

# **Missional Hearts**

Here's a must read for every Nazarene pastor and lay leader with a missional heart. The presenters/authors agreed this book gave them new insights and ideas to use in their own evangelism ministries! Here's what a few of them had to say ...

"This Evangelism Summit was fascinating. I really enjoy that kind of sharing. I came home with two pages of notes for our leadership teams to consider. It was two days very well spent - thanks for the work in putting it on!"

Gene Tanner, Senior Pastor  
Valparaiso Church of the Nazarene

"Thanks for including me in the Evangelism Summit. I enjoyed hearing the various presentations and having the opportunity to interact with the people who were there. I know that only good will come from it!"

Clair McMillan  
National Canadian Director  
Church of the Nazarene

"I am heading for my first Evangelism Summit 'Recovery Group Meeting.' Whew! I left and could not sleep, my brain was in such a spin. There is a way for God to use the biblical office of evangelist in this new age..."

Chuck Milhuff  
Revivalism Coordinator  
Church of the Nazarene

"It was a profitable and stretching experience for me to be with you just soaking in the powerful presentations. I'm going to promote our prison chaplains ministry more aggressively. What an enormous potential ... 'Every county has a prison.'... The creative energies bouncing around in that room were pretty amazing. Thanks again for the invitation."

Woodie J. Stevens  
New Mexico District Superintendent  
Church of the Nazarene

# **Missional Hearts**

## **Best Practices for Effective Evangelism**

edited by  
Jim Dorsey

Published by  
Evangelism Ministries  
USA/Canada/Mission/Evangelism Department



*To missional partners in this journey:*

*Who serve on the frontlines of evangelism,*

*Bringing Good News to the hopeless;*

*Who draw strength from winning just one more;*

*Looking always for new methods for the message;*

*Who feel the missional fire in their bones;*

*Drawing new passion from fellow innovators;*

*Some who wrote a chapter for this volume;*

*Others who are stirred from reading their words.*



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# Preface

The first Evangelism Summit for the Church of the Nazarene was held in May, 2005. The gathering provided an opportunity for ongoing conversations on the development of new cutting edge resources and strategies for evangelism across the USA and Canada. As innovators leading the way in evangelism ministries, over 30 Nazarene leaders were invited from across the USA and Canada to this first roundtable discussion of best practices.

The gathering focused on sharing workable ideas for the new Evangelism Ministries, organized early in May, 2005 for the USA/Canada Mission/Evangelism Department (UCME). Plans call for this new ministry office to assist in extending the evangelistic impact of existing Nazarene churches across the USA and Canada.

In conjunction with this decision, this E-Summit provided a forum for discussion from the some of the most effective Nazarene leaders in evangelism. Each of the participants presented a 6 to 8 page paper on a specific evangelism topic related to their ministry experience. A wide range of ideas, resources and strategies were presented and discussed.

Of particular interest were the most effective ministries in bringing people to faith in Jesus Christ and discipling them into the Church of the Nazarene. Admittedly, all the materials and discussions couldn't be included in this volume. In an interest for maintaining the original spirit of the meeting and the vibrant tone of the presenters, any editing was lightly applied to the papers, if at all. Your understanding is appreciated.

These chapters are presentations are from the frontlines of best practices in evangelism. The hope is by making this resource available on a wider scale to all Nazarene pastors and lay leaders, it can become a helpful guide of practical ideas for an even a broader range of ministries.

The table of contents reveals the wide range of topics at the summit were as diverse as the presenters themselves. As can be imagined, after each of these papers were presented, energetic discussions followed. And an unexpected practice spontaneously developed during the meeting. From the first presenter to the last, after each paper was shared, the group set aside a time for special prayer. They prayed for each presenter and their respective

ministries, asking for the Lord's anointing upon all their efforts. They prayed for you and your ministry as well, that by reading these pages, a new passion for evangelism would permeate your own heart and ministry.

The participants agreed this initial summit sparked new ideas and innovations for more effective evangelism in their own ministries. Our hopeful prayers are these insights will do the same across our denominational family throughout the USA and Canada.

*Jim Dorsey*  
*May, 2005*

## CHAPTER 1

# **Missional Hearts:**

*Best Practices for  
Effective Evangelism*

by Jim Dorsey



**T**he gathering of church leaders was most impressive. Notable theologians huddled together discussing a range of topics. The practitioners came from varied backgrounds, to discuss the finer points of implementing a more unified plan. After opening introductions, the discussions moved quickly into their focused agenda. But all too soon, questions strayed into the controversial.

The center of the exchanges swirled around similar topics, things like including outsiders and the group's expectations of newer members. Several in the group openly criticized of the way outsiders were being invited into meetings. Others began questioning the reputation – and even the motivations – of several of their ministry peers. The volume of the discussions gradually rose until heated exchanges erupted. Finally, the representative of the outsiders arose, and responded to their criticisms and questions. His answers shocked the group.

No, this wasn't a local church board meeting or denominational roundtable discussion. Instead, this leadership forum met centuries ago and described for us in Luke 15. The controversy involved the way Jesus interacted with those outside the church community of His time. (He had even included them into His dinner group meetings!) More than one present-day leader has taken comfort that even Jesus came under severe criticism by ministry peers for His evangelism policies and practices.

Our Lord rose above the negativity of His critics. Instead, He shared three different life experiences to the groups listening that day. These rapid fire illustrations, one right after the other, record the only time in the gospels the Lord using three similar parables together. After listening to the confused and conflicted logic of His critics, these three "reality experiences" took aim at unraveling their self-centered attacks.

Much has been written about the "Parables of the Lost and Found," and we would not presume to explain the richness of these parables in just a few paragraphs. But try to consider the unspoken attitudes of these religious leaders. Luke tells us these church leaders questioned Jesus in the very presence of the outsiders, "the publicans and sinners." The spirit of the elder brother personified these insensitive critics. While they concerned themselves with their traditions and reputations, Christ looked at the spiritual needs of the crowd gathered around them. While the "unchurched" listened in on the conversation, Jesus passionately spoke of the lost finding their way back home.

From the heart of our Lord came words of genuine understanding. He

used descriptions of forgiveness and acceptance that dramatically contrasted with the tones of these irritated critics. While they saw the differences, Jesus described their similarities.

In all three life portraits, He illustrated attitudes of concern. An urgency resonated in each story, from people who really cared about their unacceptable spiritual conditions. Hearing these life-like stories, “the outsiders” sensed a kindred spirit. Someone spoke like He really cared about each of them. Images of a tender Shepherd, hopeful bride and broken-hearted Father contrasted with the “out of touch” church leaders around them. His authentic compassion drew them in for a closer look. When the lost must be found, love finds a way to connect.

Another group of church leaders gathered more recently for an Evangelism Summit in May, 2005. These leaders contrasted dramatically from the previous group mentioned in Luke’s gospel. While they represented diverse backgrounds, they had been unusually effective in various ministries of evangelism. Pastors, educators, administrators, and chaplains all sat down together to discuss ministry experiences and discover any common best practices. An enthusiasm filled the room as each shared ministries and methods that were impacting the lives of the unchurched. Spontaneous times of prayer for participants and their ministries followed each of the exchanges. The affirmations expressed to the positive reports contrasted with the previous descriptions. A genuine spirit of joy and celebration filled the meeting with each story of a life restored.

Underneath it all, effective evangelism begins as a matter of the heart. When moved with the spirit of compassion, love will find a way to reach the spiritually displaced in every generation. The life and ministry experiences of these church leaders revealed a deep seated hope in our missional challenges for effective evangelism. Their methods varied as much as their styles and personalities. But the mission and the message remained consistently the same.

Some overarching patterns began to emerge through the two days of presentations and discussions. As you read the following chapters, no doubt you’ll pick up on these patterns as well, and probably add a few of your own. To begin your journey, here’s an overview of some of the common denominators we picked up from the meeting and some of their practices for ministry. You’ll want to jot down your own observations too.

In the priority of worship, multiple leaders reinforced the power of relevancy to the unchurched. Worship is “a dramatic, emotional experience,” said Gene Tanner. “Emotions are to lead us to God ... emotions without Truth are empty frenzy...”

Wes Humble and Brian Redman reflected that same sentiment in their discussion of worship. The dramatic shift that took place at their assignment

at Newark (OH) First Church “centered on becoming intentional about the planning and designing of the Sunday morning worship celebration.” Worship becomes a crucial time for connecting seekers to a life changing experience in faith. When the people of God gather to seek Him in genuine worship, seekers in the crowd can be swept closer to faith. What ever the investment in time, talents and treasure, love bridges a way in worship to connect others to faith in Christ.

Other leaders described the dramatic results of gift based ministries connected with relational evangelism. Brett Rickey said “All the church’s connection events were designed to allow people to find a small group and to start new ones.” The new church he pastors at Tulsa (OK) Family Church of the Nazarene has grown in less than 5 years to over 700 in worship. Pastor Brett says that growth is attributed primarily to helping people connect through their own personal ministry: “We have found our greatest retention of unchurched people happens when they take on a ministry job and keep it.” The sense of momentum and greater participation by utilizing spiritual giftedness becomes an effective way to help others connect to faith in Christ. Real love works all the options to find a way.

An atmosphere of openness and acceptance fosters the sense of security for people processing their faith. This openness involves affirming and including the widening diversities happening in our ministries all across the USA and Canada. Building an authentic sense of community only reinforces the unchurched to trust your church as a place to find real answers.

Steve Ottley shared how his new church developed the “Circle of Friends” small groups to foster a new multicultural ministry emphasis in the suburbs of Toronto. In chapter 9, he describes arriving in Toronto. “One of the first things that struck me as I made my way, for the first time, through Toronto was how cosmopolitan this city was. I had never experienced anything like it before. There were people from every corner of this planet. I saw white people, black people, ladies dressed in saris, and men with turbans. It was an incredible sight, and an eye opener for this young man whose only world reference consisted of Belize, a country that is ethnically mixed, but no where near the variety I was experiencing that summer Sunday afternoon, and Bethany Oklahoma.”

Pastor Steve began to pray and seek for ways to impact his community with the Good News of the gospel. For other churches facing the same challenges, you’ll want to study his observations. Gradually their church became a reflection of the demographics in their community of Whitby, with sensitivity to being open and accepting in their church.

Brian Wilson reminds us that “Hispanics are not a homogeneous group” and encourages a new understanding between the various cultures of the Latin American countries. This kind of understanding builds meaningful

fellowship and improves the efforts for effective evangelism. Difficult as the challenge may be at times, love moves us to look for new ways.

For others, effective evangelism involves reaching beyond the “already convinced” requiring a focused vision and determined missional passion. Co-pastor Gaye Marston described this missional focus at Salem Fields Community Church of the Nazarene “to actively look outside our walls for ways to connect our church with the community.” In less than 7 years, God has honored their outreach efforts in a myriad of ministries designed to connect with the unchurched. Co-pastors Buddy and Gaye Marston have seen their ministry grow from less than 70 to over 2,900 on Easter 2005. “We took the challenge and committed that no matter what the criticism or the obstacles, we were going to change our methods without changing the message we love, and reach people for Christ.”

Of course, no evangelism strategies can be complete without adequate training and teaching. All these leaders agreed discipleship remains as important as reaching in their on-going evangelism ministries. Co-pastor Terry Schneider serves at Gold Creek Community Church of the Nazarene. He described “connecting with the crowd where they are living and then step by step taking them to the Bible to discover what God has to say.” Learning and discipleship are crucial for life change to occur.

Woodie Stevens writes “Building relationships one at a time, inviting people into the experiences of our lives, opens the door for them to see Christ in us.” That level of transparency, and personal vulnerability, to seekers can be intimidating. But love requires we open our hearts to impact others. However challenging, love opens up a way.

Underneath it all, faith sharing and faith shaping begin as matters of the heart. Jesus described it so well in the parables of the lost and found. The lost were found when Someone loved enough and took personal responsibility to get involved to make a difference. That’s how most of us came to faith in Jesus Christ – someone cared about our spiritual needs and loved us to faith. The journey to faith may be as different as our life experiences, but the influencing motivations remain the same.

Sponsoring a new church has become the most productive form of evangelism we know. As hundreds of existing Nazarene churches have helped sponsor a new church, thousands of unchurched families across the USA and Canada have come to faith in Jesus Christ and been disciplined into our denominational church family.

This past year a record number of new members were received into the Church of the Nazarene in the USA and Canada. The research makes it crystal clear. This new upsurge in membership is directly connected to the hundreds of new Nazarene churches started since 1994. Sponsoring churches and pastors are beginning to see their greatest legacy in ministry for

extending the Kingdom of Jesus Christ just may be the new church they help to sponsor.

As you read these chapters, we trust the authors will spark new inspiration and an idea or two you will find helpful. Perhaps these ministries will help initiate a new evangelism strategy in your ministry. Whether in your worship service, reaching out to your community, the fellowship ministries of your church or even in the discipleship of newer believers, anyway to help others to faith in Christ is the right way. The attitude of compassion in your heart will help find a way.



