WITNESSING (After GSED seminar)

5. My **attitude** towards personal witnessing has ( )

- 1. Greatly improved
- 2. Improved
- 3. Slightly improved
- 4. Remained the same
- 5. Worsened

6. General comments on your experiences in witnessing: (Avoid putting name or names)





**You have reached the end of the survey. This survey is anonymous (non-identifiable) and voluntary, so do not write your name.**

**Your input is valuable to the church and the researcher. Thank you very much for your participation and may the Lord bless you!**

**Should you have further questions please contact the following:**

**Researcher: Tan Thiam Hong email: [thiamhongtan@gmail.com](mailto:thiamhongtan@gmail.com)**

**Researcher Supervisor: Dr. James Patterson email: [jpatters@uu.edu](mailto:jpatters@uu.edu)**

**Or Institutional Review Board Office email: [irb@uu.edu](mailto:irb@uu.edu)**

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **SPIRITUAL HEALTH THERMOMETER SCALE (SHTS)**

Adapted SPIRITUAL THERMOMETER SCALE—Original by WANG MING-DAO  
*[Cicle one on each item that best describes your state of health: 10 = Healthy Spiritual Life, 0=Unhealthy Spiritual Life]*

1. Fervent in prayer	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Lethargic
2. Bible reading tasteful	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Inspid
3. Trusting God fully Doubting	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Anxious and
4. Loving God more than anything else	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Loving the world more than the Lord
5. Resisting and hating sin	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Compromising with sin
6. Give God glory in all things	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Seeking self-glory in everything
7. Fully at Peace	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Much worrying
8. Giving thanks in all	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Much murmuring
9. Always joyful & singing	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Always sad and sighing
10. Peaceful & patient in trouble	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Easily provoked to anger
11. Much consideration of others	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Much consideration self
12. Seeking to please God in all things	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Seeking to please men in all things
13. Yearning for spiritual things in the heart	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Coveting earthly things in the heart
14. Speaking words that edify others	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Speaking words that criticize others
15. Happy to witness for Christ	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	No power to witness for Christ

16. Cheerful in giving unwilling to give	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Skimp and
17. Rejoicing in other's success	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Jealous of other's success
18. A helping hand to those in trouble	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Nonchalant at other's misery
19. Willing to forgive forgive	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Unwilling to
20. Character first	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Appearance first
21. Happy to keep close to devout Christians	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Happy in the company of worldly friends
22. Happy to hear faithful admonition	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	Happy to hear flattery words
23. Eager and hoping for the Lord's return	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	No thought of the Lord's return



## **APPENDIX 6**

### **INFORMED CONSENT— To Participate in a Research Study (Interview)**

My name is Tan Thiam Hong (T H Tan). I am a graduate student in the School of Theology & Missions at Union University in Jackson, TN. You are being asked to volunteer for a research study. You were selected as a possible participant because you are one of the pioneers or you are knowledgeable in the history of the Bible-Presbyterian (B-P) movement. Please read this form and ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

#### **Purpose of the Research Study:**

The purpose of this study is to explore the history and current state of intentional evangelism at Life B-P Church, Singapore.

#### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, the researcher will interview you regarding your experience with the B-P movement during its formative years, its subsequent development till today.

#### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Pseudo names will be used in written reports and data stored securely.

Benefit: Benefits to participation are that existing and future generations of B-P members may realize its rich history and find it an inspiration to move forward in kingdom building.

#### **Compensation:**

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

#### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, but change your mind later, you may withdraw from the study at any time.

**Confidentiality:**

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely at researcher's home in locked cabinet and only researcher and advisor will have access to the records. The records will be destroyed one year from completion of the study.

**Audio Taping Of Study Activities:**

To assist with accurate recording of participant responses, interviews may be recorded on an audio recording device/video recording device. Participants have the right to refuse to allow such taping without penalty. Please select one of the following options.

- ☐ I consent to the use of audio recording.  
☐ I do not consent to the use of audio recording.

**Contacts and Questions:**

You are encouraged to contact the researcher or the researcher's advisor if you have any questions.

Researcher: T H Tan email: [thiamhongtan@gmail.com](mailto:thiamhongtan@gmail.com)

Researcher's Supervisor: Dr. James Patterson email: [jpatters@uu.edu](mailto:jpatters@uu.edu)

If you have any questions about the rights as a researcher participant, you may contact Union University – Institutional Review Board Office at 731-661-5580 or [irb@uu.edu](mailto:irb@uu.edu).

*You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records. If you are not given a copy of this consent form, please request one.*

**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I consent to participate in the research study.

---

 Signature of Participant

---

 Date

---

 Signature of Researcher

---

 Date

## APPENDIX 7

### PERSONAL WITNESSING LETTER

By Tan Thiam Hong

Does the subject of personal witnessing frighten you? If it does, you are not alone. Even a seasoned evangelist and preacher Dr. Stephen Olford (1918-2004) said this about his early years as believer in his famous book, *The Secret of Soul Winning* (2007 revised edition with his son Dr. David Olford):

The fact that I was a committed Christian did not seem to make much difference. In one sense it made me worse. As a saved person, I knew it was my duty to witness for my Lord and, when possible, seek to win others to Him. But such a sense of duty only brought me into inner bondage. I have known what it is to gather up my courage and walk the entire length of a train, giving out gospel booklets to anyone who was courteous enough (and, I often thought, pitying enough) to take a copy. But was I ever glad when such a task was complete.

Many of us who went to Ang Mo Kio and later Yishun door-to-door evangelism could identify the same predicament.<sup>1</sup> Although E-band or Evangelistic-band (later under Evangelism and Discipleship Department of Life Church), which conducts the local evangelism outreach started almost as early as Life B-P Church when it was established 65 years ago, participants would still at times be fearful of the unknown response by the person behind the door, whether it will be a friendly conversation or a harsh refusal or even a slam at the door. When we first started evangelizing, many of us wished that after pressing the bell or knocking, the door would remain unopened, which meant the welcome relief of leaving the gospel tract at the iron-gate.

If that is the picture with strangers, we should find ourselves at ease with our friends and loved ones in sharing the gospel. Alas, the situation did not improve; we are tongue-tied and frozen in front of our would-be gospel recipients. Dr. Olford recalled: “Then God graciously stepped in. He had permitted me to struggle on long

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<sup>1</sup>Ang Mo Kio and Yishun are two large (mainly consisting) public housing estates in Singapore.

enough to convince me that I could do nothing about it. I was shy; I was bound; and I was defeated. In a word, I was a failure.”

Dr. Olford recounted that how sometime later he was brought out of the “*bondage of soul-winning in the flesh*” and into “*the blessing of soul-winning in the Spirit,*” when he came across a solemn question put up to him by one of his old friends: “Tell me, did you get the permission of the Holy Ghost to speak to that man about his soul’s welfare?”

The young Dr. Olford began to realize that soul-winning is God’s work. As such, he must plan from start to finish. Our involvement is to be in line with His will, and let the Holy Spirit take the lead. He further cautioned us that Jesus Christ is the only successful soul-winner, but to try to copy Him is to fail miserably; for His thoughts are not our thoughts, His ways are not our ways. But since Christ has sent the Holy Spirit to dwell within us, the Spirit can lead us to do His work, as long as we surrender to His sovereign will. Dr. Olford was transformed as saying:

That evening I went home determined to cease trying and to start trusting. From that moment soul-winning for me has been different. Not only have I been delivered from shyness and self-consciousness, but I have been introduced to a level of soul-winning that is divinely directed and unspeakably joyous.

Dear brethren, evangelism is one of the greatest privileges that the children of God are bestowed with; not even the angels in heaven have been given the honor to proclaim it. Unfortunately, because of the makeup of our personalities, many believers consider ourselves unfit for the job. Therefore, evangelism becomes a burden, and we drag our feet to do it. Worse still, many have the misconception that evangelism is a spiritual gift: “I don’t have it and therefore I am absolved from this responsibility.”

NO, evangelism is a spiritual discipline, for the Great Commission is given to every believer, just like reading the Bible, praying, and fellowshiping with the saints; it all starts from ground zero at the moment we are spiritually saved. But how good if evangelism is as easy as reading the Bible, praying, and fellowshiping with the saints— the other three special privileges of believers.



Believers are not meant to be passive in sharing the gospel; we are to be the influencers instead of being influenced by the people around us. Jesus mingled and ate with sinners, but He always led the conversation and the least influenced by others around Him. Many non-believers are absolutely right in assessing the contagion effect of us as believers when we want to share the gospel. Once they heard that we come to share Christ Jesus, they immediately shut us up or run away for afraid of being infected with the “gospel disease.”

It has been found that new believers are more zealous in sharing the gospel than older or more mature ones. While being saved spiritually is still a fresh experience for them, mature Christians are actually more apt to do the work of evangelism. They have been trained in the doctrine through the reading of the Word, they have the more intimate relationship with the Spirit through praying, and they have the encouragement of the brethren through close fellowship within and outside the church. What is needed is just a step of faith to reach out to the unsaved.

The great preacher Dr. Stephen Olford testified that there was a time in his life when he was afraid to share the gospel. He said: “Even the thought of talking to people, publicly or privately, paralyzed me with fear. I was painfully shy by nature but also hopelessly indisposed to meeting new faces.” But thanks be to God, he came to understand that evangelism is totally the work of our Lord Jesus Christ who must lead, and thus his work is just to keep in line with Christ’s leading. This made Dr. Olford one of the successful soul winners whom we have ever known. May we be encouraged to learn from this man of God and by the leading of the Spirit, may all of us be a soul-winner for the Lord and for the extension of His kingdom.

“And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; **and they that turn many to righteousness** as the stars for ever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

## **APPENDIX 8**

### **PERSONAL WITNESSING SURVEY**

From the Pastor

From 2007 to 2012 the church conducted regular survey to help our church leaders to understand the spiritual life of the congregation. The participation and comments of those who responded to those surveys have helped the church to make adjustments in order to meet the needs of its members.

Through the last two surveys, which were conducted in 2010 and 2012, we received feedback, which has made us aware that members are interested to learn more about evangelism, e.g.,

- The need for evangelism, the salvation of friends and loved ones.
- How to start sharing the gospel with others.
- How to create a love for souls.
- Conviction of the gospel.
- Evangelism as the reason for the church's existence.
- How to answer questions from agnostics and skeptics.
- The importance of reaching out to the unsaved.
- Salvation and the gospel are not just a few times a year.
- Evangelism-how to do it in school and at work.
- Common questions asked by non-believers and how to answer them.
- Preach the gospel in comprehensible language to non-believers who have no biblical knowledge.

According to Acts 2:42, 46-47, the early church continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers; they were in one accord, having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to their numbers day by day. The growth of the early church was the outcome of their unity in the Lord and in evangelism. As we all know, the gospel later spread to many parts of the world and came to us because our spiritual forefathers were obedient and committed to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Because of this, we need to look into this important ministry of evangelism, and we have designed an on-line survey to help us to assess how best the needs can be met, for the extension of God's kingdom and for His glory.

Please take a few moments to pray and participate in this on-line survey at <Survey URL>. The nine questions will not take more than 5 minutes of your time. May the Lord bless us as we seek to be sanctified for His service.

## APPENDIX 9

### RESULTS OF THE PERSONAL WITNESSING CHURCH SURVEY

By Tan Thiam Hong

With reference to the anonymous *Personal Witnessing Survey* of our church conducted earlier this year, we thank the Lord that between 15 March and 28 April 2015, 228 or approximately 25% of members participated in it. The survey results are as follows:

#### QA1: Age Group

- <18            4%
- 18-25        14.9%
- 26-40        18%
- 41-50        17%
- 51-60        30.3%
- >60          15.8%

#### QA2: Gender

- Male            45.6%
- Female        54.4%

#### QA3: Number of years as Christians

- <2            1.3%
- 3-6            8.3%
- 7-10          6.6%
- 11-20        20.2%
- >20          63.6%

#### QA4 Multi-generational Christians

- First            61.4%
- Second        29.8%
- Third           6.1%
- Fourth and higher    2.6%

#### QB1. The six greatest influences leading to my faith in Christ (multiple answers)

- Witnessed by someone    42.5%
- Family Influence            36%
- Fellowship Group          33.8%
- Sunday Service            33%
- Sunday School            30.3%
- Christian literature/magazine    24.6%

**QB2. Frequency of Witnessing**

- Once a week 4.4%
- Twice a month 8.8%
- Once a month 21.5%
- Twice a year 26.3%
- Once a year 18.6%
- None 20.2%

**QB3. Six major reasons of seldom sharing the gospel (multiple answers)**

- Not wanting to pressure others 42.5%
- Fear of strained relations 41.7%
- Shyness 23.3%
- Inability to answer questions 20.6%
- Don't know how 20.2%
- Fear of rejection 19.7%

**QB4. I am willing to improve my witnessing life by (multiple answers):**

- Having a changed mindset 43%
- Being an encourager in evangelism 38.6%
- Being a soul-winner 37.3%
- Being trained in personal evangelism 33.3%
- Bringing about culture change 20.6%
- Others 9.2%

**QB5. I am a born again Christian**

- Yes (222) 97.37%
- No (1) 0.44%
- Not sure (5) 2.19%

**Observations** from the above survey:

- Nearly all respondents came to know the Lord through evangelism whether by someone, family members, fellowship group, from the pulpit or from Christian literature. This point affirms the importance of evangelism in saving souls.
- The frequency of witnessing needs to be and can be improved. Evangelism is a spiritual discipline that can be as easy as reading the Bible, praying and fellowshiping with other brethren.
- Obstacles in witnessing may be legitimate but are surmountable. No obstacles are insurmountable if we know that evangelism is God's plan and will, and our duty is to be in line with His plan.
- It is comforting to note that most respondents wanted to improve their personal witnessing life and be involved in evangelism as a way of life and be a soul-

winner, change of mindset, promoting evangelism culture and also through training in evangelism.