## CHAPTER 2

# **One Chaplain's Perspective**

by Luann Lester McBride

# Introduction

## Luann Lester McBride

Chaplain Luann McBride is an ordained elder in the Church of the Nazarene. She currently serves as a Hospital Chaplain at Providence St. Peter Hospital and Founder & Chaplain of Good Mourning; a Grief/ Loss & Life Transition Ministry. She and her husband Paul, who is also ordained, and serve as interim pastors in the Pacific Northwest.

Chaplain Luann says, “I must admit I have enjoyed being a PK (preacher’s kid). I remember the early years of traveling as a family in the summer; camp meeting to tent meeting and the great old saints of the church, they must have been at least 45 not looking a day over 50. Our oldest daughter told her minister dad as a teenager, ‘I am not a PK, I’m a TO.’ To which her dad promptly responded. ‘A TO?’ ‘Yes,’ she fired back, ‘A theological offspring.’ It is an integral part of our heritage. “

Chaplain McBride’s formal training includes the following:

Ed B.A., Vennard College, University Park

IAB.A., Seattle Pacific University, Seattle

Course of Study, Church of the Nazarene Clinical Pastoral Education,  
Yuma Regional Medical, Center, Yuma, AZ

I grew up in the home of a Nazarene Evangelist, Fred R. Lester. I learned at an early age the power of prayer as one prepares to engage persons in conversation through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. My calling to health care chaplaincy finds me in hospital rooms, intensive care units, operating rooms, family birth center, senior residential and rehabilitation facilities. It is through the Holy Spirit's leading, directing and empowering me much as my father experienced in his encounters in church revivals, tent meetings, and Holiness crusades. My father had the ability to preach a sermon and share Christ anywhere, and to anyone. We shared in common not location but a heart's motivation to love people, to serve people and be used of God in that service.

I've been blessed to serve the local church in a number of capacities; Director of Christian Education, Interim Pastor, Pastor's wife and lay volunteer. I remember a discussion shared recently with my husband, Paul, after his almost 8 years as an interim pastor on the Washington Pacific District and mine in hospital chaplaincy. Our vision for pastoral ministry has been challenged and changed as we have joined our hearts with persons experiencing life transition and loss. Opportunities for forgiveness, spiritual healing and wholeness has been a central focus in our shared and individual ministries, as we view Christ's work in the church, in the hospital and in senior residential settings.

## COMMUNICATION

We celebrate our respective gifts for ministry in the home, in the church and in the community. Noticing the title of this chapter, "One Chaplain's Perspective," I do not speak for all of us in the health care field. It is important for us as chaplains, pastors, and lay church visitors to create opportunities for discussion with local health care agencies, chaplains in hospital and hospice settings, nursing/rehabilitation centers, and low-income residence for seniors. There is renewed interest in many health care/home care settings to provide a holistic approach to patient/resident care. As a result there is greater receptivity to spiritual issues and funding opportunities.

I am convicted at times of my own lack of reaching out and taking the initiative to connect with pastors in my local area. There are many challenges that face us as hospital employees. Confidentiality and patient's rights to privacy laws, may feel at times a hindrance to clergy visitation. The often times unfamiliar and perhaps ever changing atmosphere you may encounter as you enter the hospital doors clearly indicates a greater need for shared

communication. Asking ourselves, “What are the programs and the resources the hospital offers to the community, and what are the programs, activities and ministries the church offers to those in need?” As we apply John Wesley’s words, “the world is my parish” to our contemporary culture we find the need to stay informed and partner together in areas of common intent and concern versus isolation and duplication. People who are unchurched may find at the point of a trauma, crisis or disaster a desire to discover a living faith in Christ or rediscover a forgotten faith. Some find longtime health issues preventing them from regular church attendance and feel alone and frightened. Many need to know we care as we respond to them at their point of need not necessarily from our pre-planned agendas. The chorus by Doug Holck speaks in music the text of II Corinthians. 5:14 :

“Your love compels me, Lord, To give as You would give,  
To speak as as You would speak. To live as You would live.  
Your love compels me, Lord, To see as You would see,  
To serve as You would serve, To be as You would be.”

We share together the call of God on our lives, to love and serve Him. Our geographical areas and ministry responsibilities vary, we are more than number crunchers and worship styles. We are the church, the body of Christ, we serve through the power of His Holy Spirit that calls us to care and love, effectively and redemptively. It is not so much the location of our ministry as it is the motivation of our hearts to minister.

### EDUCATION and APPRECIATION

One seminarian recently shared this suggestion: “Most people who are not planning to go into Hospital Chaplaincy, as I intend, opt for a different form of internship, usually at their local church. While this gives them much valuable experience in encouraging others for Christ and in church growth, it does little to prepare them for the inevitable grief crises that life brings. Our pastors are entering this field with little preparation to help others in times of trauma.

“One possible way to remedy this would be to require every student who is in a Master of Divinity program to take at least one unit of CPE. CPE is an excellent way to allow a student to learn about grief and suffering in a safe environment where they can explore and process their own emotions, thereby allowing them to be better prepared to reach out and comfort others. Do we not turn immediately to our pastors when someone we love is sick or dying? The pastor needs to be fully prepared to extend the love of Jesus and help people through their grief. I believe CPE is an excellent way to help them prepare.”

Other shared educational opportunities may include:

*Workshops on Ethics and Advanced Directives*

*Conversations around Aging and End of Life Issues*

*Partnering for Grief Support classes for providing important community outreach*

*Training laity for hospital visitation*

*Hospitals sponsoring "Clergy Appreciation Day"*

*Churches recognizing and honoring the work being done by inviting Spiritual Care Chaplains*

Web sites in this chapter's resource section include:

A Bereavement Ministry Program

*Beginning A Health Care Ministry (parish nursing)*

*Stephen Ministries*

*Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)*

*The CPE experience provides excellent preparation for church ministry; lay and clergy alike*

Recently I talked to one of our local clergy after his second part time unit of Clinical Pastoral Education, asking, "What difference the educational experience had made in his pastoral ministry?" He responded, "When delivering a sermon I use to look out on a group of people that made up my congregation. Now I see a widow sitting next to her daughter. I see a couple whose baby died of SIDS. I see an elderly couple who just sold their home of 35 years and have moved into an assisted living apartment. I see a 53 year old dad newly diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and a young man sitting in the pew behind him with AIDS."

I thought to myself, "your love compels us Lord, to see as you would see."

## OPPORTUNITIES

Stillbirths and miscarriages may occur in places other than our Family Birth Center. I remember a call to Out Patient Surgery "stat," which found me propelled into a room of laundry and scrubs. No time to be intimidated by the wide red line on the floor marking the sterile field. I was asked by the attending physician to put on scrubs as the patient requested her baby of 16 weeks to be blessed upon delivery. It was a difficult yet sacred time for all of us in the operating room that day as we respected a mother's desire for her baby to be blessed, calling on God's presence to comfort us all by His Spirit.

Do we wonder why a mom sits tearfully in our Mother's Day service with no little one to cradle in her arms? Do we question a Dad who appears brusque at the door when greeted after a Father's Day message because he will not be playing catch with his son or attending his little league games?

Often times there are local community support groups looking for places to meet where people can find help and encouragement as they journey through uncharted or unfamiliar territory. We need to reach out and include other Nazarene churches and other denominations, partnering

together to identify the needs of people in an ever changing society and culture. We need to encourage interdependence on each other and our dependence on God, a God who is changeless and died that we might have life and life more abundantly in Him.

After serving as a hospital chaplain for three years I expanded my ministry to skilled nursing facilities and low income housing for seniors. I saw the need and had the desire to minister to seniors particularly as their issues related to grief, loss and life transitions. My nonprofit ministry is called "Good Mourning."

The National Council on Administration on Aging supplies us with these statistics. "There were 35.6 million older Americans in 2002, representing 12.3 percent of the population in the United States. There were 4.6 million elderly Americans aged 85 years and older. By 2030, there will be about 71.5 million people over 65, more than twice their number in 2000."

Seniors need our time and attention. Whether they live in their own residence or in a residential care facility, most are lonely. In their own words, "we don't require long visits, just stop by, check in, share a prayer, a song or a word of encouragement." Let them know they are appreciated. Communicate their worth and value as honored citizens to us and to their heavenly Father. They may not be able to contribute monetarily, they may never hear us preach or teach a Sunday School class. Their baking days may be over and someone else will have to bake the cookies for the social. Many seniors have wisdom to share and years of life experiences. They deserve our care and understanding and as they approach the end of life, many need the Lord. God will honor our efforts as we reach out in love on His behalf.

As I entered the morning busyness of the breakfast crowd in the Dining Room of the senior facility where I provide chaplaincy services, I found my way to Miss Carol. I have visited with Carol many times. She has been diagnosed with end stage cancer, and was sitting quietly waiting to be served her breakfast. She looked up at me as I touched her shoulder. Finding an empty chair I sat down next to her and taking her hand in mine I began to talk quietly wanting to say something that would bring comfort and encouragement.

She was unusually quiet and seemed a bit anxious and distracted. Showing little response I stood, smiled and started to leave when her voice was barely heard over the clanging of the breakfast trays, "Do that again," she stated quietly but clearly. Stopping, I looked into her eyes and repeated her sentence with a question, "Do it again?" I asked. "Touch me again," she said simply. Our gracious Savior uses our hands, our voices, and our hearts to touch the lives of others. As we faithfully and obediently respond in His name with His love; for in His service we become Christ to our world with a word, a touch, and a smile all in the name of Jesus.

As I left the dining room a nurse approached me, "Please see Natasha, Chaplain, I think she could really use a visit." That brief call became one of my most challenging. Natasha was almost blind and nearly deaf. I remember smiling a lot and writing with a large black marker on her white dry-erase board. It was very hard to carry on a conversation at all and although I tried for several weeks it almost became easier to avoid her room completely, just look the other way.

"Let those who know her better, visit Lord, I just don't know what to do." I tried writing a simple prayer for her on my computer enlarging the letters to a size 20 point, but it only seemed to confuse her. Finally my prayer was made in the hallway as I entered her room, "Dear Lord, help me to encourage Natasha today." I got up close to her, smiled and hollered loudly into her best ear. "Would you like to say The Lord's Prayer?" She responded, "Oh, I love to sing the Lord's Prayer but I don't sing so very good anymore." "Natasha, I know The Lord's Prayer, would you like to sing it with me?" Well, that was the beginning of many times of sharing in song together, The Lord's Prayer. I would always follow her lead and pace. Natasha would sing sometimes with her eyes closed, at other times looking upward with her hands folded always in prayer. She sang her prayer not caring who heard for she was not singing to others but to her Heavenly Father who never grew tired of hearing his daughter's voice.

We are faced daily with the challenge to provide caring, compassionate, confrontational ministry. This will require that we stay informed, educated, Spirit led and empowered for the spiritual and emotional needs, from Gen-Xer's to the aged in our society. For some they will never know the love of Christ unless we are that love, "broken and spilled out."

"To serve as You would serve; to live as You would live."

## SUGGESTED RESOURCES

“Beginning A Health Care Ministry” (to include Parish Nursing)  
[www.nursinguiowa.edu](http://www.nursinguiowa.edu)

Centering Corporation, grief resources, [centeringcorp@aol.com](mailto:centeringcorp@aol.com)

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) [www.acpe.edu](http://www.acpe.edu)

Focus on the Family, “A Complete Guide to Caring for Aging Loved Ones”  
[www.family.org/resources](http://www.family.org/resources)

Moorehouse Publishing & Trinity Press International “Books of Spiritual  
Comfort for Professionals Serving the Aging, Dying and Bereaved”

[moorehouse@moorehousegroup.com](mailto:moorehouse@moorehousegroup.com)

Memorial Hospital, Colorado Springs, “Caring for Aging & Those at End of  
Life Workshops” [hurshel.hendrix@memhospCS.org](mailto:hurshel.hendrix@memhospCS.org)

One Caring Place, “Care Notes” Abbey Press [ocp@abbeypress.com](mailto:ocp@abbeypress.com)

Paraclete Video Productions, [www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com)

“At a Loss for Words” and “Footprints on our Hearts,” two excellent  
presentations helping those who are dealing with miscarriage, stillbirth  
and newborn death. and those who minister to them.

Schoedinger Lending Library on Bereavement Resources. [www.schoedinger.com](http://www.schoedinger.com)

“The Bereavement Ministry Program; A comprehensive Guide for Churches”  
providing a wealth of resources needed to develop a comprehensive  
bereavement program. by Nelson & Aaker

“Bittersweet-Hello/Goodbye” A resource of planning farewell rituals; for  
when there is relinquishment for adoption or a baby dies.

Stephen Ministries [www.fsregional.com](http://www.fsregional.com)

“Stroke of the Heart” stationery and cards for sympathy and encouragement  
[mail@soth.com](mailto:mail@soth.com)

Willowgreen: Audiovisuals & Books [www.willowgreen.com](http://www.willowgreen.com)

“Resources for healing, for hope, for tending that which is sacred.”

Two excellent videos on grief & loss:

“When Mourning Dawns; Living your way fully through the seasons of your  
grief” and “Listen to your Sadness.”