- While it is heartening to know that more than 97% of respondents are confident of being born-again Christians, we do sincerely wish that those less than 3% would soon find eternal salvation. We welcome them to approach any of the church leaders to discuss this most important and urgent matter in life.

## Appendix 9A—GSED Seminar

### “Good Soil Evangelism and Discipleship” (GSED) SEMINAR

#### *Two days of Interactive Learning*

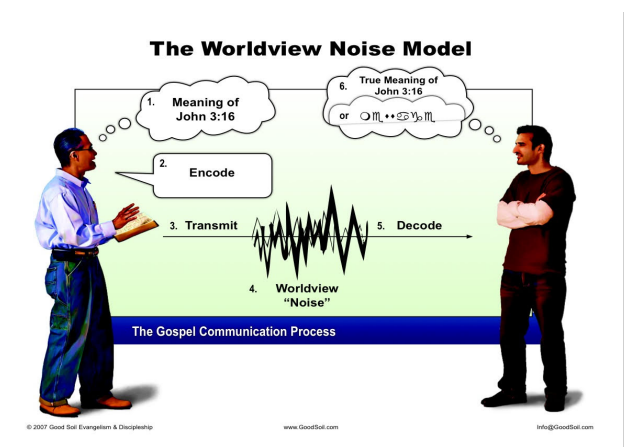
The Life B-P Church Combined Fellowships is pleased to announce that the above seminar will be conducted in September 2015. Members are strongly encouraged to participate in the seminar, which among others will address matters and issues of **QB2, QB3** and **QB4** in the recent *Personal Witnessing Survey*. The main objective of the seminar is to equip members to have the privilege of becoming soul-winners.

Outline of the two-day seminar:

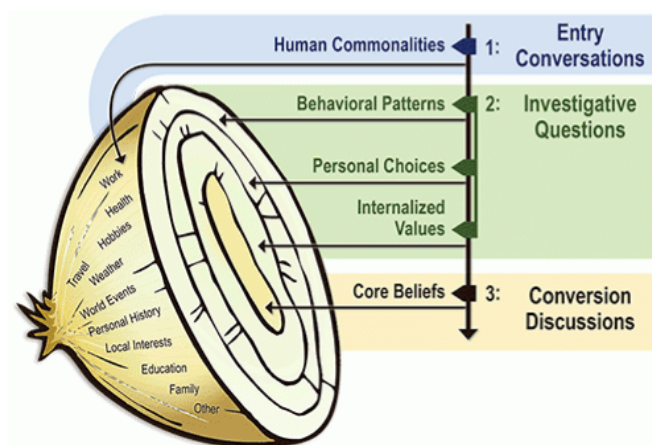
#### **Day One: “The Why”**

#### *Understanding the Good Soil Theology of Evangelism and Discipleship (E&D)*

- “Good soil” as defined by Jesus
- The Good Soil E&D scale
- Initial contact and relational evangelism
- The problem of worldview noise
- Worldview noise case studies from the early church
- Worldview noise in your host culture
- Peeling the worldview onion
- Identifying gospel knowledge deficiencies
- Evaluating gospel presentations
- Penetrating worldview noise with the Bible’s redemptive story
- Homilies: Understanding the awesome gospel, hell pleads for the gospel, and is witnessing optional?



## Worldview Noise



## Onion Peeling

### Day Two: “The How”

*Preparing to use The Story of Hope and The Way to Joy*

- (1) Becoming acquainted with *The Story of Hope* Bible study book
- (2) Practice telling God’s story of hope in 15 minutes or less
- (3) Practice teaching some key events from God’s story of hope Expanding/shrinking the accordion—flexing the use of *The Story of Hope*
- (4) Practice using the *ChronoBridge* to help unbelievers embrace the gospel
- (5) Leading unbelievers to a personal faith response
- (6) Common topical issues related to follow up discipleship. Becoming acquainted with *The Way to Joy* discipleship book
- (7) Helping new believers to structure and share their faith stories
- (8) Practice leading a lesson in *The Way to Joy*
- (9) Homilies: Know the value of a soul, the secret of soul winning, and the enormous blessings of a soul-winner.



Work Book and Textbooks Used in the Seminar

**Date: September 19th (Saturday) and 24th (Thursday-Holiday)**

**Time: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm**

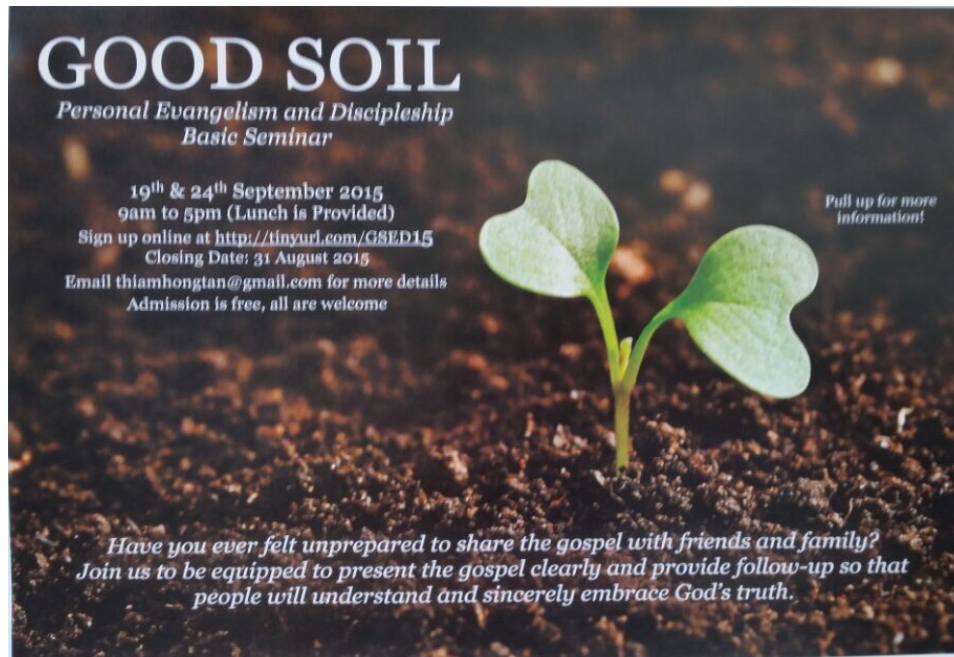
**Venue: MPH Beulah Centre**

**Admission is free and open to all (Priority to members)**

**E-Register at: (Web link) Open from July 1 till 31 August 2015.**

## Appendix 10A

## POSTER



## Appendix 10B

## POSTER





## APPENDIX 11

## GSED SEMINAR TIME TABLE

Day One

19 Sep 15 LBPC

Trainer	Minutes	Page	Chunk
<b>ALL</b>	Pre-session +20	8:30 am	“Just suppose...” cards Pre-survey
<b>SP</b>	<b>12</b>	9:00 am	Opening word and prayer
<b>TH</b>	<b>30</b>	Exhortation -1	“The Awesome Gospel – <b>How</b> it came about?”
<b>CT</b> <b>CT</b> <b>-</b> <b>TH</b>	<b>3</b> <b>10</b> <b>15</b> <b>5</b>	2 bottom 2 L 2 R	Regeneration – Conversion discussion Good Soil Parables Group discussion – Match passages to the numbered statements Group Answers
<b>CT</b> <b>TH</b>	<b>20</b> <b>2</b>	3	Good Soil E&D Scale Application – Choose 3 non-believers’ name
<b>TH</b> <b>TH</b>	<b>6</b> <b>2</b>	4-top 4-bottom	Understanding & Applying the GSED Scale – Group Chart Evangelism: Is it a process or a single event
	<b>15</b>	10:45 am	Interval
<b>EC</b> <b>CT</b>	<b>20</b> <b>10</b>		D-to-D Evangelism Evange-Card Video
<b>TH</b>	<b>5</b>	5	Initial Contact & Relational Evangelism
<b>CT</b>	<b>5</b>	6	Understanding-Receptivity Matrix
<b>CT</b>	<b>10</b>	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German Coastguard film clip</li> <li>• Helping Unbeliever to Understand the Gospel</li> <li>• Why don’t Unbelievers Understand the Gospel</li> </ul>

<b>TH</b>	<b>2</b>		• Jerusalem-Lystra-Athens Case Studies
<b>TH</b>	<b>18</b>	8-11	• Group discussions
	<b>10</b>		• Group Answers
<b>CT</b>	<b>10</b>	12	WIFI Video Clip
			• How Dense is the WV Noise in Your Culture?
	<b>60</b>	12:30 pm	Lunch Break
<b>TH</b>	<b>25</b>	Exhortation -2	Hymn “Evangelize, Evangelize” “Hell Pleads for the Gospel”
<b>CT</b>	<b>15</b>	13-14	“Ogres” video
<b>TH</b>			Peeling Worldview Onion
<b>CT</b>	<b>10</b>	15 & S-1	Gospel Knowledge Deficiencies
<b>TH</b>	<b>10</b>	16-19	Evaluating the Four Gospel Presentations
<b>CT</b>	<b>10</b>	20	John 1
<b>TH</b>	<b>10</b>	21-22	Where Did Jesus Begin? Pluralism & the Bible Plotline
<b>TH/CT</b>	<b>5</b> <b>20</b>	25-28	Pass Out “The Story of Hope” TSOH Introduction Activities Give TSOH “Prep-to-Teach” Assignments
	<b>15</b>	15:15 pm	Interval
<b>CT</b>	<b>30</b>	23	Ee-Taow: The Mouk Story
<b>CT</b>	<b>20</b>	24-top	Other Popular E&D Tools for Teaching the Bible’s Plot-line
<b>CT</b>	<b>15</b>	24-bottom	ABWE GSED Project & Resources
<b>TH</b>	<b>10</b>		Discuss “Just suppose...” answers
<b>TH/CT</b>	<b>10</b>		Wrap-up for Day One. Homework.
	<b>5</b>	5 pm	Closing Prayer
	<b>390</b>	<b>Seminar time</b>	<b>End of Day One</b>

Note: 390 min/day does not include lunch and interval

SP= Sr. Pastor  
 TH= Researcher  
 CT= Co-trainer  
 EC= EDD Chairman

## Day Two

24 Sep 15 LBPC

Trainer	Minutes	Page	Chunk
TH	30	Exhortation-3	Opening Prayer “Bearing Fruit is not Optional”
TH	5	26-27	Overview of TSOH Events and CBS & CBT
CT CT	10 45	28	Revision of Day One essentials Two TSOH Practice Activities – Group Discussion
TH	15	29	Helping Unbelievers to Embrace the Gospel
	15	10:45	Interval
TH	20	Exhortation-4	“How Much is a Soul Worth?”
CT	20	30	Practice Using ChronoBridge
TH	10	31 S-5 to S11	Challenge to Personal Faith Response What Must I (Really) do to be saved?
TH	15	32	Helping Believers to Retain the Gospel
CT	15	33	Pass out copies of TWTJ TWTJ “Prep-to-Teach” Assignments
TH	10	34-top	Pursuing Basic Steps to Discipleship T-F Quiz to Introduce TWTJ
	60	12:30 pm	Lunch Break Post-survey
TH	30	Exhortation-5	(1) Hymn “Evangelize, Evangelize” (2) “Are You on the Right Track?”
CT	20	34-bottom	Lesson One – TWSJ