## CHAPTER 3

# Ministry Opportunities:

*People in Prison and Their Families*

by Barry Cook

# **Introduction**

**Barry Cook**

Coordinating Chaplain: State of NY Department of Corrections 1989 to present

Regional Chaplaincy Coordinator: ENC region

Pastor: Westbury CON, Red Creek, NY

Master of Divinity: Nazarene Theological Seminary, 1983

BA in Religion and Psychology: Eastern Nazarene College, 1980

**I**n a day where prisons dot the landscape and prison populations swell at alarming rates, God is calling and depending upon our local churches to become the spiritual custodians of people in prison.

During a recent meeting in the New York metropolitan area, chaplains were informed by prison officials that the United States prison population has topped two million residents, and based on the present growth rates among incarcerated men and women, the prison population is expected to reach 7.5 million by 2015.

At this same meeting, prison administrators have requested the assistance of ministerial staff and support groups developed by local churches to become involved by calling their people to action. Spirit-led volunteers are now in great demand to supply what the Criminal Justice system is lacking.

In order to resource our Nazarene lay people to become involved in the growing field of religious volunteerism, it will be necessary for them to see the need of people in prison to be taught the good news about Jesus in forgiving and changing lives gone wrong. Our lay people need to receive a fresh vision of lost people being found by Christ through God's people, and to develop a godly desire to become a part of a volunteer ministry team that will make a difference in the hearts, and lives of prisoners.

Pastors and church educators play a strategic role in casting a fresh vision among their lay people, and in developing this godly desire to reach out beyond themselves to become dynamic instruments in God's hands for evangelizing the lost. When inactive lay people find an area of ministry that is designed for them outside the church, they experience within themselves a personal spiritual development which enhances their spiritual vitality and energy in their local church.

In casting the vision and developing a godly desire for prison ministry church educators can simply share the facts about people in prison. When our people see others around them as lost and helpless, God places a natural desire within them to get involved. In many seemingly hopeless situations God raises up people who will bring the message of love, hope, and deliverance to some very dry and barren places.

In the book of Ezekiel, chapters 36 and 37, God was tremendously interested in freeing people whom he allowed for a period of time to be taken into captivity. Their freedom was lost and the imagery of death was a sure sign that real life had ended for these people. As they spent their time in their "graves of captivity", God began to offer new life and hope to these people

who had lost the presence of God in their midst, and who also had lost their motivation to live.

God led this man of God to the valley of death and posed a question for the prophet to answer, “Son of man, can these bones live?” (37:3) And immediately, He used the mouth of the prophet to speak to the bones and initiated new life.

This same imagery of death is applicable to incarcerated men and women who are housed in federal, state, and county correctional facilities across our country.

Their valley of death is often referred to as living in the “joint”. And in order to lead them through the joint and to eventually prepare them for life beyond the joint, it is necessary for us to get into their world. Are you ready to be led to their valley of despair?

**Their valley of despair is depicted in three areas:**

### **1. People**

Men and women in prison are lost people. They are people who lack trust, they lack hope, and they lack spiritual insight. Their sins are grievous, their lifestyle is hopeless, and their future outlook is bleak.

People in prison have not proved themselves trustworthy. Their lack of respect for themselves, coupled with living among other individuals with various crimes keeps them untrusting and skeptical about their surroundings.

The moment they are pronounced guilty and arrive at their designated prison, a deep sense of despair sets in and begin to eat away any ray of hope that may have been the piece holding them together. Their convictions ride along on their shoulders. Their guilt is enormous! As one inmate put it, “Chaplain, I have to wear this guilt every day of my life.” The tone of every correctional system is a dry, deep sense of losing something that will never be restored.

Residents in prison are often at a loss when it comes to their future. Short-term men and women count off everyday, looking and longing to be released, and upon release, seventy percent will return to prison to serve time for another crime. Long-term residents view their future in terms of living out life on the inside. A five by eight prison cell is “home”.

### **2. Places**

The places where prison people are housed are filled with problems. As hope vanishes and their future is gone, the accompanying feeling of loneliness creeps in upon them. The closeness of family ties evaporates as they wait patiently for the daily mail distribution.

Every individual finds themselves encircled by foul language, anger, resentment, hostility, and even terror from prison gang members and

potential enemies. To break the networking of criminal activity inside correctional facilities, inmates are continually shuffled around to different housing blocks, cells, and even transported to alternative facilities. This maintains a high level of insecurity in the prisoner's life as the system continues.

### 3. Things

When men and women are moved to different locations, their loss of wealth becomes apparent in their limited amount of personal property. Life in a tiny cell generally includes a locker and a bed. When they are ordered to pack up their belongings to prepare for their next move, most of their personal effects are stuffed into a "draft bag" which can only handle the basics. As these individuals enter this level of simple living, the reality of their shrinking world leads them to the conclusion, "I've lost everything."

As our lay people see the hidden reality of prison death, they are now in a position for God to inwardly motivate them by creating an inward vision and desire to be used by God to make a difference.

#### *How can ministry partners bring spiritual life and hope to people in prison?*

There is life emerging within correctional settings and beyond correctional settings because of prison volunteers. Our volunteers represent the missing piece. Through their personal encounters with Jesus they hold out and offer a new life filled with love, hope and deliverance from the grievous sins, the hopeless lifestyles, and the dismal future of people living within the prison system.

As volunteers share their stories and experiences from their encounter with their savior, the inmate's ray of hope begins to find its way back into their souls. Many are searching for anything that will work, and as faithful volunteers lead them to Christ they find what their hearts desire.

Residents in prison dwell in a different world and volunteers are often viewed as a link to the outside world. Many do not receive outside mail or correspondence from caring friends and family, and even less benefit from family visitation. Incarcerated individuals seem to experience a craving for outside input from any one who will sit with them and share with them from a caring, loving heart.

Pastors and church educators may find it useful to recruit, train and motivate their lay people by utilizing the following developmental strategies for volunteer prison ministries.

Here are a number of suggestions to connect in a new meaningful ministry:

### **1. Contact chaplains of nearby correctional facilities**

Prison chaplains are generally the key that opens the door to prison ministry. Most chaplains will become excited and supportive for lay men and women who will volunteer their ministry gifts in their prison. One estimate places at least one correctional facility in every county in the USA.

### **2. Build a dedicated team of volunteers within your church**

We have discovered from past experience that a team approach is the best approach for maximum long-term impact. These ministry partners may come from within your church or with other churches. Explain the purpose of teams leading Bible studies or visiting chapel services on an alternating basis. Volunteers who visit weekly will likely burn out very rapidly. Most effective prison ministries create a team along with the chaplain, which provide 6-8 men and women volunteers who will schedule alternate weeks for leading Bible study groups.

### **3. Provide spiritual materials**

Each local church can provide "Holiness Today" subscriptions and other available Bible study materials. Any small group materials or Bible study guides would be welcomed.

These are excellent resources for prison ministry programs. Written materials are of utmost importance to resident inmates who eagerly desire an independent Bible study during the week.

### **4. Research existing prison ministry programs in your area**

"*Prison Fellowship Ministries*," formulated by Chuck Colson are continually recruiting men and women volunteers from area churches to join their vision of reaching inmates for Christ. Through "*Prison Fellowship*" seminars, many men and women in prison have been reached for Christ and the volunteers all claim to have a richer, fuller life because of their involvement on the ministry team.

### **5. Pastors and church choirs have made great inroads in prison ministry**

Prison gymnasiums are usually overcrowded when a church choir is scheduled to sing. Lay volunteers share their testimonies and a sermon is delivered. At the completion of the service, as a simple invitation to receive Christ as Savior is offered, a crowd of men or women will leave the bleachers and come forward for prayer.

### **6. Selective Pen-pal ministries can be effective for prison ministries**

Volunteers in prison ministry are not encouraged to participate in a pen-pal ministry. This has been widely discouraged by prison officials because of the volunteer's vulnerability to inmates. It is not advised, and in

most states is not permitted, for prison volunteers to visit or engage in written communication with people that they serve in prison.

However, outside prison ministry volunteers and programs can be implemented to correspond with inmates. This kind of ministry is effective for Bible correspondence courses and for spiritual encouragement. This should be short term correspondence on a first name basis only in order to protect the volunteer's personal identity. As this ministry becomes engaged, it is necessary to have resident inmates correspond to a general church address or to a designated pen-pal ministry name such as "*Prison Outreach*".

### **7. Angel Tree Ministries**

The Angel Tree program, which is incorporated into Chuck Colson's "*Prison Fellowship Ministries*", is a national network that seeks to provide assistance to families of inmates. Local churches are encouraged to participate by contacting the "*Prison Fellowship Ministries*" staff within their state.

People in prison complete an application at the chaplain's office that requests the assistance of a local church to provide their children with Christmas presents on behalf of the father or mother who is presently incarcerated.

"*Prison Fellowship Ministries*" will provide each local church a group of completed applications that includes the names and addresses of participating families within their area. As lay volunteers get involved in meeting these new families and providing Christmas presents for their child or children, a relationship of care and compassion is developed for future care and ministry.

Many of our new Nazarene families have been won to Christ, and into our local church fellowship, as a result of our lay people visiting the families of people in prison.

### **8. Prayer Partners**

A ministry which is not impacted with prayer is a ministry without fuel. As lay volunteers are recruited for prison outreach and integrated into inspiring ministry programs their effectiveness within the prison population will be the result of outside prayer cells.

Prison ministry is a wonderful outreach for our lay people to enter. As we resource our Nazarene lay people in the field of prison ministry, the men and women within our prison system will be enabled to find life, hope and a future in Jesus Christ.

The families of incarcerated people will also be reached with the good news of Jesus, and our lay people themselves will receive a spiritual blessing that will enhance their vitality and energy within their local church.



## CHAPTER 4

# Communicating the Message:

### *Ramping Up the Relevancy*

By Wes Humble

# **Introduction**

## **Wes Humble**

Wes Humble has been a pastor and both a denominational and college administrator. He has also served as editor of two magazines, The Evangelical Advocate and the Holiness Digest.

In 2001 he became the lead pastor of the Newark First Church of the Nazarene. This church is experiencing a rapid growth rate and is currently ministering to over 750 on a regular basis and over 1,000 on special weekends. He also serves as facilitator of the New Start Assessment Centers.

In 2000, the First Church of the Nazarene in Newark Ohio began to experience an incredible transformation. After 82 years of existence, the church had become entrenched in tradition. They were firmly stuck in a way of doing church that had resulted in year after year of little to no growth. Church health and individual spiritual health was also seriously in question. Descriptive words such as, apathetic, dying, boring, drifting, and even the biblical reference to being lukewarm were appropriate for this church.

As Erwin McManus wrote in *An Unstoppable Force*, “The church became a refuge from the world rather than a force in the world. Predictability and stability became dominant themes. The cultural environment became comfortable, and the gospel shifted from a church ‘on mission’ to a church that supported missions.”

The transformation that took place resulted initially in over one hundred people leaving the church. While losing people is not the ideal situation for churches to be in, the ministry gained new freedom to move forward and began to be effective in reaching out to unchurched people.

The shift that took place centered on becoming intentional about the planning and designing of the Sunday morning celebration. The church relied heavily on the “Worship Design Model”, pioneered by the Ginghamburg Church in Tipp City, Ohio. Lead Pastor Mike Slaughter and Creative Director Kim Miller, influenced much of the transitions that were made at the Newark Church of the Nazarene through their leadership in developing this process of planning intentional worship services.

The worship design planning sessions are done on Tuesday morning, and include the Lead Pastor, Worship Pastor, the Power Point graphic designer, the person responsible for designing and building the metaphor, and usually two or three others who are there to provide creative input.

At this time, the team is working on a week to week basis. In the case of sermon series, they do have the luxury of working ahead. But, most of the time they are focused on the Sunday Celebration, following the Tuesday meeting. This makes for a high level of commitment and a lot of preparation between Tuesday and Sunday.

During these meetings they follow a format that includes spending time talking about the services the week before. All aspects are subject to scrutiny. After almost four years of doing this kind of worship design, the team has been on target more often than not.

Most agree, it is amazing to watch the process unfold on a Sunday morning. Mike Slaughter, Lead Pastor at Ginghamburg, likened it to

watching a football being moved down the field ninety-five yards, and then being called in to take the last five yards with his sermon. Pastor Wes says, “Many weeks I feel as though I am being asked to make a five yard run to complete the win.”

For a sample Sunday in this presentation, they have chosen to use the 2005 Easter weekend service as a sample of what they do and how they do it. Below you will find the notes from their Worship Design meeting regarding the 2005 Easter Celebration.

March 26 & 27, 2005 – WORSHIP DESIGN NOTES

TEXT – John 20:11-18

FELT NEED – Hope. To break free from our struggles. To find new life and really live.

DESIRED OUTCOME – To stand up and move forward in the power of the resurrection.

TITLE/THEME – Resurrection ~ Alive Again

THE LOOK – Butterflies / orange flowers

OPENING SONG/ILLUSTRATION – Were You There? (w/ video)

ILLUSTRATION – (video) My Story – “Resurrection Brenda”

FEATURE SONG – When I Think About the Lord

The above notes include the elements that are crucial to accurate and effective planning or designing of a service. The service begins with the sermon or teaching which is provided by the Lead Pastor or speaker for the service. After listening to a synopsis of the text and direction the speaker is going, the team begins the work of trying to ascertain what felt need this subject or scripture touches in the human spirit. It is important to note that they do not start with felt needs, but rather with the Word of God. The Bible and effective communication will always touch some basic human felt need. Then, they try to determine a desired outcome for the service. When this challenging work is completed, the planning team begins to creatively imagine and plan the presentation of the service.