		35-top	Lesson Two - TWSJ
<b>TH</b>	<b>10</b>	35-bottom	Lessons 3-10 TWSJ Overview
<b>CT</b>	<b>25</b>	37-top	Practice Leading TWTJ lesson
<b>TH</b>	<b>5</b>	37-bottom	Developing an E-List & a D-List
<b>CT</b>	<b>15</b>	36	Write Your Story - Personal Testimony
	<b>15</b>	15:15 pm	Interval
<b>CT</b>	<b>10</b>		(1) <a href="http://www.GoodSoil.com">www.GoodSoil.com</a> (2) <a href="http://www.SowAndHarvest.com">www.SowAndHarvest.com</a> (3) <a href="http://Cultivate.GoodSoil.com">Cultivate.GoodSoil.com</a> (4) <a href="https://www.facebook.com/GoodSoil.com">Facebook.GoodSoil.com</a>
<b>TH/CT</b>	<b>25</b>		(5) A to Z Review activity over Workbook
<b>CT</b>	<b>30</b>		Window Pane Activity (Summarize the main concepts of this seminar in 6 window panes) - Group Chart
<b>ALL*</b>	<b>15</b>		Feedback
<b>CT/TH</b>	<b>10</b>		(1) Trainer Certification Seminar 10 Nov (Tues) (2) Wrap-up Day Two (3) Closing Prayer
	<b>390</b>	<b>Seminar Time</b>	<b>End of Day Two</b>

Note: 390 min/day does not include lunch and interval

TH= Researcher

CT= Co-trainer

### Day Three Trainer Seminar

10 Nov 15 LBPC

Trainer	Minutes	Page	Chunk
<b>ALL</b>	Pre-session +30	8:30 am	Preparation & Class Arrangement
<b>TH</b>	<b>35</b>	Exhortation-6	Opening Prayer & Sermon

<b>CT</b>	<b>15</b>		(1) Distribute Training Wheel Material (2) Bind them with the Workbook
<b>TH</b>	<b>15</b>		Introductory Activity – Floor Scale Activity (1-10)
<b>CT</b>	<b>15</b>		Room Setup Activity
<b>CT/TH</b>	<b>20</b>		Part One - Theological-Philosophical Distinctives
	<b>15</b>	10:40 am	Interval
	<b>20</b>	10:55 am	Part Two - Adapting the GSED Seminar
<b>CT/TH</b>	<b>75</b>		Part Three - Practice Training the Workbook Section (By chunk)
	<b>60</b>	12.30 pm	Lunch
<b>CT/TH</b>	<b>60</b>		Part four – Setting the Learning Environment
<b>CT</b>	<b>15</b>		Trainer’s Website Resources
<b>CT</b>	<b>15</b>		Disclaimer
<b>TH</b>	<b>15</b>		Q & A and the Challenge to start training program
	<b>15</b>	15.15 pm	Interval
<b>TH</b> <b>TH</b>	<b>15</b> <b>15</b>		Part Five – The “Final Exam” Feedback
<b>TH</b>	<b>15</b>		Concluding Activity – Floor Scale Activity (1-10)

<b>SP</b>	<b>10</b>	16.30 pm	Presentation of GSED Trainer Certificates
<b>TH/CT</b>	<b>20</b>	17.00 pm	Wrap up & Closing Prayers
	<b>390 min</b>	<b>Seminar time</b>	<b>End of Day Three</b>

Note: 390 min does not include lunch and interval

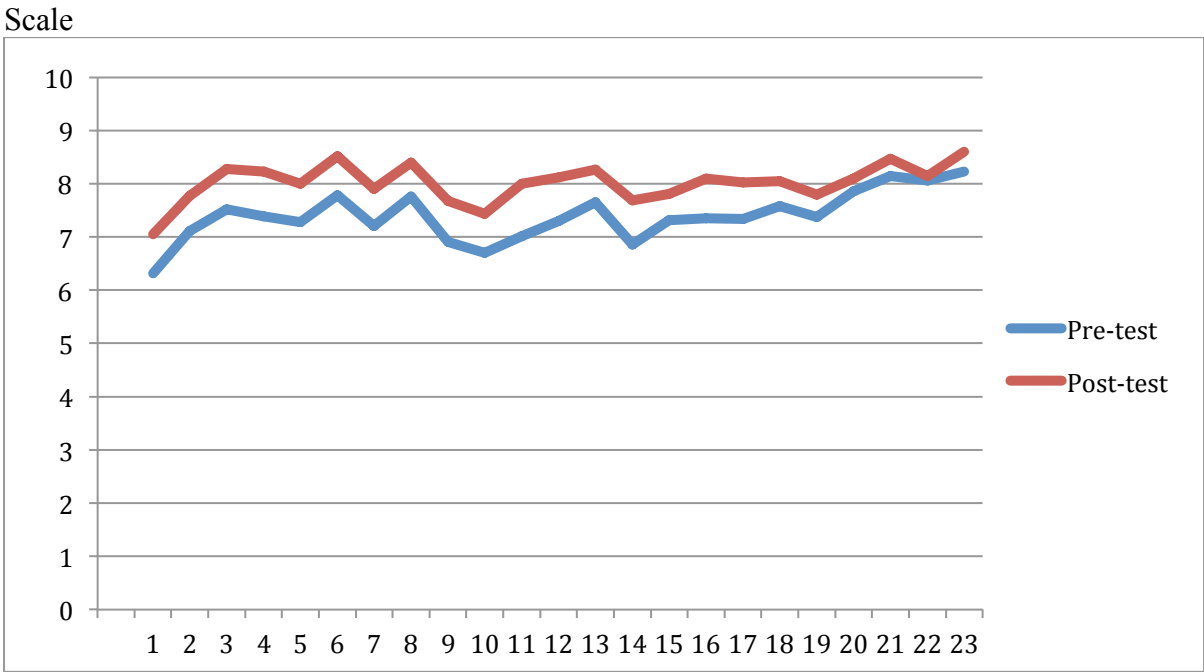
TH= Researcher

CT= Co-trainer

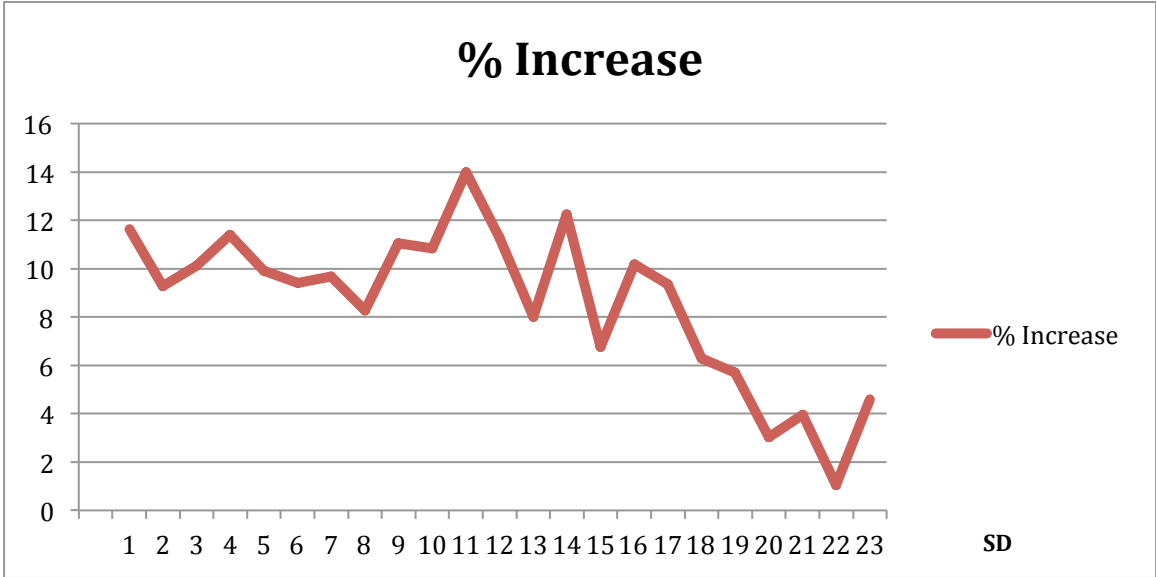
SP= Sr. Pastor

**APPENDIX 12**

**PRE- AND POST-TESTS SHTS SD 1-23**



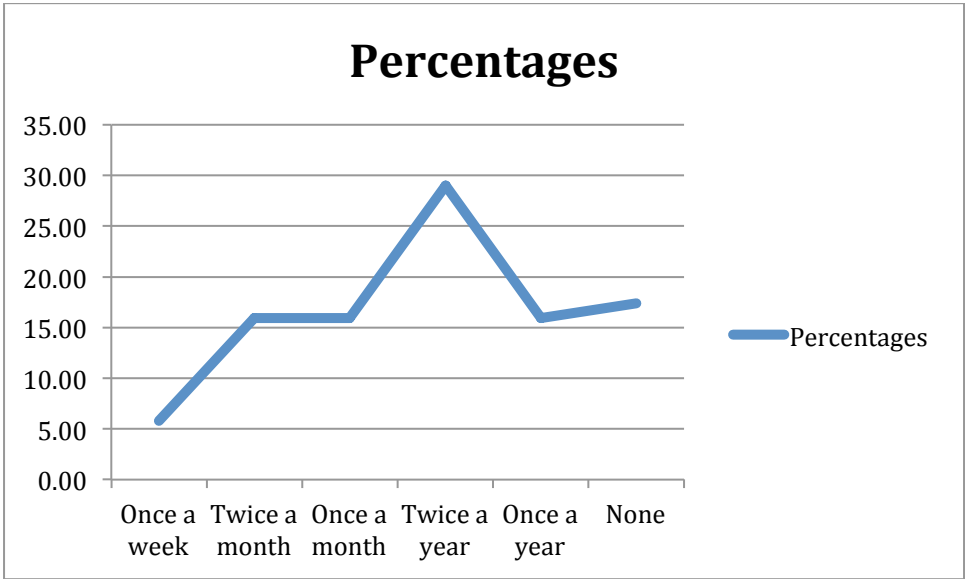
**PERCENTAGE INCREASE**  
**IN SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE (SD) 1 TO 23**



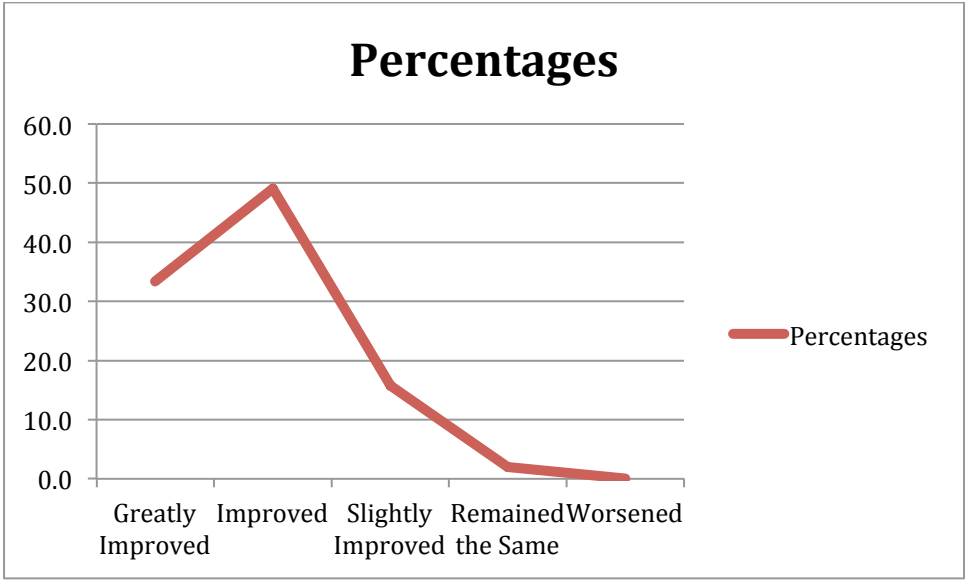


**APPENDIX 13**

**PRE- AND POST-TEST GRAPHS**  
**Frequency of Witnessing (Pre-Test) Graph**



Attitude of Witnessing (Post-Test)



## APPENDIX 14

### SERMON SERIES

#### Sermon 1

**Topic:** “If Only You Realized **How** Awesome the Gospel Came About?”

**Text:** Read Romans 3: 21-26 [with selected PPT]

**Date & Occasion:** Sept. 19, 2015—Day 1 GSED Basic Seminar Morning First Session

#### **Introduction:**

Most of us know **what** the gospel is. There are at least three passages in the Bible that tell us what the gospel is all about.

1. John 3:14-18, KJV—“And as Moses lifted up the serpent just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness even so must the Son of man be lifted up: . . . For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. . . . He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” —God has given the condemned world the good news, if only they accept and not reject the good news.
2. 1 Cor. 15:1-6—Apostle Paul summarizes unto us as he also had received, that Christ died for our sins, and He was buried, and that He rose again the third day. He was seen by all the twelve disciples, and five hundred other brethren.
3. Eph. 2:1-8—Apostle Paul reaffirms to us that God is rich in mercy and love. And by His grace through faith we received the salvation, it is the gift of God.

However, the crucial thing in the Bible is how the gospel came into being. This sermon discusses this most essential issue, which otherwise gives no meaning to the gospel that we mentioned above. The text vv. 21-26 is the most precious passage in the book of Romans. Martin Luther considered it as the most important passage of the entire NT. Martyn Lloyd Jones said that it presents the most concise and yet comprehensive declaration of the gospel in all the Scripture.<sup>2</sup> It is the most important single passage in the entire Bible. Martin Luther famously called this passage “the

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<sup>2</sup>Martin L. Jones, “Romans 3:21-31. The Righteousness of God, the Good News,” accessed August 13, 2015, [http://www.bunyanministries.org/expositions/romans/05\\_rom\\_righteousness\\_of\\_god.pdf](http://www.bunyanministries.org/expositions/romans/05_rom_righteousness_of_god.pdf).

chief point, and the very central place of the Epistle, and of the whole Bible.”<sup>3</sup> It is therefore the gospel of gospels.

### **Context:**

Romans 1:18-32 mentions the unrighteousness of the Gentiles; 2:1-3:8 depicts the unrighteousness of the Jews; and 3:9-20 describes the unrighteousness of all people. Let us read Romans 3:9-20. If we are honest with ourselves, we fit the description in this passage, especially when we were not yet believers. All human predicament is completely grave, bad news, and all men stand condemned before God, and worse, just as we are, there is no plea. By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight (v. 20). Just as the song says: “Just as I am without one plea.”

### **The Message:**

#### **a. God has revealed His Righteousness apart from the Law by Faith (vv. 21-23).**

Verse 21 begins with a great turning point “But now.” While everyone was bowing down and about to receive the judgment expecting to be sent to eternal punishment, as our heads were under the guillotines and the heavy knives were about to be dropped. Suddenly, the judge shouted “Stop, hold it”; “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested (revealed).” God the Father initiated this proceeding; it is not a new initiative, but an old one, to make it clearer it is a valid proceeding, for it is witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, the very Word of God written in the OT. The word of Moses and all the prophets up to John the Baptist can testify to that. It is valid, as it is witnessed by more than two or three persons, which is required even in the judicial court. The righteousness of God is given to us through (Textus Receptus) faith of Jesus Christ to all that believe, i.e., faith in Jesus Christ alone. Faith is more than just believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, for the devils also believe and tremble (James 2:19). Faith that saves us is placing ourselves totally in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ; it involves the trust of our will, emotions and intellect. In other word, it is a total submission. The devils believe but do not submit to him.

[Illustrations] It is said that years ago a man was about to push a wheelbarrow across a tightrope over Niagara Falls. He asked the crowd how many believed he could make it. All held up their hands. Then he asked them how many had faith enough to ride in the wheelbarrow! All hands down. Although you do not need to cross Niagara Falls in a wheelbarrow to please God, but you do need the kind of faith that leads you to act in obedience to Him. Not every one is tested like Abraham to sacrifice his own and only son, but such obedience is the result of his saving faith. [Another example:] In one

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<sup>3</sup>Tony Payne, “The Briefing Romans 3:21-26,” accessed Dec. 7, 2015, <http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2011/08/romans-321-26/>.

house church in China, before a believer is baptized, he is asked by the baptizing minister to declare his faith in front of God, the congregation, and the enemies in the spiritual realm. He is then asked to answer strings of questions in case he should face persecution from the landlord, the school, his company, even his own family members and friends, and the last one is even at gun point in his head whether he still affirms his faith. Only when all the answers are positive, he is then baptized.

The righteousness of God is given to all who believe, Jews and Gentiles, there is no difference, v. 23 for all have sinned (aorist—a past tense of a verb, especially in Greek, which does not contain any reference to the duration or completion of the action), and come (present) short of the glory of God. What Paul is saying, although the sin was committed in the past, the result of that act continues into the present and beyond, and comes short the glory of God. In short, it offended God. To glorify God, they have to come through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

**b. God has initiated the Redemption, Propitiation and Justification through Jesus Christ (vv. 24-26).**

We are going to study the three important aspects of salvation, [Redemption](#), [Propitiation](#), and [Justification](#). They sound like big words but can be easily explained and understood.

Before men can be justified and declared righteous, God must do two things: [Redemption \(v. 24\)](#) and [Propitiation \(v. 25\)](#) must take place at the same time. Redemption (*Apolytrōseōs*) is paying a ransom for someone who belongs to the redeemer and to set him free. It is to be differentiated from outright buying, which also involves payment. God does not have to buy what already belongs to him.<sup>4</sup> But when his people are lost or taken captive, in this case by the devil, to regain his people, redemption must take place. [Illustration]: When I was young, a classmate of mine lost his bicycle. It was stolen. Our school was near a flea or thief market. Our class monitor suggested that he goes to that market to search. Sure enough he found his stolen bike. He bargained with the seller, paid a price, and redeemed his bicycle.

Buying may or may not be part of redemption, but redemption includes purchase or paying a price. Without exception even the Gentiles are redeemed and not purchased, so we are not differentiated from the Jews, and we are not second-class citizens. For God to redeem his people, the price is extremely costly, it costs the life of His Son, Jesus Christ. God redeemed us with the blood of His own Son. [Paul also uses the term redemption in 8:23; it is the redemption of the body when Christ returns; it is not the redemption that he mentioned in chapter 3.]

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<sup>4</sup> Harry Poe, *The Gospel and Its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 143.

Second, Jesus Christ was set forth or put forward as a **Propitiation** (v. 25) by his blood. Paul introduced this new word “Propitiation.” In simple terms, it is an appeasement to someone who had been offended. [E.g., When a son broke his father’s favorite antique the mother pleaded for her son not to be punished.] Propitiation is more than that; Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones explained the elements involved in Propitiation: (1) an offense has taken place and needs to be removed; (2) There is an offender (the transgressor) that needs to be pardoned 3) there is the offended party who is God himself: “The WRATH of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (1:18). **This great WRATH of God needs to be appeased** and; (4) There must be a SACRIFICE, “the offering” needed to do and satisfy all the above. The one thing that could fulfill the above tasks is only the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. No other means could appease the wrath of God caused by the sins of his people. We often quote the love of God as an essential part of the gospel; no doubt that God loves us; however, God is holy and righteous, He cannot accept any unrighteousness or sin in man, and the only way to reconcile God’s love and God’s righteousness or judgment is to sacrifice God only Son, Jesus Christ as an atonement of our sin and as the propitiation in His blood, i.e., the cross.

The word “Propitiation” (*hilastērion*), is identical to the “**mercy seat**”; it is the cover on top of the ark of the covenant that contains the two stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. The mercy seat is the place where God is present and where He dispenses mercy to men through the high priest when the blood of the atonement is sprinkled. In Heb. 9:5 “And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat”: The two cherubims facing each other looking towards the cover. Each year during the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled the blood of the lamb onto the mercy seat and symbolically, his sins and the sins of the Israelites (for transgressing the law of God) were ceremonially and temporarily pardoned. But now, the blood of Christ has once and for all fulfilled what was done repeatedly by the high priest every year and it permanently removed the sins of those who believe, and God is most satisfied with it. Christ is the Propitiation and he is now the mercy seat, and he will continue to cover our sins.

With the Redemption and Propitiation accomplished, God can now declare his righteousness and **justify** those who believe in Christ Jesus. V. 24 says “We are justified freely (without charge) by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Justification and Righteousness are closely related; they come from the same root word in the original language. **In judicial court**, when one is declared not guilty after paying the penalty, the verdict is only valid for the offense committed in the past; the pardon does not cover future offenses. Justification here is once and for all; it is the act of God as the judge and God regards us as righteous, as if we have not committed the offense (which does not mean we never sin or are sinless), but our sins are fully covered by the blood of Christ and we are granted full pardon by the sacrificial blood of Christ for past, present, and future transgressions. With that the righteousness of God is accounted to us and we who believed in the Lord are declared righteous (v. 26).

We can come any time to the mercy seat of the Lord Jesus Christ that is placed in the holiest section of the temple; the Holy of Holies. No sinners are allowed to enter this holiest place of the temple, not even the high priest; he must first be cleansed of his own sin by offering animal sacrifice for himself. Traditionally, if he is not sure of the complete cleansing, a robe will be tied around his waist when he enters the Holy of Holies, just in case he is struck dead and no one else could come to the rescue, and the only way to retrieve his body is by pulling the robe from outside the veil.

Dear brethren, it is very important when Paul says in 1 Cor. 6:19, KJV “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” 1 Cor. 3:16, KJV “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” The Greek word for temple is *hieron* (ἱερόν); it is the entire temple, but here Paul use different word called *naos* (ναός), which is the Holy of Holies. Our body is the *naos*, the holy of holies, where the mercy seat is situated. Therefore, before we transgress against the Lord, we need to think who we actually are.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, we need to understand how the gospel came about and how salvation has not come easy to us. It is a careful and painstaking work of God alone, that God the Son Himself came down to earth to be the sacrifice of many, we must not take the gospel for granted. We can now identify with Paul when he said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,” and “Woe is me if I preach not the gospel.” And it should spur us more to love Him and the least we can do is not to waste the gospel that God has created for the salvation of mankind. We realize that in the Cross of Christ (which includes the death and resurrection of Christ), both God’s love and justice are reconciled and fulfilled. So the gospel of salvation is born at the Cross of Christ. The gospel is too precious and too big to be retained by anyone; it is the power of God to save sinners. The gospel needs to be shared with all the people that we come across with: “How then shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard and how can they hear without some one preaching to them” (Rom. 10:14b, KJV). Paul said that he was indebted to the gospel to those non-believers in Rome: when he arrived in Rome the first time, he preached the gospel from morning to evening, regarding Jesus in all the OT (Acts 28:23), and some believed. He told Timothy to preach the gospel in season and out of season. So we, who are in greater debt, should not we be like Paul to pay the gospel debt?

According to Acts 2:42, 46-47, the early church continued steadfastly in the apostles’ [doctrine](#) and [fellowship](#), and in breaking of bread, and in [prayers](#); they were in one accord, having favor with all the people, and the Lord added to their numbers day by day. The growth of the early church was the outcome of their unity in the Lord and in evangelism. As we all know, the gospel later spread to many parts of the world and came to us because our spiritual forefathers were obedient and committed to the great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

May the Lord help us that we continue our spiritual forefathers' vision in sharing the gospel to many who are still outside His kingdom.

PowerPoint:

FOUR ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN	FOUR—THINGS MUST TAKE PLACE
<b>PROPITIATION:</b>	
1. THE OFFENDER	1. THE OFFENDER – NEED TO BE PARDONED (V. 24 REDEEMED )
2. THE OFFENSE	2. THE OFFENSE – NEED TO BE REMOVED (V.25 REMISSION OF SIN)
3. THE OFFENDED	3. THE OFFENDED – NEED TO BE APPEASED (V. 25 <u>PROPITIATED</u> )
4. THE OFFERING	4. THE OFFERING – CHRIST IS SACRIFICED (V. 25 IN HIS BLOOD)

## Sermon 2

**Topic:** “Hell Pleads for Evangelization to the Living Lost.”

**Text:** Luke 16:19-31

**Date & Occasion:** Sept. 19, 2015—Day 1 GSED Basic Seminar Afternoon First Session

### Introduction:

In April 1961, the first ex-Soviet Union astronaut Yuri Gagarin went into space. Upon his return to earth, he reportedly said, “In space, I looked and looked again, there was no God.” His atheistic remark was well publicized in his country against religion, especially to the young students that there is no God and heaven and hell are just illusions and myths. Later one student reportedly refuted him: “Sure he sees no God, because he was in his space suit and stayed in the spacecraft, had he taken off his space suit and came out of the space station, I guarantee he will see God.”

### Context:

Jesus tells more than anyone else in the Bible about heaven and hell. This parable in Luke 16:19-31 is one of the most vivid stories of the reality of heaven and hell. I know many people do not like to come to church, especially the Chinese, because the church always speaks about sin, death, and hell, the extremely unlucky and inauspicious words. Certain churches today do not preach those things and neither do they preach about repentance. They focus on the positive aspect of God's love and blessings, the prosperity gospel. But the reality is that if we do not preach heaven and hell, we are deceiving the congregation and ourselves. The Lord will hold us responsible for not preaching the whole truth. As a matter of fact, sin, death, and hell are good news to believers. We were all sinners and when we accepted the Lord Jesus



Christ as our Lord and Savior, we became “righteous”; sin has no more dominion upon us. Death is not the end of the story; it is only a step towards new eternal life. The gates of hell are totally and forever shut on us; with righteousness and eternal life, there is only one place we can go, and that is heaven.