Through the use of video, music, graphic and visual arts Newark First provides a multi-sensory service. They believe that this creates an

environment that stimulates all the senses to focus on God in worship.

In his book, *Aqua Church*, Leonard Sweet remarks, “From the perspective of postmoderns, communication happens in the church, but nothing is communicated. There’s a lot of clucking, but not many eggs are being laid.” He goes on to pose the question, “Why are so many religious leaders having such a problem ‘connecting’ – making the transition from literacy to graphicacy, from linear to looped, from writing sermons to creating experiences?” Sweet also talks about a total learning experience. “Postmoderns have different cognitive styles and learning capacities from moderns. Some scholars contend postmoderns learn one of three ways: visually (what they see), audibly (what they hear), or kinesthetically (what they feel and touch). He contends that, “a lot of young people with attention deficit disorder are really multiple learners in need of total learning experiences, not drugs.”

The reality is that we live in a very complex time when people have been raised in a society of images and multisensory experiences. It is imperative that we address this when we plan on communicating the message of Jesus Christ. Methods are not sacred and as long as the message is not changed we should take advantage of every communication tool available to reach this generation.

With all of our work it needs to be stated that none of this will be effective without the understanding that we rely on the Holy Spirit to use what we have prepared to bring honor and glory to God.

#### **Resources from the web:**

[angelhousemedia.com](http://angelhousemedia.com)

Short films and visual Scripture clips

[avisualplanet.com](http://avisualplanet.com)

Graphics, images and motion loops

[coasthillsresources.com](http://coasthillsresources.com)

Short films, books, media and music

[compassacademy.org](http://compassacademy.org)

Training Christian filmmakers

[damah.com](http://damah.com)

Festival for spiritually themed films, DVDs and films online streaming

[digitaljuice.com](http://digitaljuice.com)  
Animations, graphics, video and music

[flashlightfilms.com](http://flashlightfilms.com)  
Short films and resources for outreach and the Church

[highwayvideo.com](http://highwayvideo.com)  
Worship loops, documentaries and short films

[lumicon.org](http://lumicon.org)  
Tools for integrating media

[mediashout.com](http://mediashout.com)  
Worship and event presentation software

[midnightoilproductions.net](http://midnightoilproductions.net)  
Graphics and videos for worship

[nooma.org](http://nooma.org)  
A series of short films for use in churches and groups

[projectgod.com](http://projectgod.com)  
Christ-centered short films

[projectseven.info](http://projectseven.info)  
A series of seven short films from six filmmakers

[questionthis.com](http://questionthis.com)  
An innovative outreach through a short film trailer

[sacramentis.com](http://sacramentis.com)  
Worship videos and stills

[screenvue.com](http://screenvue.com)  
High-quality video clip resources

[sermonspice.com](http://sermonspice.com)  
A gathering place for worship videos and short films

[sundayplus.com](http://sundayplus.com)  
Worship presentation software

theveracityproject.com  
A network of short filmmakers

verticalsky.com  
Worship videos for churches

visions-york.org  
Worship video loops

worshipandarts.com  
A conference for worship and the arts

worshipfilms.com  
Original video images for worship and sermon illustrations

#### OTHER RESOURCES:

Designing Worship by Kim Miller

Handbook for Multisensory Worship: [www.ginghamsburgglobal.com](http://www.ginghamsburgglobal.com)

Handbook for Multisensory Worship Volume 2:  
[www.ginghamsburgglobal.com](http://www.ginghamsburgglobal.com)

Worship Evangelism by Sally Morgenthaler

How to Design a Service of Structure, Openness, and Beauty by Howard Stevenson, (pastor emeritus of music, worship, and the creative arts at First Evangelical Free Church in Fullerton, California. An article in Leadership Journal, Winter 1996)

Designing Worship Teams: By: Cathy Townley Palm Reader eBooks

Designing Worship Together: Models and Strategies for Worship Planning by Norma de Waal Malefyt and Howard Vanderwell



## CHAPTER 5

# **Preaching for Evangelistic Impact**

By Terry Schneider

# Introduction

## Terry Schneider

Pastor Terry Schneider serves as the Co-Pastor of Gold Creek Community Church in Seattle, Washington with Pastor Dan Kellogg. His leadership roles include preaching, creating and casting vision, managing and mentoring staff, and other leadership duties.

Pastor Terry describes his ministry experiences as “having had the privilege of leading two ‘Evangelistic Style Churches’ over the last 15 years. Both have reached unchurched people for Christ and have shown a lot of growth.”

Visalia (CA) First Church of the Nazarene grew from 200 to over 1,000 in 10 years while he served on staff. Gold Creek Community Church in Seattle, Washington has grown from 500 to over 1,500 in the past 4 years.

As one of the strongest new churches started in USA and Canada, Pastor Terry brings some practical guidance for other pastors communicating the gospel in more relevant ways. Of those worshipping at Gold Creek Church of the Nazarene, he estimates around 20% are not currently believers. And even more encouraging, nearly 40% of their fellowship have found Jesus Christ as their Savior through the ministries of this church. For many, this is their first experience as an adult with any church.

**P**reaching with evangelistic impact is easier than getting people who are unbelievers to hear that message - that is the hardest part. Many churches across America have a low percentage of “unsaved” people in their crowd and pastors preach primarily to the already convinced.

That said, more time should probably be spent in the pulpit challenging our congregations to become an “Evangelistic Style Church.” I have had the privilege of leading two “Evangelistic Style Churches” over the last 15 years. Both have reached unchurched people for Christ and have shown a lot of growth.

Visalia (CA) First Church of the Nazarene grew from 200 to over 1,000 in 10 years. Gold Creek Community Church has grown from 500 to over 1,500 in the past 4 years. Of the people in our church, my guess is 20% are not currently believers. Nearly 40% of our people have found Jesus Christ as their Savior in our church. For many, this is their first experience as an adult with any church.

And so I believe that “preaching with evangelistic impact” probably begins by challenging believers to realize that there are several people that they come into contact with every day that will spend a Christ-less eternity unless we do things differently as a church. That also means that we preach differently than we did 30 years ago.

I would also recommend that every pastor have at least a few close relationships with lost people. It will change you and your approach to preaching. I’ve listed a few ideas that co-pastor Dan Kellogg and I have used to effectively try and engage the pre-Christians as we preach.

### *Make the scriptures accessible*

People today are basically unfamiliar with the Bible. For years I stood in front of my crowds and preached with a Bible in my hands and I asked them to turn and find the passage that I was speaking on that day. But the more conversations I had with the lost taught me that they *embarrassed* and begin to disengage from the message if they can’t find the passage that I’m covering at that moment. Make the scriptures more readily accessible by putting them on an overhead screen or some side screen. At the very least, at a minimum, have them printed in a hand out to the whole congregation.

Learning how to navigate through the Bible is best taught in Bible studies, small groups, or Sunday school classes. Last week, I had a lady in my small group (who had been coming to church for over 3 years and had been in a several small groups) ask me, “Why are some of the Bible verses in red letter print and some in black?” She also asked me, “Who wrote the book of

John?” This person is not someone who has a low I.Q. She is corporate executive with a master’s degree in business and marketing. She is a powerful and dynamic professional leader. She has the confidence to stand up in front of 1,000’s of her peers and debate anything. And yet, when I asked her to turn to Philippians recently, she became embarrassed and frustrated as she didn’t know how to navigate through the bible text.

### *Change the words , not the message*

In effectively communicating the salvation message of Jesus Christ or in just preaching Truth in today’s world, the selection of words that you use is critical. I grew up in the church. Words like sanctification, predestination, consecration, and transubstantiation are familiar to me. They can be used or thrown into any conversation and I have no issues with it, but they have little impact and can destroy a good presentation of the Gospel to unbelievers.

Because we have several teenagers in our worship services, I have always asked my youth pastors to give me current “high school slang words” that are being used. I try to work them into the message. Using phrases like “off the hook” and others will help connect me to my crowd.

Using current business terms like R.O.I. (Return On Investment) will go along way in connecting a point about holiness rather than reaping and sowing to today’s world.

### *Connect with them first, then give them the truth*

More than ever before, I feel that you have to begin every sermon by connecting with your crowd first before you can give them the eternal truths of God’s word. It is vital to be relevant to their world first before sharing what the Bible says about this subject.

This has been a change in our strategy of preaching at Gold Creek. I use to start by reading the scripture passage and then I would go verse by verse explaining what those verses meant. The problem with that approach, if we’re going to effectively preach to the lost or the unchurched, is that only those who are spiritually healthy can track with you. Most pre-Christians are not even sure they can trust in the Bible yet and are skeptical if it has any relevance to their everyday life.

At Gold Creek, we start by connecting with the crowd at where they are living and then step by step try to take them to the Bible to discover what God has to say on the subject.

### *Use multiple and diverse methods*

On Monday mornings we get part of the staff together and try to think how we can creatively communicate eternal truths the coming Sunday. A number of key components guide our discussions:

*Props* are one of the most effective tools of communicating the Gospel. Dan Kellogg, my friend and co-pastor, is a master at using props to explain a critical point in his message. A couple weeks ago he took a tin can and pitched coins into it while he talked about the widow's mite. I've used "Bug Zappers" to talk about temptation and how sometimes we are just like bugs. We get so fixated on a blue light special, that we fly toward that temptation disregarding all of the other carcasses of dead bugs that have destroyed before us. We just fly toward the temptation until we too get zapped. Props are a key to effective communication to a post sesame crowd of listeners.

*Human props* are a lot of fun. Pulling someone out of the crowd and bringing them spontaneously up on to the stage to illustrate a point is highly effective in presenting truth. Bringing a small kid on stage and dressing him or her up in over sized clothes while talking about Saul putting his armor on David is huge in illustrating the Old Testament story. Of course, be careful not to use a new attender for this kind of exercise or illustration.

*Homemade videos* of everyday people giving their thoughts on a topic your covering effectively connects people with the message. Jay Leno has a segment on the Tonight show entitled "Jay Walking" where he goes out into the street and asks people questions about certain topics. We go to downtown Seattle and ask people what their views on parenting are and play them during the message, typically at the start, before we cover what the Bible says on the subject.

*Professionally done videos, movie clips, and current commercials* are also effective at engaging the whole crowd and not just the sanctified. Chances are 60-70% of your church can recognize a popular super bowl commercial. Most pre-Christians know more about the current box office hits than they do the book of Romans. And so, use these avenues to connect and be relevant to them before bringing in the power of the Word.

*Crowd interaction* is also effective. Starting a sermon with a question where the people actually talk back to you is a great idea. Using a warm up question that is relevant to your crowd goes a long way toward their receptivity of Truth later on. I recently talked about the cross and how that one symbol, the cross, has given strength to people in crisis, reminded them of their life of total surrender and submission to God, and our hope of eternal life. But before I talked about the cross, I brought out a chalk board and drew other recognizable symbols - like the golden arches of McDonalds, the Nike Swoosh, the Mercedes-Benz symbol - and asked the crowd to call out what these symbols stood for. After that brief opening, I drew a cross and then talked about its significance to us.

*Drama before and during the preaching* can be very effective. Real life dramas well rehearsed and well timed can help people identify with the points you're making.

*Decorating the stage* or preaching area can be effective in setting the

mood for the talk. We did a series - during the football play-offs and Super Bowl - where we had the worship team dress up in football jerseys as they led worship and we decorated the stage with bleachers, score board, pennants, and a goal post. Then we challenged our church to get out of the grandstand, get down to the field, put on the uniform of Christ, and get in the game. We entitled the series "Getting in the Game". It was all about tithing, sanctification, reaching others with the Gospel, and getting into God's word daily.

Last week co-pastor Dan Kellogg talked on spending time with your kids and how watching a movie "with popcorn" was an American family tradition. We decorated the preaching area with a popcorn machine and it made popcorn during the message. The smell and the visual impact were very effective.

*Power Point* has become a staple of our effective communication in presenting truth. Whether it is the scripture verses, the sermon points, or pictures power point has been very instrumental in our sermons. We currently have 3 large screens (the center one different from the two side screens) giving us two media enhancements at the same time. When people watch television they are conditioned to a commercial about every 8 minutes. Or if they watch or go to a movie, it seems like every 2 minutes or so, a car chase happens, a bomb explodes, or a world disaster hits.

Effective preaching used to be, three main points and an illustration to back up each of these points. But today people are more interested in living out the story emotionally. They expect the talk to move quickly and carry multiple story lines that they can relate with. Multiple power point screens allow us to change images on one screen while keeping the Bible text or sermon outline on the center screen. But more importantly, have something moving or changing every 30 seconds or so.