### **Main Message:**

#### **1. The lives on earth (vv. 19-20):**

A rich man was living luxuriously in dress and feasted sumptuously everyday. In great contrast was a beggar named Lazarus, who was laid in the gate of the rich man’s house. The word “laid” literally means “dump” or “βάλλω—*balló*” in Greek by some one or ones who dealt harshly on him, since he was physically helpless and could not walk by himself and thought he was better off to be within sight of the rich man in order to receive some sympathy. Apparently, he was a destitute with no friends and relatives to care for and nurse him. His body was full of sores; he was a diseased person whose only friends were dogs, who comforted him by licking his wounds. Dogs were unclean animals to the Jews; all the more, fellow Jews would not come near him. He became an outcast, destitute person who was condemned in the eyes of the society. The religious Jews must have considered him as someone who was severely cursed by God to such a humiliating state. If he was God’s child, how could God abandon him? In contrast, the Jews must have looked at the rich man very favorably as one whom God has blessed with abundant wealth and possession. The prosperity gospel was already taking place; the rich man was blessed materially and therefore he took for granted that he was Abraham’s descendant; on the other hand, Lazarus was an outcast and he could not be the son of Abraham; he was therefore cursed in life.

Lazarus’ only desire was to receive some “fall-out” food from the rich man’s table, be it only a little bread or its crumbs. In those days, the wealthy used to celebrate and eat with their acquaintances in a garden, where almost any one could come near the table. The rich man, as he dipped his bread into the broth dish, sometimes smudged his fingers; there was no tissue paper at that time and they only washed their hands before and after meals. Being very rich, “their custom was to tear clean bread and wiped away the gravy soiled fingers, and then threw away the stained bread on the ground.”<sup>5</sup> This bread became heaven’s manna to Lazarus, the more the better. During my teenage years, I grew up in Java, every time when there was a wedding celebration at the home of rich men, many beggars lined up outside the house, some with empty containers in their hands; the number of the beggars would indicate the wealth of the family. In those days, every dish was home cooked; there was no buffet style and everyone was given a portion individually and there was bound to be some guests who did not like the dish, so leftovers were certain. The house servants would then collect the remainder and distribute it to the beggars who

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<sup>5</sup>John McArthur, “Sermon Text on Luke 16:19-31,” accessed May 27, 2014, <http://www.gty.org/resources/print/sermons/RC08-2>.

had been waiting patiently outside the house. To them, any leftovers were heaven sent; many smiled even with the small portions that they could get. The bigger the crowd of beggars, the more likely that the guests would regard the host as generous.

## **2. The lives after (vv. 22-23):**

“As it is appointed unto man once to die” (Heb. 9:27 KJV), Lazarus died and the angels carried (*ἀποφέρω*—*apopheró*) him to paradise. Instead of dumping him, he was carefully carried into Abraham’s bosom (v. 22 KJV); what a contrast from his earthly life. Jesus did not mention Lazarus’ burial; perhaps there was no burial at all since he had no next of kin. Even how simple the burial might have been, money was still needed to buy a burial cloth and pay the undertaker to dig a burial ground. Perhaps he was dumped outside the city gate in the garbage dumping ground and was burned together with the rubbish. Not long after, that the rich man also died and was buried. Since he still had 5 brothers and many acquaintances, the family must have given him a pompous and dignified burial fit for his wealth and status in the society. He must have had a rude shock when he suddenly landed in hell. By this time, both Lazarus and the rich man had become spiritual beings; their spirits departed from their body and they were released from the constraint of their physical bodies; even so, they were not free to choose where they would go. Lazarus, being a man of faith, was carried to heaven. The accompaniment of the angels proves that he was now a VIP; he was ushered in to be with his long awaited forefather of faith, Abraham: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints” (Ps. 116:15). So the rich man, though free from the physical body, but not at his own will, was immediately sent to hell, perhaps by the angels of death; there was no VIP treatment. For our sake, Jesus painted a picture of the rich man in hell and in torment (v. 23 KJV); looking up from afar he could see that his despised Lazarus was by the side of his respected forefather Abraham. People in heaven or hell are completely conscious of their state of mind and situation. They can also still remember things of the past (v. 25).

## **3. The rich man’s requests (vv. 24-31):**

It is interesting, as shocked as he was, that the rich man did not ask why he landed up in eternal condemnation. He knew very well what went wrong; while on earth, he never took God seriously; neither did he repent of his sins (v. 30); his lifestyle showed that he lived a selfish life and disregarded the Lord; he lived as if there was no God, left alone his poor fellow human being, whom he came across daily. Even in hell, his first request was for his own benefit; he called Abraham “father” to close rank and to earn favor, as if Abraham had to be obligated to him for their close genealogical relationship; but then he acted as if he was still on earth, demanding that Lazarus could be ordered at his will. He asked for Lazarus to cool his sore tongue with just a little drop of water, for the agonizing fire of hell was too much for him and he was in anguish.

Lazarus apparently was fully shielded and comforted and spoke not a single word. Instead, Abraham was his spokesman and he reminded the rich man of the reversed role that he had while still on earth. I do not think that Abraham was

sarcastic to the rich man when he said in v. 25 that the rich man had received the good things while Lazarus the bad things. This was to remind him that what he enjoyed in the earthly life could not be carried over to the spiritual realm. His privileges ended when he breathed his last. It is to be noted that Lazarus did not go to Paradise because he was poor; neither did the rich man go to hell because he was rich, for Abraham himself was a very rich man when he was alive on earth. Abraham added that there is a great gulf between heaven and hell; no one could cross over to the other from either side. This is the rule of the “spiritual nature”; it had been fixed since the creation of heaven and earth. So the first request of the rich man was denied. Contrary to popular belief, people in hell are completely isolated, lonely, desperate, and in anguish. I once heard about a mahjong enthusiast that, when the gospel was preached to him, he rejected it flatly; he preferred hell than heaven because most of his mahjong friends, in his opinion, ended up in hell and he wished to join them to continue the mahjong sessions. This person will end up in imagination rather than reality, for he will not hear the shuffling noise of mahjong playing let alone see his mahjong buddies.

Then the rich man had a second request vv. 27 and 28, which was better but still quite selfish in motive, i.e., the salvation of his household; he stopped short of caring for other people outside his family. Apparently, his 5 brothers had the same attitudes and habits as he did. Knowing them, if they did not do anything to their faith and repented of their sins, they would certainly end up like him. This time he used a stronger word, begging Abraham in desperation; but in his stubbornness, he still tried to use Lazarus to return to the earth to witness to his brethren. Abraham aptly told him there was a way out; his five brothers had Moses and the prophets to listen to (v. 29). The words “Moses and the prophets” refer to the OT Bible, which spoke of Jesus (Luke 24:27, 44). The rich man’s second request was better than the first, albeit too late. One thing that he knew and experienced himself was that hell is not a place for any man to come; he loved his brothers and he did not want them to suffer like he did. Once in my work place, I had a section supervisor who was retiring and I shared the gospel with him. He said that he could not possibly accept it, as he and his wife were Buddhists; before his wife died from cancer a year earlier, she made him promise that he could do anything, but each year on her death anniversary, he had to go to the temple to pray for her. I told him the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. I said, assuming his wife is in heaven, she would surely want him to be there with her; if she were in hades, like this rich man, she would not want him to land as she had.

Finally, the rich man still used “human logic” in v. 30 as though if someone from the dead returned to earth, his brothers would certainly believe and repent. Abraham’s logic was that if people on earth do not believe in the Bible, the Word of God, no matter what the circumstances are, they will not be convinced even if someone from heaven returned to earth. This rationale was exactly what was to come in the life of Christ. He was crucified, bled, died, and buried; three days later He rose again and showed himself to more than 500 people (1 Cor. 15:6) on earth for forty days before He ascended up to heaven. Many believed, but many more did not. Abraham’s logic to the rich man was correct.

### **Exhortations:**

- (1) **Name matters:** By now you must have noticed that the parable had three main characters, i.e., the rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham. The beggar had a name that means God's help; of course Abraham also had a name, but the rich man had not been named; not that he had no name, but Jesus did not call him by name. Theologically, the Bible tells us that there is "the Book of Life" (Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5, 21:27) and all the people's names that are written in the book of life had their salvation secured; so Lazarus' name was written in the "Book of Life." Though poor as he was while on earth, it was just temporary; when his journey ended, his new eternal life began. On the other hand, the rich man's name was withheld for his name was not written in the book of life; the Bible does not tell us about the existence of the "Book of Death," but people whose names are not written in the "Book of Life" will not be able to enter the kingdom of God and their destiny is in hell. So their names are immaterial.

I want to tell you a real life story of a person so poor that you "could not" give her money. I once visited a church in a small village in China where I saw a hunchback elderly woman in her eighties; the church leaders told me that she was the most pitiful woman in the village, for her children had abandoned her for a working life in the city. Her only meager income was from collecting carton boxes, empty bottles, and 2-piece cans to sell for pennies. Thanks be to God, she had become a believer and the church supports her two meals a day by eating in the church. I asked if I could give her RMB 10 or 20 (which is only USD3); the church leaders told me that this was not advisable, for she was known by every one in the village as having no more than few RMB in her pocket; having RMB 20 may create the suspicion that she stole the money.

After the service, I had the chance to walk with her to her home; in that short journey, I asked her if she believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as her Savior and Lord, and her wrinkled face exhibited a little smile, she said: "I will still believe in Jesus, even if I have to beg." My eyes were moist and I thanked the Lord for saving her life and for her faith in Him. I said, the Lord is rich; He will not let his child to become a beggar. The word "beggar" immediately reminded me of Lazarus and his name is in the "Book of Life." My heart was comforted; her name is also surely written in the book of life. My parting words to her were, "Be strong in the Lord and the Lord will keep and bless you!" I just wish that today, everyone of us, especially those still outside the kingdom of God, would take the step of faith so that they would know that their names are written in the "Book of Life." If you ask me how I know whether my name is written in the "Book of Life," I said that before I believed in Christ, I did not know; but once you believe, you will certainly know, because it is the promise of God in the Bible (Luke 10:20).

- (2) **Money matters?** The seduction of money and the desire to live a comfortable life can divert our attention from spiritual matters. The Bible warns us, "You cannot serve both God and Money (mammon)" (Luke 16:13b); once we accumulate much wealth and become rich, our hearts are where our treasure is.

Therefore, Matt. 19:24, KJV says: “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” The trouble with many people, including Christians, is that we want to be rich first and then serve the Lord. It should be the other way round, we should learn from Abraham; his blessings came after his simple faith in the Lord and he became a friend of God, even obedient to sacrifice his only son to God. He had a son at very old age and he became a very rich man. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33 KJV) is the key to the successful life.

- (3) **Soul matters:** Life is precious, but our soul is even more valuable: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26 KJV). The rich man clung to his money and status and ignored his own soul. He valued men’s approval rather than God’s. Matt. 10:28 KJV says: “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him (God) which is able to destroy both the soul and the body in hell.” In hell, the rich man cried out for the souls of his five brothers. By the same analogy, some of our loved ones who had gone to glory and are now in heaven certainly want their loved ones who are still living but lost to believe the gospel in order they will be in heaven. Both ways, whether a person is in hell or heaven, he longs for his living lost loved ones to accept the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. Would not we be moved to be the spokesmen of the gospel?
- (4) **The Way matters:** Many pluralists believe that all roads lead to Rome; all religions are good and lead people to heaven. There are three kinds of non-believers:
- i. The atheists: This is rare. Many are agnostics; they may believe that there is one Supreme being, but are unsure who he is.
  - ii. The polytheist with multiple gods: Many of them do not know which god is real and there is no personal relationship with these gods.
  - iii. One God with multiple ways: They believe in one and only God, but instead of believing the Bible, they have their own way and interpretation. I want to address this third category of religion; the pluralists, if I can prove that it is wrong, automatically categorizes (i) and (ii) as also false. Please look at Luke 16:14-15: “The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this things, and they ridiculed him. And he said to them, ‘you are the ones who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.’” This is actually the background that I did not mention in the context of the passage of the parable of Lazarus and the rich man.

Jesus iterated this parable with the Pharisees in mind, who were represented by the rich man. The Pharisees were highly respected religious leaders in the society; they were wealthy too; they believed that they were the true descendants of Abraham by blood and, since Abraham was rich and well favored by God, they automatically inherited this blessing (Gen. 12:2-3); their riches were credited to God’s blessings upon them, a form of the prosperity gospel in those days. However, they could not see

their shortcomings until Jesus had to list all the seven woes in Matthew 23; they were highhanded, oppressive, and above all hypocritical. Jesus did not mince His word when he said, “How are you (Pharisees) to escape being sentenced to hell?” (Matt. 23:33b).

They “worshipped” outwardly the true God, but in their own way and interpretation. They practiced not only the Ten Commandments, but the 613 Mitzvot (the expanded sub-commandments) too. They were religious in the wrong way. The Pharisaic religion became the religion of the law and the religion of works instead of faith alone. Their assurance of salvation was based on the false belief that they were the descendants of Abraham; Jesus did not deny their identity as Abraham descendants. The rich man addressed Abraham as his father, and Abraham also addressed him as his son (v. 25). Blood relations does not guarantee salvation, for the Lord can raise up children of Abraham out of stones (Luke 3:8). It was so close and yet so far; the Pharisees did not understand and grasp the OT Bible (that of Moses and the Prophets); they rejected salvation through the Messiah, Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact, they played the key role in crucifying our Lord. Therefore, Jesus said: “For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:20). Dear friends, there is only one-way to heaven, the way of Christ Jesus, who said: “I am the way, the truth and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6, KJV); “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12, KJV).

### **Conclusion:**

For believers: Let us be diligent in proclaiming the gospel in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2), for souls are most valuable thing in life.

For non-believers: Jesus told us the reality of heaven and hell; where do you stand to go? Do not be fooled that all religions lead to heaven. Even the true God rejects the salvation of the man-made way of the Pharisees. **“Believe in the Lord Jesus you will be saved”** (Acts 16:31). Heed to the voice from hell: **“DO NOT COME TO THIS PLACE OF TORMENT!” May all our names be written in the “Book of Life!”**

### **Sermon 3**

**Topic:** “Bearing Fruit for the Lord is NOT Optional.”

**Text:** Psalm 92:12-14

**Date & Occasion:** Sept. 24, 2015—Day 2 GSED Basic Seminar Morning First Session

**Psalm 92 (NIV) A song For the Sabbath day, played with musical instruments**

1 It is good to praise the Lord  
     and make music to your name, O Most High,  
 2 to proclaim your love in the morning  
     and your faithfulness at night,  
 3 to the music of the ten-stringed lyre  
     and the melody of the harp.  
 4 For you make me glad by your deeds, O Lord;  
     I sing for joy at the works of your hands.  
 5 How great are your works, O Lord,  
     how profound your thoughts!  
 6 The senseless man does not know,  
     fools do not understand,  
 7 that though the wicked spring up like grass  
     and all evildoers flourish,  
     they will be forever destroyed.  
 8 But you, O Lord, are exalted forever.  
 9 For surely your enemies, O Lord,  
     surely your enemies will perish;  
     all evildoers will be scattered.  
 10 You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox;  
     fine oils have been poured upon me.  
 11 My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries;  
     my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.  
 12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,  
     they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;  
 13 planted in the house of the Lord,  
     they will flourish in the courts of our God.  
 14 They will still bear fruit in old age,  
     they will stay fresh and green,  
 15 proclaiming, "The Lord is upright;  
 he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."

### Introduction:

Ethel Hatfield was seventy-six years old; she lived in Sydney, Australia. At that time, she had been attending a local church for many years and she wanted to serve the Lord in that church. One Sunday after the Service, she asked her pastor whether the church would allow her to teach in the Sunday school. Her pastor looked at her a couple of times; due to her age, he was of the opinion that SS was not suitable for her and he would think of another ministry. That day Ethel went home greatly disappointed.

One afternoon, while Ethel was tending her plants of roses, an overseas Chinese student studying at a nearby university, cycled by her garden, greeted her, and was praising her for the beautiful roses that she had. Everyday he passed through

her garden he was curious to know who the owner of the flower garden was? Ethel invited the young man into the house for an afternoon tea. After a while, she started mentioning Jesus Christ and shared her own testimony how she trusted the Lord Jesus. The next day, the student introduced one of his classmates to her and this became the beginning of Ethel's ministry for the Lord at home. The students were grateful for her hospitality, and soon a Bible study class was started and the number of students increased rapidly [From *Our Daily Bread*, Nov. 25, 2007].

### **Context and Genre:**

Psalm 92 is sung on the Sabbath day. It is a psalm of thanksgiving and praise to the *Elyon*, the Most High God (v.1). It is a declarative psalm instead of a descriptive one, because the psalm describes what the Lord does for His people instead of who God is. The writing format indicates that it is an individual thanksgiving psalm rather than a communal thanksgiving as indicated by the first person pronouns, I, My, and Me in vv. 4, 10, 11 and 15. It is one of the two psalms in the Hebrew Psalter where the Tetragrammaton (YHWH) or Yahweh is repeated 7 times. The other one is Psalm 19.

In summary, vv. 1-5 describes the worship of the Lord with thanksgiving, praises in songs, declaration of His loving kindness, and faithfulness in the morning and evening, and sung with musical instruments. His works are great and His thoughts are very deep.

A transition in v. 6 describes the wicked as senseless and a fool as one who does not worship God.

Then there is a chiasm between vv. 7 to 11 and vv. 12 to 14.

Vv. 7 to 11 contains 7 descriptions of the wicked, or the epithets: wicked is mentioned twice in v. 7 and 11; workers of iniquity are also mentioned twice in vv. 7 and 9, and enemies are mentioned three times, in v. 11 and twice in v. 9.

The wicked will be destroyed forever. They spring up like grass, flourish only for a season, they will be destroyed forever (v. 7).

The wicked is like grass; they live for a season or a life time. They may flourish and bear fruit, but it is the fruit of death. Their prosperity is only during this life time and once they depart from this world, they are destroyed forever.

In a parallel inversed contrast, vv. 12 to 14 describe the 7 qualities of the righteous:

- (i) flourish like a palm tree (v. 12a).
- (ii) grow like a cedar in Lebanon (v. 12b).
- (iii) planted in the house of the Lord (v. 13a).
- (iv) flourish in the courts of our God (v. 13b).
- (v) bear fruit in old age (v. 14a).
- (vi) fresh (v.14b).



(vii) green (flourishing) (v. 14c).

### **Main Message:**

With the above background, let us focus on the way of the righteous (vv. 12 to 14); how to live fruitfully and finish our lives well.

### **(I) The righteous Shall flourish (v. 12):**

The first part of v. 12 says: “Flourish like a Palm Tree” (v. 12a).

#### **(1) Characteristics of a Palm Tree:**

A Palm tree can survive in the desert; not that it does not need water, but the roots are deep and can extend to below the sand level, where there is water. Because it is deeply rooted, not only, it can withstand harsh weather and hot sun; it can also withstand a strong sandstorm; when the storm blows, the stem of the tree could bend one side, but once the wind stops, it is back to its upright position. It can live up to 100 years old to a height of 10 meters, at its peak; it can bear fruit up to 300 kg. in a year and, the older the tree, the sweeter the fruits or the dates. During the fasting month, the Middle Eastern people would eat dates to survive 12 hours without food. Its branches would provide shelter to travellers to rest underneath. When the Israelites came to the desert of Elim, there were 12 wells of water and 70 palm trees, and they encamped there. The trees must still be young, as they had not borne fruit; otherwise, the Israelites would have depended on the fruit instead of manna.

#### **(2) Spiritual symbol:**

The palm tree is a symbol of a victor or overcomer. During Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the people took branches of palm trees went out to meet Him, shouting, “Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel!”

In Rev. 7:9 in heaven, there will be a great multitude that no one can count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They will wear white robes and hold palm branches in their hands and cry out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.” The palm tree also symbolizes the uprightness, gracefulness, and long fruitful life of believers.

Second, “Grow like a Cedar of Lebanon” (v. 12b).

#### **(1) Characteristics of a Cedar Tree:**

Cedar trees in Lebanon are of the best quality; the tree is also called the “Lord’s tree” or the “tree planted by the Lord.” Psalm 104:16, KJV says: “The trees of the LORD are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon, which he hath planted.” They can reach up to 30 meters in height with a trunk about 3 meters in diameter. They are found in the mountainous terrain and, despite cold weather and stony ground, cedars can still grow straight up rightly and majestically. Pharaoh’s vessels, Solomon’s palace and temple, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Roman Emperors’ throne were

made from the cedars of Lebanon. Cedar wood is tough and has high resistance to decay. Solomon sought the cooperation of the king of Tyre to send cedar logs in floats by sea to Joppa, and then transported to Jerusalem to build the temple and his palace. The bark of cedar tree can be processed to make an embalming chemical.

(2) Spiritual Symbol:

It signifies royal power and wealth (1 Kings 10:27). It signifies the growth of God's kingdom and its leaves can span to more than a 10-meter diameter to provide shelters to all people (Ez. 17:22~24). The cedar tree has a long life span of up to one thousand years. It signifies that the new life in Christ is everlasting.

**(II) “The condition of flourishing and growing” (v.13):**

(1) It must be planted in the House of the Lord or planted by the Lord Himself, as in Ps. 104:16 mentioned above. For no trees in God's garden grow by themselves. They are carefully and tenderly planted by the owner; they are not wild or unwanted, but legitimate.

These two types of trees shall flourish or grow in the court of the Lord, because they draw nourishment from the Lord. The Lord may decide the trees to be planted in any place of His choice, like palm trees in the desert and cedar trees on the mountain; but as long as they are firmly rooted and nourished by Him, they shall triumph over the harsh environment. Similarly Christians, wherever they may be, as long as they are fed by the Word of the Lord and continue to draw our nourishment from it, they will grow and flourish.

(2) The righteous are not the masters of their own lives.

To live in the house of the Lord means, we are no more the master of ourselves, to do what we like; we are in complete submission to Him and, to be in God's house, we must obey God's Word and instructions and we let God decide our future. Hence, wherever we go, the Lord will keep us from falling. Believers are in the world, but not of the world. Be strong and unmovable like the cedar tree and be triumphant like palm tree; we will not be swayed and influenced by the winds and tides of this world.

**(III) The Outcome” (v. 14).**

The righteous will be fruitful:

The key verse of today's message is v. 14, NIV, “They shall still bear fruit in old age, they shall stay fresh and green.” The irony of old age is physical weakness and frailty, a burden to society and the family. Thanks be to God, we need not be pessimistic about old age. As believers, “We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16, NIV). Fresh and green or flourishing are not vocabulary of the young only; it is biblically for

all ages. The old can impart a lifetime experience to the younger generation. Job 12:12, NIV, “Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?”.

I know an 80-year old brother who had become blind due to illness. He said that when he could see, there was so much distraction and he could not see God clearly; now that he is blind, his spiritual eyes are open and he can feel that the Lord is all the time beside him.

Abraham at 99 years had no hope of having a son, but he believed in God and Isaac was born. At 120 years old, he was tested; he built an altar to sacrifice his son Isaac and his faith remained intact and he could still continue. At 137 he fathered 6 sons and lived to be 175 years old. As God promised, all people on earth will be blessed through him.

Moses already at 80 had no faith to bring out the Israelites out of Egypt; he asked, who am I to face Pharaoh. The key was not who Moses was; it is the one that says I AM THAT I AM who is important. Moses at old age still bore fruits until 120 years, because he was submissive to the Lord and he received commandments direct from Him. The entire nation of Israel was rescued from bondage to become a free nation that moved into the Promised Land.

### **Applications:**

1. This psalm is for believers of all ages; stay close with the Lord from youth; be grounded and nourished by the Lord and you will continue to bear fruit even at an old age. Many Christians give the excuse of being too busy in life when young and will compensate the lost time when they retire. This is a fallacy; if one is not serving the Lord early; it is unlikely that he will serve the Lord after retirement. If one did not bear fruit early, it is unlikely that he will in old age. The word “still bear fruit in old age” suggests that during his younger days, he was already bearing fruit; it was an extension of the work he had done, not a new undertaking.
2. Stay in the house of the Lord, we must abide by the rule of the house, be obedient, i.e., the Lord is our master and we are his servants/slaves; the Lord is the vine, we are the branches. No branch can bear fruit by itself, it must remain in the vine (John 15:4). To be deeply rooted in Word of the Lord, to be completely obedient to the Master of the house and to witness for the Lord, takes time and training in the spiritual disciplines. Therefore, it is not an instant product. The process of sanctification is a lifelong journey.
3. Have you been bearing fruit for the Lord? How many people have you brought to Christ in the year past, or have you shared the gospel with the unsaved? Abide in the Lord and you will draw strength and nourishment from Him, and you will be fruitful even at old age and finish well. Bearing fruit for the Lord

is not of our own effort, strength and ability, but the willingness must be ours. The Lord is able, but are you willing?