### *The power of vulnerability*

Big boys don't cry, but it's OK for pastors. It's very important to be open and honest if you're going to be effective. The unchurched are not looking for people who are perfect. They are desperately trying to find some people who live in a spirit of peace and contentment in spite of all of the trials that go on in our world. It's OK to say from the pulpit that you struggle, or that you hurt, or that you don't always do what God wants you to do instantaneously, or tell how hard it is to forgive. or share the temptations that you struggle with. The more real you are the more effective a preacher you will be when talking to the non-believer.

### *Tell the Bible story the way Jesus would have*

Jesus constantly used the culture and the environment of the moment to communicate the Word of God. He was so relevant to the crowds in which he

spoke that they hung on His every word. I have tried to use this in connecting salvation messages to the people I'm speaking to. Recently in talking about the women at the well in John chapter 4, I started out by talking (without ever saying it was a true story in the Bible) about this teenager who grew up the apple in her Daddy's eye. How she had dreamed dreams of a husband who loved her and a family to pour herself into. But, because of some bad choices she made or maybe through some negative circumstances that came into her life, she found herself being an outcast in society. She is with out hope, without friends, and her dream of the perfect family has turned to a life of abuse. She has had multiple divorces. Until one day, she finds herself living with a man and a long way from God. And then after taking 4-5 minutes of setting up this heart wrenching story of this teenager they think is probably some girl in our youth group, I tell them that you can find this story in the Bible. And then, I pick it up from there.

### *The power of music*

Mixed into the message, especially secular music, you rediscover the power of music.

Popular songs during the sermon can go along way in effectively bringing home eternal truths or reaching people with the Gospel. Ending a family talk with a song like "Cats in the cradle" can replay your message in their hearts every time they hear that song played on the radio. We used the song by U2 "Vertigo" as a lead in to a message on discerning the still small quiet voice of God and not being confused about which way is right. 95% of the crowd knew the song and my guess is 100% of the pre-Christian crowd knew the song.

### *Preaching with "Excellence"*

God gave his very best by sending His Son to die on the cross. How can we give anything less than our best effort every week to the people who come to listen to the word of God? We preachers need to value our crowd and honor the fact that the people are choosing to give us an hour out of their busy week to come to church.

We need to be well prepared, current, creative, and at our best emotionally, spiritually, and with high energy when we communicate the Gospel to our people. Anything but our best is not good enough. We need to realize that oft times we only get one shot at people who will spend a Christ-less eternity if they don't receive Jesus as their personal Savior. If we bring an excellent effort and God anoints it, we will be effective in preaching to this lost and hurting world.



## CHAPTER 6

# **Designing Worship For High Impact Evangelism**

By Gene Tanner

# **Introduction**

## **Gene Tanner**

Gene Tanner currently serves as Senior Pastor of the Valparaiso Nazarene Church (VNC). Since his arrival in 1994, VNC has been blessed with tremendous growth. In 25 years of service, Rev. Tanner has always reported increases in all areas at District Assembly. Although there has been tremendous growth, his true passion is the power that is revealed through Christ in a life-changing worship experience.

Rev. Tanner received his BA in Speech Pathology from Central Michigan University and went on to pursue his Master's in Theology from ONU. He speaks on leadership and life enrichment several times a year for the cruise industry. He also leads a yearly Community Leadership Seminar in Porter County.

In John 4:23, Jesus tells us the Father is actively seeking worship. How can this be true? There are churches on every corner! The only possible answer is that having a church service must not automatically mean worship. Worship must be excellent and relevant, bathed with the Holy Spirit, celebrating “in spirit and in truth.” Churches without true worship may have missed some paradigm shifts. Therefore, they are now at a plateau or declining without the power of the Holy Spirit empowering the body of believers.

In too many instances, “church- creativity” seems like an oxymoron. Many churches are more focused on safety than adventure. Some can’t imagine a church service in which anything surprising, out of the ordinary, or even close to cutting edge may occur. Many are able to attend church on a mental autopilot, predicting everything before it happens. I call this a regression of imagination.

It is vital to recognize that some paradigms of worship have come and gone. Many worship on a clear format of:

- Two worship songs or hymns with the offering
- Choir number
- Prayer song
- Pastor’s prayer
- Special
- Sermon

Worship is seen as preparation for the sermon. The pastor’s message becomes the centerpiece of the worship. This worship experience tends to be the single most boring hour in the week. Most attendees are there out of loyalty. The church is slowly dwindling in size and strength. Worship preparation tends to be the pastor and a laymen or two meeting before the service and offering up a two-minute desperation prayer in hopes that God will show up and transform the worshippers. Is it any wonder that God must seek worshippers despite the fact that cities are lined with churches? The boring service confirms a lie to the community, that God must also be boring.

The next paradigm that has come is the “contemporary service.” For many in the church of the Nazarene, this is just an opportunity to sing hymns a little faster and add a guitar. The worship format of the service is basically unchanged. We define this worship as “seeker-sensitive” because we have a guitar and not a pipe organ, but in fact, they are not. Most third generation Nazarene’s are very comfortable in our contemporary services. This in itself

would be fine, except those we are trying to reach are not drawn into worship by our contemporary offerings. Few “seekers” like our “seeker-sensitive” services. Without saying it out loud, many believe mediocrity will still honor God because it happens within a worship context.

In the new paradigm the church is here because of a specific mission, not visa-versa. Actions are ordered according to that mission and purpose, not technique.

The paradigm at play now is the worship experience seen as a whole. It is a singular event where the worshipper may pick out the piece that directly affected him. The worshipper in the seat next to you may pick out another part of the service. It is a dramatic, emotional experience. This is the most difficult paradigm that has ever come before the church simply because of the preparation work needed to accomplish this goal. In this paradigm, the sermon is only a piece of the event.

Each Sunday is a new concept. Each Sunday is a new design, a new emotional event. This week the sermon may be the first thing in worship, with music used to continue the teaching. The next week the sermon may be in the middle of the experience.

As a family tradition, my son and I go to the annual Chicago car show. Despite the fact that Jon is in the military, this winter he came home for the car show. On the way home I asked him his opinion. His statement reminded me of the church and the culture we are trying to reach. “Buick is gone – they will be the next out now that Oldsmobile is gone.” When I asked why, he explained that at every exhibit we had to wait to sit in the cars. But at Buick no one was there. His reason was that Buick offered nothing to bring us to them. Even their new car is not exciting, but the same old Buick. “They are in trouble, if not now, soon.” I did not see it the way he did. The younger generation, raised on multi-task, can see the whole and pick out a detail. I saw each car brand exhibit as a singular event. He saw the whole and picked out a Buick problem. They will see the worship as the whole, and pick out what hit them personally.

Define the journey: “Where is the worshipper to be led?” This now is the issue, not a predictable order of worship. This new paradigm is more than an unpredictable order of service; it is an addiction to excellence where every Sunday is a designed event. In designing our worship event there are usually 30-35 light cues in the one-hour and fifteen minute service.

At Valparaiso Nazarene Church (VNC), we use “intelligent lights” where each service is pre-programmed within the computerized light board. The lighting is extremely important to the event. The worshipper is guided through an event. Absolutely NO RUTS ALLOWED!

To understand this worship paradigm, you must understand the process. The process rises and falls on the Creative Team. This team (at VNC it consists of nine people – I also serve on this team) designs the worship

experience based on my teaching for a particular Sunday. This is very intentional.

Exodus 39:43 defines my role as a pastor: “Moses looked closely at all the work and saw they had done it just as the Lord commanded.” Moses was personally involved, yet wasn’t a micro- manager. I am personally part of the creative process from the creative meeting to rehearsals to final Sunday presentation. In this process, the Senior Pastor must be careful when to use “veto” power. The creativity must flow. In this paradigm it is my responsibility to have my sermons completed a full two months in advance so the team can begin the worship design.

At VNC, the Creative Team meets each Tuesday, beginning at 7 PM and continuing until about 11 PM. The first part of each meeting is evaluation. As pastor I must check both my authority and ego at the door. For in order for this to be effective, they will also evaluate my teaching and how it fit into the entire experience.

### EVALUATION PROCESS

This is huge in this paradigm. There must be an environment of openness. The worship leader, Joel, chairs the Creative Team meeting. We always begin by looking at last Sunday. It makes no sense going forward until we are certain of what we have just done. This evaluation is usually under discussion for over an hour (or equally as long as the Sunday service). Every light cue and every transition is considered. Evaluation is the only path to getting better. We understand that we cannot grow as a team without honest feedback; therefore, we speak the truth helping each of us get better.

Prov. 12:1 (NLV) says, “It is stupid to hate criticism.” The environment is bathed in friendship, grace and celebration. Deep down we must function as if everyone is for the “team”. This kind of relationship takes a lot of work, it doesn’t happen overnight. Every team has a code of ethics, written or unwritten, spoken or unspoken. It becomes the standard for the team. We feel our unity is a more powerful testimony than what we “produce” on Sundays. No one has the right to be defensive (If you are wrong, you have no defense. And, if you are right, you don’t need one.)

As we evaluate we always begin with the “whole” or the big picture. Did we teach what we wanted to teach? Did the entire service, as a whole, “work”? Did anyone daydream for even a minute? We may think big picture, but after all, how do you really critique worship? Should you even try? It is fine to critique the band, vocal team, dancers, drama but the bottom line is, did worship happen or not? Were the people brought into the presence of God? Did the room heat up with spirit and truth? These are most important: Did what we want to be taught - get taught? Was it understood by the body? Next, we evaluate each team’s weak and strong

points. Failure is OK, as long as you learn from the experience. After evaluation we move forward.

### FUTURE PLANNING

We begin by asking ourselves, “Is everything ready for this Sunday?” We walk through the service, picturing it in our minds. We envision the light changes, songs, and sermon – every detail. Each Sunday is to be an emotional experience. This week, will the emotional high take place at the beginning, middle or end of the service? Emotions are to lead us to God. He created us as emotional beings. Worship is very emotional, as is our vision for worship. Authentic emotions are revealed in the light of Truth. Emotions without Truth are empty frenzy, producing very shallow people who reject serious thought.

William Temple defines worship as, “The submission of all our nature to God.” That is very emotional! This is an atmosphere where God steps in and transforms lives. Ministry must be entertaining without being entertainment. The difference is that the Holy Spirit owns the stage. When we are positive this Sunday is set, we advance to the future Sundays. This is usually about two months out. This gives us plenty of time for rehearsals, drama writing (dramas are written in house) or any other preparation needed for that Sunday.

The mission and vision of this team is clear. Without a vision we would be like a sailor without a destination, therefore, unable to tell the difference between a good wind and an ill wind. Vision and mission for this team gives us our persistence and stamina. The creative team must have a target. Our target is to create worship that is so compelling, so meaningful and so unexpected, the time sails by and attendees leave with an enthusiastic desire to talk about the experience as well as the biblical content of the service.

There should be a “buzz” in the parking lot. It is empowering when a new idea, fresh perspective or a radical concept is seen. The team feeds off each other and dreams. Each Sunday is an adventure. If my sermon topic is “What drives your life?” give everyone a toy car, have a real car on the platform, and I come out wearing the uniform of a racecar driver. Or, on Easter, if the centerpiece of the sermon is the cross, build a 48-foot cross and hang it from the ceiling over the platform and first few rows.

Hundreds of hours and large amounts of money may be spent on a single service. It is expensive to create the experience. “Concept worship” is a budgeted item within the music/arts department. God has blessed us with the personnel and funds to accomplish these goals. For a smaller church, it is possible to be creative and still accomplish this new paradigm.

## REHEARSAL

Each Wednesday evening we have a final run-through. We usually begin at 7:30 p.m. and finish by 10:30 p.m. It takes time to get it right. All the light cues, music and drama must be set. I have discovered volunteers will give tremendous amounts of time if their time is not wasted. They see the results on Sunday. There is excitement about what is going to happen this week! There is the adventure of worship.

People will invest time in things that matter. There begins to be that addiction to quality. God deserves our very best. This creates a culture of gift development. There is the old golf joke, “The more practice I get, the luckier I am.” Excellence is not about magic. It is the result of hard work and long hours of preparation. God does the miracle of transforming lives, but the arts themselves are the result of invested time. Some of it takes tedious time just to get it right. Volunteers want to invest their time in something worthwhile. By the time Sunday comes, everyone involved is “fired up” to see the results of their hard work. Volunteers expect God to change someone’s life each Sunday and want to be a part of this miracle. This is motivating!

Wouldn’t it be great if once again the church was seen as the place where outstanding art was utilized to glorify God? It is not our desire to be better than the “competitors” in town because we have a better show or better technology. This paradigm is expensive and demanding both on staff and volunteers. But we have also seen that the branch can do nothing outside of The Vine. Worship here is not about us – God is blessing because He chooses to. He will therefore receive the glory.



## CHAPTER 7

# The Power of First Impressions

By Gay Leonard

# Introduction

## Gay Leonard

Founder and president of SUNDAY FIRST IMPRESSIONS – consulting firm for hospitality ministries to first time guests

President of SAND SCRIPT – editorial consulting firm

Co author of *The Winning Welcome* and *Articles of Faith: What Nazarenes Believe and Why* – Beacon Hill Press

Lives in Lakeland, FL with husband, Larry, pastor Highland Park CON and her two children.