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, I would like to continue with the story of Ethel. After few years, Ethel was called home to be with the Lord. During the burial, 70 overseas Chinese students attended the funeral service. Every one of them was led to Christ by Ethel. What a great testimony at old age. Ethel had finished her life, well pleasing to the Lord by bearing abundant fruit for Him! Please remember, every believer has the responsibility to share the gospel to anyone that we come across, whether we are young or old, male or female, rich or poor, intellectual or illiterate, our mission is to make non-believers know the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not optional!

## **Sermon 4**

**Topic:** “What is the Worth of Human Soul?”

**Text:** Matt. 16:26; Luke 15:11-32.

**Date & Occasion:** Sept. 24, 2015—Day 2 GSED Basic Seminar Morning Second Session

### **Introduction:**

In Luke 15, Jesus narrated three parables. In each of the first two parables, He concluded that the end result of even one sinner who repented, leads to celebration on earth, and the Father in heaven rejoices with His hosts of angels (Luke 15:7, 10). In the last parable of the lost son who repented, his father symbolizes of the heavenly Father; he made merry with his entire household. It implies that rejoicing and celebration are also taking place in heaven for a repentant soul is precious in the eyes of the Lord.

### **Context:**

Jesus spoke the parables in response to accusations by the Pharisees and the scribes that Jesus was the friend of sinners and publicans, as many of them came to listen to him. Jesus not only welcomed these outcasts, he even ate with them (Mark 2:16). Jesus’ mission was to save sinners (Luke 19:10). The Pharisees had a knowledge of the OT law, yet they were more concerned with their “holiness” and showed no love for lost souls. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin (silver) focused on the joy of the owner of the sheep and the silver, representing God the Father, searching for lost souls. Once they repented, and they found that all in the household of God rejoiced with them. Jesus did not include the Pharisees in the picture, but he gave the message that if they are part of the household of God, they should be rejoicing with the sinners and not criticizing His friendship with the lost.

When narrating the third parable of the lost son, Jesus intensified the role of the Pharisees in the elder brother. Instead of rejoicing to see the return of his younger brother, he snubbed at the whole episode and revealed his self-righteous attitude and the love of money instead of God.

“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Matt. 15:8-9).

### **The Message:**

The third parable began with the story of a certain man had two sons. The man, who was the father of the two sons, was apparently a very wealthy one, for he had many hired servants. While it was the Jewish custom that the elder son receives 2/3 of his father inheritance and the younger son 1/3, the inheritance was normally distributed after the death of the father. However, upon the father's own initiative, he had the liberty to divide the inheritance while still alive. In this instance it was the younger son who initiated the division, which was unbecoming of him since he apparently wished that the father were dead (v. 12). The father did according to his request and divided the properties. Let us imagine here that the younger son now possessed a large sum of money in cash (gold and silver) they were heavy. In a matter of days, he gathered all his belonging and left the house and the family. It is unlikely that he carried it all by himself; the least he could do was to ride on a stallion with all his belongings and go to a far country. We are not told how long he was away; while large sums of money could be spent in a short time, especially with reckless living, severe famine came slowly. It is therefore conceivable to assume that this young man must have spent months if not years in the far country.

When the younger son left his father's house he must have been fat and fair; after working in the field to feed swine under the sun, with no food to eat, he must have become thin and dark. Unlike in the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin, where to a certain extent the sheep and the coin were not aware that they were lost, the son came to know his condition. The lost sheep represented a foolish person, happy go lucky, without knowing the danger of being lost eternally in the life to come. The lost coin represented those who were dead spiritually, and were not conscious that there was no hope of eternal life. In both the above parables, the owner, i.e., the shepherd and the woman respectively, went to search and find them. The prodigal son, as many call him, was very much conscious and yet, like many people in this world, he deliberately disobeyed the will of the father. His motto was that I am mature enough to take care of myself and let my will be done. Under such circumstance, there was no point for the father to look for the son. Before he knew that he was in a dead end, no amount of good advice would make him conscious of his mistakes.

Illustration: Watchman Nee was conducting a summer camp at a sister's house in a village. It was attended by about 30 brethren, half of whom were sisters. As there was only one bathroom, the decision was to let the sisters use the facility and the brothers

go to a nearby river to bathe. One of the brothers, a non-swimmer, went down and was drowning. Nee alerted one other brother who was a swimmer to come to the rescue. This later brother, instead of immediately jumping in to rescue, stood still but attentively watched the drowning brother. Nee was furious and said, “How could you love your life more than your brother’s?” Later this swimmer jumped in to rescue the drowning brother and he was saved. When asked the second time, he explained to Nee that if he had gone down while the brother in the river was still struggling, the chances are that both the rescuer and the rescued would go down together; therefore, he waited until he stopped struggling to save his life. Similarly, God will come to the rescue, when one is ready to surrender fully his life to Him. When he is still struggling, he is still hopeful that things could be done his way.

The young son “fasted” for he had no food to eat; he was at his wits end and came to his senses. He was truly sorry and repented of his sins. He had sinned against God and against his father, and he prayed that he could return to his father, not as a son, but as a hired servant. Repentance is not just feeling sorry and doing nothing. When one leaves the Lord and does things according to his own will, sins most certainly take place. When one repents, it is not only a change in attitude or a U-turn, but it is also an act of returning to the Lord in complete obedience. The lost son decided to do just that—he returned to his father. It is amazing that the father who had lost his son for a long period could still recognize him from a long way off; he must have pulled his long robe up and ran to his son with compassion, embraced him, and kissed him. The only way that the father could recognize his son is that he must have been always waiting and looking at the road where his son left him and imagined how he would look like all this while. At the moment he saw the son far approaching, dignity aside, he ran to greet his beloved son. Could not we visualize the same picture of our heavenly Father waiting for all his children to return to Him?

The returning son said: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and I am not worthy to be called your son.” Before he could say the last rehearsed sentence, “Make me as one of your hired servant,” his father interrupted him and instead asked his servants to bring the best robe, a ring, and shoes. I am pretty sure that the son did not wear any shoes when his father saw him. He could have thrown his worn-out shoes before he reached home, or he could have sold them for money. When his father saw that he was barefooted, he already knew that his son had not intended to return to the same status. In those days, no servants were allowed to wear shoes in the house. Dear brethren, when one sinner repents and comes to the Lord, there is no precondition set; our Lord accepts us sinners just as we are. No matter how notorious and defiant we were, our Lord accepts anyone, including backsliders, to him without condition. That is the great compassion that our Lord has for the lost souls.

At this juncture, I would like to touch on the main topic of today’s sermon that is “What is the worth of human soul?” that the Lord regards it so precious in his sight.

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the **whole world**, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange of his soul?” (Matt.16: 26, KJV).

From the above passage, our Lord has given a human soul a heavy price tag. It is worth more than the value of this entire world. It does not matter whether one is young or old, rich or poor, male or female, educated or illiterate; every human being is worth more than the value of this world. Many times we are not sure what “gaining the world” means. Spiritually, we are advised that it is not worth it to love the world and lose one’s soul eternally. To make it more realistic, Jesus put a price tag on each man’s soul. It is worth more than the value of this world. What is that value? Economists will use the world’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to calculate; it is worth USD 78 trillion in 2014.<sup>6</sup> If one is born in 2014 and lives for 80 years it will be USD  $78 \times 80 \times 1.05^{80}$  (2% growth and 3% inflation per year). It works out to be an astronomical number of USD 312 quadrillion (15 zeros). The current world richest man has a net worth of USD 74 billion. Assuming that he came to Jesus and was asked to sell all he had and give to the poor, with 7.4 billion people in the world, everyone would receive just USD 10. It is a 20-minute work in an advanced country and a 10-day living expense in the world’s poorest country. That is all. Brethren, his total assets are less than one thousandth percent of the world GDP. If Lazarus were living today, his soul would be worth USD 78 trillion annually; he is spiritually richer than the richest man in this world. On the other hand, if the world richest man is not a believer, he will die a pauper.

Back to the story of the prodigal son, in addition to the love of the father to his son, it is his soul that the father was more concerned about. His repentant soul was worth more than the value of this entire world and, therefore, he did not question how much money he had wasted, for it was nothing compared to the value of his soul. The elder brother, representing the Pharisees, was the opposite; he loved money, he did not value his brother’s soul; what he cared about was how much he would inherit, and the return of the brother would pose a challenge to his inheritance. Worst of all, he did not even know the worth of his own soul.

### **Conclusion:**

I am not advocating a prosperity gospel here, but your soul is indeed worth more than the entire world money can buy. Do you want to waste your soul or you can use it to multiply and add value to a human soul, that they may become rich spiritually. The bottom line is any soul is precious in the sight of the Lord, and we should also care for our soul. Even if you are the only living soul on earth, Christ will still come and die on the cross for you. What more, we still have many souls to save even within our own community.

During the first day seminar, all of us are challenged to evangelize three souls. Let us be diligent, knowing that these souls are so precious in the sight of the Lord,

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<sup>6</sup>World GDP, “2015 Economy, The World Bank Data,” accessed December 9, 2015. <http://wdi.worldbank.org/table/4.2>.

that spending time to pray and to witness for the Lord is a privilege to have. May the Lord use and bless us to win more souls.

## **Sermon 5**

**Topic:** “Mr. Mrs. Jonah, and Jonah Jr.—Are You on the Right Track?”

**Text:** Jonah 1:1-3 [with selected PPT].

**Date & Occasion:** Sept. 24, 2015—Day 2 GSED Basic Seminar Afternoon First Session

### **Introduction:**

The story of Jonah is very familiar to many of us, especially to SS children. The big fish miracle has become the main attraction of the story, associated with the character of Jonah. From the story, we learn that it does not pay to be disobedient to God’s call. But since I am not swallowed up by the big fish and not thrown over board, I must be okay. I am therefore unable to identify with Jonah and view Jonah as just another disobedient servant of God who needed to be chastised to obey. Since I am not a servant of God, I am not Jonah and I can just live a peaceful Christian life. The story of Jonah, though interesting, has no impact in our life. But nothing is more important than the truth; in every book of the Bible, God has a message for us. Therefore, I would like to look at the book from the geographical and strategic point of view to check if today we are actually like Jonah.

### **Context:**

Jonah prophesied during the politically prosperous time of Jeroboam II of Israel (2 Kings 14:23-28), while Amaziah was the king of Judah. Although Jeroboam II did evil in the sight of the Lord (v. 24), he nevertheless expanded Israel territory, matching the boundaries in the days of David and Solomon (v. 25; 1 Kings 8:65). God through his servant Jonah spoke about the affliction of Israel and His compassion to save them by the hand of evil king Jeroboam II: “In God’s providence, the expansion by Jeroboam was made easier because of Assyrian weakness. There was wide spread famine and numerous revolts within the Assyrian empire. . . . This convergence of events supports the plausibility of the Ninevites being so responsive to Jonah’s call to repent.”<sup>7</sup>

### **The Message:**

#### **I. Are You on the Right Track?**

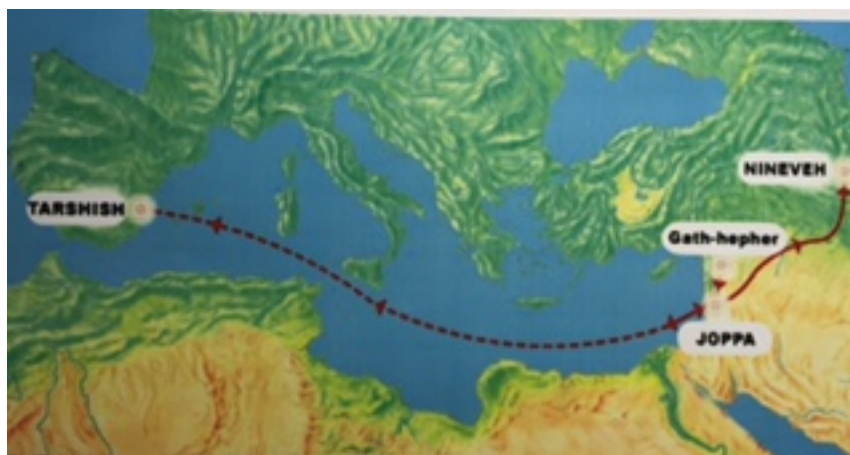
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<sup>7</sup>*ESV Study Bible*, s.v. “Introduction to Jonah,” accessed December 15, 2015, <http://esvstudybible.org/wp-content/uploads/excerpt-jonah.pdf>.





From the map of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, Gath-Hepher was the hometown of the prophet Jonah (2 Kings 14:25). It was located about three miles northeast of Nazareth. When God called Jonah to go to Nineveh, the great city of Assyria, to preach the gospel of repentance, instead of heading towards northeast, Jonah went in the opposite direction towards Joppa. Joppa was situated on the northern tip of the region of Philistia, which was occupied by the Philistines bordering the kingdom of Israel. Jonah could possibly have gone to the northern seacoast territory of Phoenicia, but it was too close to the city of Nineveh where he was supposed to go. By going to Joppa, Jonah must have thought, at least it was a breathing place before he went any further. It was the place of the Gentiles, and the Lord must have been dwelling in His people's territory and would not bother the city of the Gentiles.