## Scene 1

For weeks we had watched the construction of a Lamar's donut shop in our neighborhood. Though we were lifelong Krispy Kreme fans, we had heard that Lamar's donuts were almost as good, and we anticipated occasional diet transgressions for a morning coffee break close to home. Finally the long-awaited day came, and along with many other donut-lovers we flocked to the grand opening. The new tables and chairs gleamed, the glass display cases were filled with temptations, and the distinctive donut scent filled the air. But one thing was missing: there was no coffee aroma. In fact, there was no coffee at all.

The coffee equipment, they explained, had not yet arrived. Rented coffee urns? They hadn't thought of that. Temporary use of several home coffee pots? None of these options had been considered. *Customers will understand that we've just opened*, they thought, *and they'll expect certain glitches in our start-up phase. Everyone knows*, they reasoned, *that things aren't perfect on the very first day of business.*

But they miscalculated the effect of the coffee faux pas. Their customers had a very basic but clear conception of what a donut shop should be, and it definitely included coffee. When the new owners failed to meet the customers' expectations, their grand opening crowd soon dwindled to a faithful few, and eventually our neighborhood Lamar's went out of business.

## Scene 2

Dave Goetz, president of CZ Marketing, and his nine-year-old son recently visited an electronics store to select a Yu-Gi-Oh game. When Dave produced his store discount card, the clerk at the register said, "I can't read the bar code on the back of the card. It looks worn off. Sorry, but you're out of luck."

"Can't you look up my name on your computer?" Dave asked. "We paid for this card, and we'd like the 10 percent discount."

"Sorry, I can't do that."

Dave considered his two choices: push further or just walk away. His response? "I walked away. And I determined that we'd never darken that door again. There's no amount of marketing that can fix what happened that Saturday afternoon." (Brand & Strategy, April 2005, used by permission of CZ Marketing, Wheaton, IL).

Welcome to the business world where customers are unforgiving and where first impressions are instant and lasting. Welcome to the church world,

a world that has its own brand of consumers—first-time guests.

Although our ultimate purpose is spiritual, the church is not just in the evangelism business. The church is also in the customer service and hospitality business. Failure to act on this reality is a large factor in keeping many of our churches from achieving their evangelism potential.

According to the Congregational Life Survey, two percent of Sunday morning worship service attendees are first-time visitors. For a church of 500, this represents 10 first-time visitors per Sunday, a total of 520 per year. Do the math. For any church, this represents a significant annual percentage. Among these first-time guests are people who are searching for spiritual answers to their emptiness.

The biggest question is not how many guests a church has but how many of them return. Let's examine some basic facts and numbers:

Studies show that with each subsequent visit, the likelihood of retaining newcomers increases dramatically. Among first-time guests, one-third of them should return for a second visit. Among second-time guests, three-fourths should make that church their home. A church's evangelism efforts depend on the ability to make the right first impression and to build an atmosphere that encourages visitors to return again and again.

The Lamar's donut parable and the Yu-Gi-Uh-Oh story hold lessons for astute churches.

### **1. Creating the right first impression requires a culture of excellence.**

Jim Collins's best-seller *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't* was snapped up not only by the business world but also by pastors searching for principles to apply to their churches. But when Thom Rainer wrote a similar book about churches, he found surprisingly few to hold up as examples. Of approximately 400,000 churches in the U.S., only 13 made it into *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap*.

Rainer writes: "In one of our team meetings, I asked the researchers what common element was emerging in our finalists for the breakout churches. 'Excellence in all things . . . They don't want to do anything unless they are doing their best. . . . The thirteen breakout churches had a passion for excellence in all they attempted.'"

While "a culture of excellence" was common in the breakout churches, it was nonexistent in the comparison churches. The difference between the two? A refusal to be satisfied with being satisfied, to consider "business as usual" acceptable, and to tolerate being "good enough." Since Rainer's study found only 13 churches among the 400,000 he held up as examples, we should not be surprised in characterizing the majority of our Nazarene churches as satisfied with being satisfied, as considering "business as usual"

acceptable, and as tolerating being “good enough.”

Business as usual for most churches’ first impressions efforts consists of having greeters and ushers. Not long ago, we were saying that if Wal-Mart has greeters, we in the church should certainly do the same. However, today the very fact that businesses such as Wal-Mart routinely have greeters makes the church’s greeters no more than status quo—an expected part of business as usual.

Make no mistake: ushers and greeters are absolutely necessary. The importance of their preparedness cannot be minimized. However, the American “wow factor” bar has been raised significantly, and the church has not kept up. Instead of doing more of the same—in this case, repeated usher and greeter training—it’s time to go from good to great.

Excellence today means a higher standard than ever before in history. While every church cannot compete with the latest technology and modern facilities, every church can achieve excellence in making first impressions. The costs are measured not in dollars but in effort, selflessness, tact, sensitivity, and above all a “whatever it takes” attitude.

At the opposite extreme, two of the biggest hindrances to making the right first impression are laziness and apathy. Pointing will always be always easier than escorting, and the easy road is chosen by the masses. Going the extra mile means work, and non-excellent churches disdain the extra mile.

### Scene 1

Lamar’s donut shop. They determined their grand opening (minus coffee) would be “good enough,” and their customers’ understanding and patience was taken for granted. Opinions were formed instantly: This business is slipshod and disorganized. These owners have a “get by” mentality. If we can’t depend on coffee today, maybe next week they’ll run out of donuts. In short, Lamar’s failed to make the right first impression.

Excellence begins at the top. It cannot be simply mandated; it must be molded and modeled. Marriott Hotels and Resorts CEO Bill Marriott visits his properties, inspecting every detail in the kitchen, lobby, and front desk. He checks guest rooms at random, insuring each closet contains an iron and ironing board, and even getting down on his hands and knees to check under the bed for cleanliness. He credits the success of his hotels to attention to detail, starting with himself and flowing down. Marriott Hotels has a culture of excellence.

### Scene 2

Let’s go back to the electronics store. Someone who had at one time been interested enough to buy a discount card for future purchases was irrevocably turned off by a minimum-wage employee who not only didn’t

choose the extra mile but didn't even have the road map.

## **2. You have only one chance to make a good first impression.**

It's more than a truism. Like donuts and coffee go together, some expectations are very basic and deserve to be met. Church visitors want to know they'll be welcomed without being overwhelmed, singled out, grilled with questions, or pushed into involvement. They want to know their children will receive individual attention and be safe and supervised. They want to know their teens will be comfortable and feel accepted into the group. They ask themselves: Is there something here that makes me want to come back on a regular basis? Is this a place where I could belong?

Guests make quick decisions. According to Gary McIntosh, most guests form an opinion of a church as they drive into the parking lot and within 30 seconds of entering the front door. And while they make quick decisions about whether to return to a church, they generally do not make quick spiritual decisions. Increasing the number of returning guests is not just a church growth concern; it is an evangelism concern as well.

## **3. Creating the right first impression involves a series of transitions points.**

Our paradigm for first impressions is greeters at the front door. However, an increasing number of church guests visit a church's web site before they visit the church. Is the web making the right first impression? And once they drive on the property, decisions to return are often made before they reach the front door. It's time for an overhaul of our paradigm.

Most churches have these physical locations where guests must move from point A to point B: parking lot, entrance to the building, foyer, entrance to the sanctuary, seating in the sanctuary, restrooms, and exit. While we could talk about specific tips for these transition points, for the sake of time here we will simply say that helpful personnel and innovative "extra mile" service are needed at each of these seven points. Regardless of how simple these transitions may seem to regular attendees, the building is a maze to newcomers. No wonder they generally wait until the second or third visit to add Sunday School, children's church, or nursery.

## **4. First impressions are created one person at a time by one person at a time.**

Sunday First Impressions recently sent two separate mystery guests to the same church. Final evaluations revealed that Mystery Guest 1 was not satisfied and would probably not come back. Mystery Guest 2 was satisfied and probably would come back. Yet both reported almost identical unsatisfactory and unflattering findings in the parking lots, entry, sanctuary, and exit. Both described other attendees "in a hurry" in arriving and in leaving and had no interaction with any of them. What then was caused the

difference in their responses?

Mystery Guest 1 wrote: “There was no connection made. Everyone just went about their business. *I felt as if I was invisible.*” Contrast with this the first impression made on Mystery Guest 2, who met one person who made the total difference. “Ed Curtis was very helpful. He made sure we knew where the children would be. He took the time to escort us to the appropriate classrooms and took us to the Welcome Center. *I would return to this church based on this interaction alone.*” One person can compensate for all others in influencing a first-time visitor to return for that very critical second visit.

Newcomers are looking for someone to take the time and effort to make a personal connection. Churches generally characterize themselves as friendly. Pastors believe their welcome team is friendly. But are they friendly to people outside of their regular acquaintances?

Studies show that if no one approaches newcomers outside of “prescribed greeting time” in the service, they consider that no one has made contact with them. In other words, “required” greetings are not considered genuine and therefore “don’t count.” Few attendees watch for newcomers or step out of their comfort zones for spontaneous interaction. For this reason, churches need to give serious consideration to adopting the pew host/hostess method, persons who appear to be making “unrequired” greeting contact. In short, first impressions are created one person at a time by one person at a time.

##### **5. Bad first impressions are almost impossible to correct.**

First impressions are lasting ones, and there’s very little hope of changing a bad first impression. Just as one person can make the right first impression, one person can also insure that the guest will never return. Scene 2: the electronics store. “There’s no amount of marketing that can fix what happened that Saturday afternoon.”

We live in a very consumer-oriented society. “If Target doesn’t have what I need, I just head to K-Mart.” “If the Delta airfare is too high, American Airlines might have a sale.” Capitalism has taught us that if we don’t find what we want at one business, someone else down the street or at another web site will have it. If a church building is too hard for newcomers to navigate, if they have to park in the “back 40,” if people are unaccepting and unfriendly, another church down the street may have what they’re looking for. Worse yet, they may decide getting into a church is not worth the effort and give up their search for a new church home altogether.

You have only one visit to show your newcomers that you can meet their consumer-oriented expectations. A church may have excellent small groups or the best children’s ministry in the city, but first-time guests will never know unless they make that critical second or third visit.

Will first-time visitors come back? Will they have the opportunity to

hear the gospel, give time for the Holy Spirit to work in their lives, and respond to evangelism efforts? It all depends on the impression you're making. Make the effort now to make the right impression the first time.

**What does it feel like to be a first-time guest in your church?**

Now you can know for sure through the services of Sunday First Impressions.

For more information about making  
the right first impression, visit  
[www.SundayFirstImpressions.com](http://www.SundayFirstImpressions.com)  
or e-mail [info@SundayFirstImpressions.com](mailto:info@SundayFirstImpressions.com)

## CHAPTER 8

# The First 100 Days

Jay Ahlemann

# Introduction

## Jay Ahlemann

When Pastor Jay Ahlemann began his new assignment at Pasadena (CA) First Church of the Nazarene in January 2003, multiple concerns were expressed by the church's leaders and members. Over the past ten years, membership rolls had significant declines. The worship attendance had continued to slide over the past 15 years.

To help initiate some of the needed changes, Pastor Ahlemann embarked on a bold plan for his first 100 days as senior pastor. The results of those strategies brought a significant increase in weekend worship attendance and progress of vital ministries of the congregation. The average moved from around 1,000 a Sunday to over 2,000 in worship every week in less than two years.

Now, Pastor Jay has committed those strategies of "The First 100 Days" in a helpful resource for other senior pastors. This chapter shares a brief overview of the first strategic steps for pastors in a new ministry assignment. For church leaders facing an effort to reposition a church facing serious momentum issues and aligning a congregation in a new way for greater evangelism impact, this chapter brings new insights and hope.

I want to share some things that I have learned about getting started right - how to transition as a new pastor into a church. I followed the basic philosophy of connecting with people early on in each previous church, but then, it had been thirty-one years since I had begun to pastor an existing church. Starting a new church was an altogether different story. Would it work? Could I still follow the basic pattern of going into a new pastorate as I had so many years before?

These strategies had worked in a church averaging 30, one averaging 70, and into two separate churches averaging 300. I had done this before. My wife asked, "Do you still know how to do this?" I wasn't sure, but I thought I would just do what I knew to do, trust the Lord and see what He would do.

Prior to moving to Pasadena, I prepared a letter to be mailed to the church mailing list. I asked for two details: (1) that this mailing list be thoroughly updated, and (2) the letter be mailed from me so that everyone would receive the letter the week just before my very first Sunday, January 5.

It was Rose Bowl week in Pasadena but everyone had the letter by Friday, January 3. I have included a copy of that letter at the end of this chapter. Note the positive approach. I wanted to arouse curiosity and create as much interest as possible. I knew that my first Sunday offered a window of opportunity that I dare not miss!

The people came. Average attendance at First Church for December 2002, was up, they were averaging about 1,100 in total attendance on Sunday mornings. We had right at 1,800 on January 5! The 1,800 included children, youth and adults. It also included people who were present that day for Sunday School who didn't stay for morning worship. Many adults had been attending Sunday School but were not attending the worship service. While many of them didn't attend the worship service that morning either, they were still there, and we calculated that there were approximately 1,800 people in total attendance present our first Sunday.

God met with us! I have included four tapes of the first four Sunday Morning Worship Services in "The First 100 Days Resource" so that you can get a sense of the kind of music, the kind of messages, and the general direction that we headed from our very first Sunday. It is extremely important that you listen to these tapes, not so much to hear the sermon, for I'm really not a great preacher, but for the purpose of understanding how to approach a new congregation with faith and optimism. You will see how I introduced the attendance cards that first Sunday and the following three Sundays. This is strategic!

I had asked for a team of people that knew the people of First Church to go over the attendance cards on Sunday afternoon, January 5, so that they could have them on my desk for Monday morning, January 6. This team did a fantastic job! I had asked them ahead of time to separate the cards into five different groups: 1) those who attended morning worship regularly; 2) those who attended adult Sunday School classes regularly, but who were not attending morning worship; 3) those who came back to First Church for my first Sunday who had dropped out of regular attendance; 4) those who were first-time visitors at the church; and 5) those that no one really knew about for sure.

When I walked into my office at 6:00 am on Monday, January 6, the stacks of cards were there. I had asked the people to write notes to me if they wanted to on the cards and I would read every card. I told them that they could tell me anything they wanted, even if it was “I’m just here to check you out.” Some wrote that very thing! There were hundreds of cards and many notes for me to read. I spent many hours that Monday reading every card. I began to make my own separate stacks of cards. I decided that I would not try to contact any people who attended regularly unless they wrote me a note asking for a contact. I decided to focus my efforts in that first week on those who came that had not come for some time, and upon the new people, as well as those that no one knew anything about. I made more than 100 phone calls that first week to these households prior to my second Sunday, January 12.

My calls were very positive. I thanked them for giving me the privilege of being their pastor and that I was there to serve them. I asked them for their prayers. I never indicated to those who had not been attending regularly, those who had dropped out, that I knew they had dropped out. I just talked to them like they’d never been gone, just asked them to pray for me as their new pastor. Some told me they had been away from the church, but most didn’t; they acted like they’d never left. That thrilled me! I was giving them the opportunity to make a fresh start if they wanted to with the new pastor.

I thanked the visitors for coming. There weren’t many first-time visitors that first Sunday. The people of the church wanted to check me out before they would invite their families and friends. I called all those that no one knew anything about. Of course, in many cases, I had no full addresses or phone numbers, but I worked with what information I did have. All new names were added to the mailing list. I put a letter in the mail just before my second Sunday, January 12. I’m also including a copy of that letter at the end of this chapter.

I was in my office every morning no later than 6:00 am following my first Sunday. My wife knew what the routine would be for the first few weeks. I was blessed to have her best friend, Robert Price, my secretary from CFC in Virginia for the past sixteen years, fly out and spend the first two weeks

helping Pat put our house in order and even organizing my office. Now I know that won't work for everybody and I am blessed to have been able to see that happen. It gave me lots of time to make contacts with people. In my opinion, this is absolutely critical in the first weeks, seeing and talking to everyone you can. I had spent a lot of time preparing my messages for the first several weeks of preaching/teaching at First Church, so I didn't spend a lot of time in sermon preparation those first days and weeks. It was all about being in contact with people and reaching out to the old, and especially those who had dropped out!

If you spend your first days and weeks in sermon preparation and not in connection with people, you have missed a one-time opportunity that never comes again in your ministry in your new church. I did my best to preach, and you'll have to judge for yourself by listening to the messages how I did. The important thing is that people knew they had a pastor that was there for them. I averaged more than 100 phone calls a week for my first month.

I made some home visits, but delayed those as best I could, asking the people if they would give me a few weeks to get settled and then call me and I'd set up a time to come and visit with them. Pat and I visited every Adult Sunday School Class (all fourteen of them) from January 12 through April 13. I shared a message, "What to pray for your pastor," (the same message in every class). It helped me to connect with adults that had not been attending worship services. Many of them started coming to the worship.

On January 12, my second Sunday, there were about 1,600 people in total attendance. Not bad at all, and it stayed pretty much at that level for the rest of January. This was an immediate jump of about 500 in average Sunday morning attendance from the month of December. I was very thankful. I worked hard all of January in people contacts and God met us every Sunday. The altars were lined each Sunday morning with people seeking the Lord. God was so good.

On January 9, 2003, I had my first meeting with the Church Board as their new pastor. I told them that I was like Nehemiah coming to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, that just as Nehemiah needed time to walk through the ruins of the City to determine what needed to be done, I needed time as well. I asked them to give me some time to survey the needs of First Church and we would seek God's direction together. I asked to postpone any major decisions, staff decisions, policy decisions, etc., until I had time to gather information. Visionaries ask lots of questions, and I did.

I began weekly staff meetings on January 7. I shared my vision with the staff and told them the Nehemiah story. I asked them to help me contact people. I had lots of people for them to contact from information that I had gathered by going over the attendance cards.

The staff made their contacts and reported back on paper concerning the contacts. People who had turned in special prayer requests were called and ministered to at the point of their needs and concerns. People were realizing that there was pastoral care and follow-up taking place.

They began to invite their friends. In the next three Sunday mornings we had seventy-three first-time households represented by guests. These were not just people who were coming back to check out the new pastor at First Church. These were first-time guests from seventy-three different households. The people of the congregation were now inviting their friends and family members to come because they knew God was at work and this was a “safe place” to come and find God.

I followed up with a phone call on all first-time households. I personally called them! Letters were sent to those for whom we had no phone numbers. All of these were being added to the church mailing list. A series of letters were developed (this involved a lot of early morning work to develop letters and processes for follow-up), and various new procedures were put in place. Sharon Densford, my new assistant, did a fantastic job assimilating and processing this information for the staff and congregation.

Letters were developed for the following: 1) first-time visitors; 2) first-time visitors for whom we had no phone numbers to call; 3) out-of-town first-time visitors; 4) visitors who had attended one time and then missed the next two Sundays; 5) those who made commitments to Christ; 6) those interested in baptism; 7) those interested in baby dedication; and 8) those interested in church membership.

New classes and training programs were developed which I taught or taught others to teach: 1) Altar Counselor Class; 2) Growing Christians Class (cycle of seven lessons); 3) Baptismal Class; 4) Child Dedication Class for parents and grandparents to attend, and 5) Membership Class.

I made a special effort to attend all leadership kinds of gatherings as soon as possible to meet with ministry leaders. All of these efforts took weeks and months to demonstrate my commitment and interest in the existing ministries. I studied and surveyed the landscape of ministry (a Nehemiah story), and determined which ministries needed to GROW and which needed to GO! Those that needed to GO were not immediately terminated. These things take wisdom and timing!

I looked at such issues as wedding policies, counseling policies, facilities policies, etc. You study and you work slowly. Unless there is an immediate crisis that has to be addressed, you wait for God’s timing and then you make changes slowly as you develop the love relationship of pastor with people. Once people know you care, then they are ready to consider changes. People contacts of caring and ministry are essential in the early days and weeks if you’re going to get started right!

Now I'm talking about going into Pasadena First Church of the Nazarene, a church that was then averaging 1,100 in attendance. A smaller church can be much more easily processed because there are less people to contact. Pastor, connect with the people! If you are willing to pay the price, do the work and pray, God will give you the hearts of His people, and you will be building a foundation for an exciting ministry.



## CHAPTER 9

# **Effective Evangelism in a Multicultural Context**

By Steve Ottley

# Introduction

## Steve Ottley

Born in Belize City, Central America, Steve grew up as a Nazarene preacher's kid. In 1980 he left Belize to attend Bethany Nazarene College. Three years later He and Pat got married and settled down in Toronto Canada.

After a long battle, he responded to God's call on his life for fulltime ministry in the early 1990's. In 1992, Steve was invited to be on staff at Rosewood Church of the Nazarene in Toronto. He filled the role as youth pastor and worship leader.

In 1999 Steve and Pat felt called to start a new congregation in Whitby, a town just east of Toronto. With the help of their sponsoring congregation, Rosewood Church, together they launched Gateway Community Church in October of 2000.

Presently, Steve serves on the Canadian NewStart Taskforce and the NewStart Multicongregational Taskforce for the USA and Canada. Steve and Pat have three beautiful children: Nicole (18), Shauna (15), and Dylan (13).

### *Introduction to a cosmopolitan city*

In the summer of 1982 I rolled into the City of Toronto in my Ford Pinto station wagon. It was my first trip to Canada and to Toronto. I had driven from Oklahoma City where I was attending Bethany Nazarene College, to visit my fiancé and her family.

Both Pat and I grew up in the tiny Central American country of Belize. I went off to college in 1980 and the following year, Pat and her family migrated to Canada. Now that we were getting married, we needed to make the decision of where we would live. Would it be Belize, Oklahoma, or Toronto?

One of the first things that struck me as I made my way, for the first time, through Toronto along its famous downtown Yonge St., was how cosmopolitan this City was. I had never experienced anything like it before. There were people from every corner of this planet. I saw white people, black people, ladies dressed in saris, and men with turbans. It was an incredible sight, and an eye opener for this young man whose only world reference consisted of Belize (a country that is ethnically mixed, but no where near the variety I was experiencing that summer Sunday afternoon) and Bethany Oklahoma.

At the end of my two week visit to Toronto, taking in all the sights and people, I knew that this was the place for us to settle down. I didn't need to convince Pat; this was now home for her. We got married in the summer of 1983 and I migrated to Canada, to the city I had fallen in love with a year earlier.

### **The Multicultural Community Called Greater Toronto Area (GTA)**

According to the 2001 census, the GTA has a population of almost 5 million people. The breakdown of that is as follows:

People Groups	Population
Aboriginal	23,320
Chinese	411,890
South Asian	478,440
Black	317,685
Filipino	134,585
Latin American	76,875
Southeast Asian	54,150
Arab	43,400
West Asian	53,400
Korean	43,235

Japanese	17,885
Multiple Visible Minority	33,920
Other Visible Minority	67,805
All Other	3,208,285

Forty four percent of the population of the GTA was born outside of Canada. It is as multicultural as you get. This is the context in which we are called to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.

More and more, the above statistics represents the face of North America. A recently aired program on CNN dealt with the rising Hispanic population in the state of Georgia. In the past decade, that state has seen a three hundred percent increase in its Latino population. Some look at this a negative trend. I see this as a “God Thing”. He has given us a unique opportunity to reach all the nations of the world right here on this one continent.

### **The Church of the Nazarene in the GTA**

Walk into most Nazarene congregations in the GTA, and you’ll find a variety of people from all nations and kindred and people and tongue. There are twelve ethnic language congregations in the GTA. The other thirteen congregations are multicultural ones where people from all different backgrounds gather.

Rosewood Church of the Nazarene is one of those multicultural congregations. I had the opportunity to serve on staff at Rosewood through much of the nineties. During those years, and continues to be the case today, there are over thirty different nationalities represented. Rosewood is pastored by Nick Stavropoulos, who comes from a Macedonian background. He pastors people from all over the Caribbean, South America, Latin America, Africa, Europe, and North America.

Even in the Spanish congregations, you find cultural mix. Though they all speak the same language, they are from a wide variety of cultures. There are people from the Dominican Republic, Central America, South America, and Mexico.

The ministry of the twelve ethnic language congregations is needed so that the gospel is shared effectively to those who communicate best in those specific languages. However, in the future, even those churches will need to plan for a more multicultural setting. Many of the large Chinese churches in the GTA are finding that to be effective, they need to provide English speaking services.

One Chinese pastor from a church outside our denomination, explains that the children of the first generation Chinese-Canadian, who attend English speaking schools, work for English speaking companies, and develop relationships with English speaking friends from various cultural

backgrounds, will not bring their friends and coworkers to a Chinese only church. They have found that in order to carry out the Great Commission of *Making Disciples*, they needed to go *Multicultural*.

That's great news! That is what Heaven is going to be like so we need to get used to being together on this side. This is also how Jesus said the world would know that we are His disciples. In Jesus' priestly prayer He prayed for the church to be one.

John 17:20-23 (NLT) 20 "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me because of their testimony. 21 My prayer for all of them is that they will be one, just as you and I are one, Father—that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us, and the world will believe you sent me.

22 "I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are— 23 I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one. Then the world will know that you sent me and will understand that you love them as much as you love me.

In his book *Theory and Truth*, my father, Dr. O.L. Ottley sums it up:

*This prayer for oneness by Jesus presupposes an intention inherent in God's original plan for mankind, not a second thought... Jesus did not come primarily to preach a gospel; rather he came to die in order that there might be a gospel to preach, and this is the gospel! "My prayer is not for them alone, I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message (the gospel), that all of them may be one..." The oneness for which he prays is inherent in that gospel which is based on the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world'*

### Effectively Carrying Out the Mission

The question that is obvious is: "How do you effectively carry out the mission we were given by Christ to make disciples of all nations in this multicultural context?" Let me offer some of the things that have been effective in the two congregations I've had the opportunity to minister in.