Jonah boarded a ship bound for Tarshish, some 2500 miles west in the south of Spain. This was five times farther away than Joppa to Nineveh. He thought he was now physically safe.

Jonah forgot that in Ps. 139:7-10, the psalmist says, “Where can I go from your Spirit. Or where can I flee from your presence. If I ascended to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold you are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.”

God spoke to Jonah personally, and he was very clear on the compassion of the Lord towards his wayward Israel; his mercy was shown even in using the evil king Jeroboam II to save Israel from affliction. Jonah did not protest and he pronounced God’s Word as He revealed it to him. When God spoke to him the second time in Jonah 1:1, God also showed His mercy for the 120,000 people of Nineveh for being ignorant morally and spiritually (Jonah 4:11). This time round, Jonah defected to Joppa as a sign of protest and a temporary hiding place to ward off God’s attention. Jonah was not ready to witness to people outside his Israelite family.

Applications:

There are three questions arising from the story of Jonah:

1. Are you running away from God’s will?

From LBPC witnessing survey conducted in March 2015, only 13% witness more than twice a month, which means that more than 87% are not doing intentional witnessing. Even if those witnessing once a month is included, the total percentage is only 35%. 65% of members are not consistently witnessing, and 40% are not witnessing at all or not more than once a year. Jonah ran away from God’s will to evangelize, but at least he witnessed to his fellow Israelites. It is unlikely that so many of us do not have non-believing loved ones; if so, we may be worse than Jonah.

2. Are you running away from God’s love for others?

We often say that God loves us, and we love Him in return, and also His creation. When we fail or refuse to witness for the Lord, we are in effect, running away from God’s love for others? Imagine if others could be our loved ones. Once I knew a friend who believed in the Lord, but he was reluctant to be baptized since his mother strongly objected. He said that his mother had a heart problem and he would not want to cause further complications. He would rather wait until his mother passed away before he went for baptism. He must have regretted later in life that he did not seize the opportunity to witness to his mother while she was still alive.

3. Is LBPC your Joppa? Mr. Mrs. Jonah and Junior!

Many professed believers would like to attend churches that are not so fervent in evangelism. What they want is to be spiritually fed, but do not want to be asked to evangelize: “It is not my cup of tea. I will stay in the church as long as I am not asked to proclaim my faith to other people. What matter is that I and perhaps my family are saved. As for the salvation of others, it is between God and them.” If this is the situation, you are treating LBPC as the Joppa of your life. The word evangelism has not been in the family vocabulary. If LBPC is your Joppa, then you and the family are not on the right track. It is worse when the evangelism heat is turned on and some move to “Tarshish.”

## II. Beware of the “LINES” of the Devil:

Many Christians do not wish to declare their faith, let alone to evangelize; they would rather live quietly and, as long as they feel they are spiritually saved, that is what matters to them. Kenneth Boa, the author of *Conformed to His Image*, says, “The greatest threat to Christianity is Christians who are trying to sneak into heaven incognito without ever having shared their faith.”<sup>8</sup> I must add that the devil loves it.

In Genesis, the serpent deceived Eve through its lies; today, it deceives even believers through its “lines,” even using the lines of Jesus. Many believers are convinced by the devil that as long as they live a life that Jesus called “You are the salt of the earth” (Matt. 5:13a), meaning a good living testimony is better than preaching the gospel. People will see my living testimony and be converted. The fact of the matter is that this is not enough. There are people of other religions who could give an even better testimony than Christians. They are okay, because they do not proselytize. Jesus did not stop there; he immediately charged believers in the following verse that we are to be the light of the world (v. 14a), and we are to preach the Word if we want to shine on this earth.

The devil has become smarter to use half-truths to deceive God’s people. Another “line” of the devil is what Jesus said in Matthew 9:37-38, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into this harvest.” Very often at prayer meetings, I hear believers quoting these lines of Jesus to his disciples. There are many foreign guest workers to the tune of a million of them in Singapore. They are at our doorsteps; we need to reach out to them. We pray that the Lord will send laborers to the field. I am convinced, that when Jesus’ disciples prayed for laborers, they counted themselves in the fold. The twelve of them were certainly shorthanded; they followed Jesus and went throughout the cities and villages, teaching and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing the sick. Jesus saw the crowds were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. They needed more shepherds **in addition** to the twelve. However, the same lines are now quoted out of context; we have no compunction to

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<sup>8</sup>Kenneth Boa, *Conformed to His Image: Biblical and Practical Approaches to Spiritual Formation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 398.

ask the Lord for laborers and yet we do nothing to get involved in the outreach ministry. We fall into the “lines” of the devils and they love every bit of it.

### **Conclusion:**

Dear brethren, the story of Jonah is our story. We are just as disobedient and defiant as Jonah at the first call to evangelize to God’s choice group, but Jonah repented and went along with God’s will the second time. God very often gives us a second chance to cooperate with Him to fulfill His will. Are we now ready to follow Jonah’s footsteps and make a U-turn to go to “Nineveh” to proclaim the gospel where many are waiting to be reached. There is no benefit to go to Tarshish, for the Lord is everywhere. Wherever your Joppa is, it is not too late to make a U-turn to the place where the Lord has put in your heart to witness. Start with your own house, family, and neighbors. If you really have no non-believing acquaintances, thank and praise the Lord for this, and door-to-door or street evangelism will still be the place for you to witness.

Finally, do not be deceived by the “lines” of the devil; being “the salt of the earth” is a mark of the believer as a living testimony; our goal goes further than this, that we should also be “the light of the world”; to proclaim the gospel is as important as a living testimony, if not more important. May the story of Jonah be our story and may we heed to the call of the Lord before it is too late to do anything useful for the Lord to win souls.

## **Sermon 6**

**Topic:** “Every Believer Should be a Soul Winner.”

**Texts:** Matt. 28:18-20; Dan. 12:3.

**Date & Occasion:** Nov. 10, 2015—GSED Trainer Seminar Morning First Session

### **Introduction:**

After attending two days of a GSED basic seminar, all of us should be convinced by now that evangelism is a spiritual discipline, an important one, and not a spiritual gift like that of the evangelist. There are three other basic spiritual disciplines as one embraces the gospel and becomes a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ; he will have to read God’s Word to know His will, to communicate with the Lord through prayer, and to fellowship with the saints. I want to impress upon you that the above four disciplines are the most basic that a believer will practice and they are actually privileges accorded to all believers. They are basic exercises in order for a believer to live a healthy Christian life. While, studying the Word, praying, and fellowshiping may be less strenuous and easy to practice, witnessing can pose a challenge to many. That is why such a high percentage of believers do not intentionally witness for the Lord. The number can be as high as 80% of believers

who do not intentionally share the gospel to non-believers. It is hoped that you will be motivated to improve the church environment in evangelism and help change the mindset and culture of witnessing for the glory of God. Once you obtain the trainer certificate, you may start teaching the people in your fellowship or ministry, even one to one, until you gain the confidence to train a group.

### **The Message:**

#### **1. The Great Commission is for Every One:**

First and foremost, we must be committed to the Great Commission of our Lord. It is not only written in Matt. 28:18-20; it is also mentioned in the other three Gospels. They are in Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:46-49, and John 20:21-22. The Great Commission is also in the Old Testament in Gen. 12:1-3. The Great Commission is a charge to every believer; it is therefore not negotiable. By fulfilling the Great Commission, we are also part of the fulfillment of God's early covenant with Abraham in Gen.12 that "in thee all the families of the earth will be blessed."

When the Lord says, "go therefore," it is to preach the gospel to non-believers. However, our commitment is to the Lord; without the Lord, there is no gospel to preach to non-believers. Therefore, the focus has to be on the Lord, the owner of the gospel. When the Lord says, "make disciples," our commitment is still to the Lord and not the believers. Without the Lord, there are no believers to disciple. Believers are members of the body of Christ; without Christ, there is no "body of Christ."

The Great Commission is the best vision for the church. Many church pastors are hard pressed to come up with a vision statement for their church. It is the wrong approach. If we believe that Christ is the supreme head of the Church, the vision has to come from the head of the church instead of from the leader of the church. Christ's vision is for the church to go and preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations. These nations are not the geo-political countries of the world, currently 203 of them. They are the people groups throughout the world, estimated at 16,300 of them. To date, there are still about 6,600 unreached people groups (from the Joshua Project Global People Summary).

Second, we are not making disciples for ourselves; we are making disciples for the Lord. No doubt when the Lord uses us to proclaim the gospel, we are just the instruments or channels. The gospel belongs to our Lord, if the disciple belongs to us, we have no gospel to imbue in them. John the Baptist had many followers, but he led them to Christ, for he said, "He must increase, and I must decrease." One evening, Charles Spurgeon was walking along a street, and as he came near a bus stop, he saw a man with one hand holding the bus stop pole, and the other hand was holding a bottle of liquor; he was apparently intoxicated. The man apparently knew Spurgeon, as he attended one of his gospel rallies. As Spurgeon passed by, the man shouted: "Mr. Spurgeon, I am your convert." Spurgeon answered him: "I can see that you are my disciple, but I can surely tell you that you are not the Lord's disciple."

## 2. Soul Winning is God's Work, not Ours:

Salvation belongs to the Lord and only the Holy Spirit can convert a sinner. As the sovereignty is with the Lord, initiation of saving souls lies with the Lord. As Stephen Olford said: "Soul winning is God's work. From start to finish, He must plan and carry it through. My business is to be in line with His will. Winning men and women to the Lord Jesus Christ is not a matter of trial and error but of being led by the Holy Spirit."<sup>9</sup> Soul winning does not have to be a burden, for the burdens are lifted by the Lord. We need not worry about the word to speak, for the Lord will provide what to say. We need not worry about rejection, for the Lord will bear all the brunt. We are not fighting the spiritual battle with the devil alone, for the Lord had already declared victory over Satan when he was crucified, died, and resurrected the third day. Like the Promised Land was to Joshua, we are claiming souls already given to us by the Lord. Brethren, the battle had been won by the Lord, what we need is to claim the souls for the Lord.

I often advise Christians going for evangelism that the prerequisite is to have a thick-skinned face. I was deeply touched by a university student brother in China; when I said that evangelism requires a thick-skinned face, he said not only that, for the sake of the gospel, I need not care about my face. The Chinese word is that I am prepared to be "shameless" for the Lord. Yes, we need to be thick-skinned instead of being sheepish; however, when facing temptations to sin, our skin has to be shamefaced. I like the Nike shoe slogan "Just Do It!" That should be our second prerequisite to evangelize. There are adverse effects to this slogan. In a city, a large wall with a Nike slogan attracts many urgent youngsters urinating below it. A depressed person climbing an 18-story building who saw the Nike slogan opposite the building would likely have an undesired consequence. However, there are no adverse consequences to "just do it" in evangelism; of course, it must be done with wisdom.

## 3. The Blessings of Soul Winner:

Third, the blessing of a soul winner is tremendous. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself promised that He would be with us always: "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20b). What is more precious than to have the Lord staying with us at all times? Certain promises in the Bible are not universal or guaranteed; for example, in Prov. 22:6 we read, "Train up a child in the way he should go: even when he is old he will not depart from it," and the promise of long life in the fifth commandment (Exod. 20:12). But the promise that the Lord is with you always in the GC is one that you can definitely name and claim. I can testify in all situations of fulfilling the GC, whether favorable or adverse circumstances, the Lord is always there to protect you. The question is, how can you experience the Lord's presence, if you have not gone out and preached the gospel and made disciples?

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<sup>9</sup> Stephen Olford, (with David Olford), *The Secret of Soul Winning* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 2.

Dan. 12:3 says, “And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.” They that turn many to righteousness refer to those who would be instrumental in converting men to the worship of the true God. Any one who converts a soul for the Lord belongs to this category. Barnes’s note further says that the stars will be conspicuous; the wise who turn many to righteousness will be honored in proportion to their toils, sacrifices, and their success. What is more, every time one soul repents, God is glorified, Christ is magnified, and we should be the most satisfied people on earth.

**Conclusion:**

The Great Commission is a charge to all believers. It is not optional. Our commitment is wholly to Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior and the head of the church. Fulfill the Great Commission and for sure, you will experience the Lord’s presence, or you can name and claim the promise. Soul winning is God’s work; He must plan and carry from the beginning to the end. Our business is to be in line with His will. May all of us be found faithful in fulfilling the Great Commission of the Lord! Amen!