#### 1. *Get to know the people you're reaching*

Many refer to this as "Knowing Your Target." As we study Jesus' effectiveness in ministry we notice that He was successful in large part because He met the needs of people. For the blind, He gave sight. For the deaf, He gave hearing. For the lame, He gave mobility. For the woman caught in adultery, He gave protection. He was a master at meeting the needs of people. It was only after He met their need that He shared with them the good news of forgiveness of sin and the gift eternal life.

If we're going to be effective in evangelism in any setting, we need to follow the Master. We need to know the people we are reaching out to, just as

he did. People will not respond to our message if they don't see that we genuinely care about them. That means getting to know them and their needs

When Pat and I felt God calling us to start a new congregation in the town of Whitby, a suburb of Toronto, one of the first things we did was to start researching the demographics of the town. Who were these people God was calling us to? Statistics Canada provided information contained in the latest census. We visited successful churches in the town to see how they were doing church. People began giving us information about their family and friends who lived in Whitby. We made contact and starting building relationships with those who were willing. We needed to know the people we were going to be reaching out to and ministering to.

## *2. Be intentional*

One of the things I quickly found out was that the community we were called to was, at the time, eighty nine percent white. Eighty percent of the core group that God had blessed us with was from an ethnic background. I remember asking God, "Why in the world would you send me to an area like this when You could use me in a part of the GTA that is more ethnically diverse? After all, there are not too many black pastors on our district. Wouldn't I do better right at the heart of the city where most immigrants first settle?"

While in the GTA, all the different peoples live in relative harmony and most communities are very mixed, I recognized two things about Whitby: (1) Whitby is on the outskirts of the GTA and the ethnic mix we see in most of Toronto had not yet reached this community, and (2) Whether consciously or unconsciously, people need to see other similar faces or they won't feel completely at home.

As we moved towards the launch date of this new Whitby congregation called Gateway Community Church of the Nazarene I intentionally did some things to bring some balance. I prayed and asked God to bring people into our core team that would make it a balanced team. When formulating our Leadership Team, I was careful to choose godly, wise people from different backgrounds.

As we planned each Sunday's worship service, we made sure, and we continue to make sure, that those up front represented all of the demographic: Male, female, teens, adults, black, white, brown...

After four years of ministry in Whitby, if you were to visit Gateway, you would look out at a congregation that is very balanced in the area of the various backgrounds. It's a wonderful sight to behold.

In those four years, Whitby has also seen a transformation. When we first came to this town, it had a population of 82,000. Now we are pushing 115,000. Many of those new individuals and families are from different ethnic backgrounds. God knew what He was doing after all, as He put together the core group of people to start Gateway. On the street we live, our

neighbors on the one side are of Italian decent, while our neighbors on the other side, the husband is from Jamaica and the wife is from St. Vincent. Our neighbors two doors down are from India, and three doors down we have Filipino neighbors. Across the street we have a family with Greek heritage and another Italian Family. That's just a slice of what Whitby is developing into.

Everyday I walk out of the doors to our home I'm reminded of a couple things. I'm reminded that God sees the big picture, around the bend and down the road, even when I can't. I'm also reminded that there is a lot more work to do in reaching this ever growing multicultural community.

### *3. Plan events that draw a crowd*

Even before we had our launch day, we began having events in the community to draw a crowd. One of the things we did was to have *Family Fun Days* in the park next to the school we were going to begin meeting in.

The demographics of Whitby, especially the community in which we were launching the new congregation, had a large number of young families, most of them commuting families. Mom and dad drop the kids off at school or daycare by 7 a.m. and start making the 60 – 90 minute trek into Toronto. Later that evening, sometime between 6:00 and 7:00 they pick up the kids, rush home to make supper, do homework, get the kids off to bed, to start all over again the next day.

Providing a community activity where parents and kids could spend time doing fun things like jumping castles, playing penny carnival games, being entertained by Bobbles the clown, and have a hot dog or a hamburger, all on the church, was a hit. We saw upwards of 300 people from the immediate community come out to such events. Some of the families in our congregation, we first met at one of those *Family Fun Days*.

Often times you need to go to where the crowd is. Every year the town of Whitby has a County Town Carnival. It runs the entire weekend. For three years in a row, we've canceled our Sunday morning worship service and joined with a couple other churches to do a concert on the main stage at the carnival.

We've gone to the crowd on Canada Day (July 1<sup>st</sup>) by assisting the Kiwanis Club with their Canada Day Celebrations. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people flock to the lakeside park to enjoy free games, food, and entertainment. We've assisted with the craft centre, allowing kids to come in and create a craft they would take home.

At Rosewood, we often organized parades in the community. There were Anniversary Parades, Police Appreciation Parades, Possessing the Land Parades... They all attracted a crowd, including the media. People in the community knew who Rosewood Church of the Nazarene was.

There would often be International Celebrations and Potlucks at Rosewood. Foods and flags from all the countries represented in the

congregation made those events a hit. The music also reflected the mosaic of people. These were hits in the community.

Weddings for people in the Rosewood Community attracted large crowds of unchurched people. One summer we did almost 30 weddings. One particular Saturday, we had three weddings. They produced a crowd. Many pastors shy away from tying up their time doing weddings for people outside of their congregation. That's a major mistake. There are many families that are a part of Rosewood who were first introduced to the church at a wedding.

In some cultures, when families buy a new home, they invite the pastor to come and do a house blessing. It's not unusual to have eighty to one hundred family members and friends, a large number of them unchurched, at these house blessings. Again there are families that are a part of Rosewood whose first contact with the church was at a house blessing.

At Gateway, we are in the process of planning our *Summer Day Camp Ministry*. That in itself will draw children from unchurched homes in our community. However, we're going to take it a step further. On the Saturday at the end of *Day Camp* week, we're planning one of our *Family Fun Day* in the park and school parking lot. The idea is to get the families of the kids who attend *Day Camp*, to make a connection with people from Gateway.

Along with some of the activities we've provided in the past at *Family Fun Day*, we're going to have our first *Summer Swap*. Families from our congregation will bring items they don't have use for anymore and do a swap with another family. The community will be invited to participate. The cost to participate is to bring a couple canned food items for a local food bank. We'll invite representatives from the food bank to come and share information about their service.

It all goes back to knowing the people you're reaching out to, meeting their needs with a genuine love that comes only from God.

#### ***4. Connect with community organizations***

This is the key in becoming established and recognized in the community God has placed you. As with many NewStart congregations, Gateway meets for worship in a public school. Over the four years, we have built a solid relationship with the staff of the school. It has become a partnership and not just a landlord/tenant relationship. Shortly after we started worshipping in the Public School, I was asked to be a part of the *School Community Council*. This is a team of people made up of parents, teachers, and a community representative. This has given Gateway an inroad into a partnership with the school, we never dreamed of.

The last three years we've partnered with the school to provide Christmas Hampers to needy families in the community. The students bring toys and non-perishable food items, filling up large bins in the school foyer.

Gateway volunteers then take over, prayerfully seeking families in the community that could use some help at Christmas. Hampers are then put together with food and a gift for each child in the home.

Our partnership with the school has even gone international. Gateway has been a part of Work and Witness Teams to the country of Cuba. The school has donated items, including pens, paper, pencils, etc., for us to take for the people of Cuba. One year they donated funds to go towards purchasing a saxophone for one of the young ladies in one of our churches in Cuba who plays magnificently, but had been using a pretty beat up borrowed saxophone. She received the gift with tears of joy.

The school uses our sound equipment for school concerts. They have also been blessed by our small groups taking turns, during our *40 Days of Community*, providing a nutritious snack for the students, and gifts for the teachers. Recently our congregation was blessed with complimentary copies of the New York Times best selling book, *The Maker's Diet*. We made a copy available to all of the staff members of the school. They were thrilled.

We are getting ready to assist with the school's annual BBQ. Volunteers from Gateway will be handing out helium filled balloons to the kids.

Staff, including the principal, occasionally attends our Sunday worship service. Teachers, who come in on Sunday mornings to work in their classrooms, interact with our folks. We are building relationships that will count for eternity.

We've connected with other organizations in the community: Gateway teams have assisted at a local youth shelter; a Gateway team takes turn with other churches, leading a worship service at one of the local nursing homes; we've recently made contact with the mental health hospital and are looking into the possibility of assisting there.

##### **5. Preach relevant messages**

One of the things that often turns people off church is that they find it boring and not at all relevant. We need to preach The Word in a way that is relevant to the people we've worked so hard to get to church. The Bible is full of practical truths that can help people in their everyday life. Messages shouldn't be this mystical, far out there, hard to understand, put you to sleep lecture. They need to be full of truth and application. They need to be a "How To" work of art, covered in prayer, and preparation.

Again we need to turn to the Master in this art, Jesus Christ. Christ used stories that were relevant to the people he was speaking to and at the same time bring the truth home. We need to do the same.

Erich Bridges, in an article titled, *Don't Underestimate the Power of Stories*, quotes Phil Cooke:

*Award-winning Christian TV/film producer Phil Cooke has similar advice.*

“The filmmaker Ingmar Bergman said, ‘Facts go straight to your head. Stories go straight to your heart,’” Cooke recounted.

Yet most Christian television still consists of static, headshot preaching loaded with lingo that only long-time Christians can understand. Likewise, he added, every Sunday “thousands of pastors will step into the pulpit without telling a single story.”

Cooke issued a challenge: “Learn to tell stories that will change people’s lives.”

Having the whole service tell a story is the most effective way of corporate worshiping and in-house evangelism. Using the singing, scripture reading, drama, special music, the message, the offering as a thread running through the entire service helps to tell the story that will go straight to people’s hearts.

In a multicultural setting, one should use as much variety in music, drama, and stories, from the different backgrounds represented in the congregation to make that connection.

Each week I prepare the message out of my knowledge of and my experiences with the people of our congregation and community. After asking God to reveal His truth through me, I begin asking the question, “What truth from God’s Word do our people need to hear and how best to present that truth in a way that will be understandable, and give people some practical ‘how to?’”

## **6. Build community**

Whatever background people are from they need community. Along with their passion to reach people for Christ, whatever it takes, one of the reasons our Ethnic congregations are so successful is because new immigrants are looking for community and they find it at church.

Community is also a great need in multicultural congregations. Small Groups have been the main vehicle to get people into community at Gateway. We call them *Circle of Friends*. These groups provide fellowship, mentoring, and teaching. It’s a place where people get connected. We continually try to find ways to encourage people to join one of our *Circle of Friends*.

One of the motivating factors for our staff to get people into small groups is that we know they receive pastoral care in those groups. Many times I will not find out about a need in an individual’s or family’s life until the need has already been met by their *Circle of Friends*.

More than half our congregation is in a regular small group. During our Fall and Spring campaigns we see that number increase to seventy five or even eighty percent of our congregation attending small groups for the four to seven weeks of the campaign. Lives have been changed as a result of our *Circle of Friends*. Families going through crisis have been supported,

encouraged, prayed for, and have experienced breakthroughs as a result of being a part of their *Circle of Friends*.

Our worship services at Gateway are structured intentionally to be community. Knowing that we serve a community that is made up of young families, we recognize that families need to be together. Everyone is together for the first part of our service. The children then leave for their time of learning just before the message.

During that first part of the service, we include a variety of people of all ages to participate in reading scripture, special music, drama, welcome, operating the audio/visual equipment, etc. One visiting pastor commented, “everything you do here is centered around community, isn’t it?” My answer was, “You bet. That’s what we’re all about. We are the community of faith.”

On Sundays we normally have a greeting time after the first couple songs. We have a hard time getting people back into their seats to move on in the service. They are experiencing community.

### 7. *Mentor your people*

Jesus’ Great Commission to the church was to “make disciples.” We often don’t take that to its completion. We forget the part that says, “Teaching them to obey all I have commanded”. We need to mentor people into mature believers who can then turn around and make disciples of others.

Recently we brought on a staff member to concentrate on just that. Pastor Jayne Lopez has been developing customized Discipleship Classes for Gateway. When completed, we will have a process of taking people from making a commitment to Christ to making disciples themselves.

Rather than simply using a prepackaged program, we’re customizing it to what is needed in our context.

One on one mentoring, especially for new believers, has been an effective way of encouraging and teaching. We have used Chick Shaver’s *Basic Bible Study for New and Growing Believers* as a tool to mentor those who are new to the faith.

Earl Palmer explains the ministry of mentoring in an article, *Mentoring That Makes A Difference*:

*In our prophetic role, pastors need to challenge people to keep the faith, fight the good fight. And often that means giving a forceful word to the congregation.*

*The other side of being prophetic, the side that the mentor highlights, is being an encourager. The goal is the same—living faithfully a Christian lifestyle—but the means are different: encouragement, affirmation, praise.<sup>3</sup>*

If a church is to be successful, it needs to develop leaders. For this reason we continually provide opportunities for leadership training and development at Gateway. Once a year we have a *Ministry Development Day*.

We set aside a Saturday where all who are involved in ministry are encouraged to come together for general training in leadership skills as well as training in their specific ministry area. Throughout the year, we provide up to 30 different opportunities for leadership development through live satellite seminars from CCN (Church Communications Network). These live broadcasts are also recorded and placed in the church library for individuals or ministry departments to use as development resources.

### ***8. Keep something big in front of people***

We are creatures who get bored quickly. For this reason we always need to have a challenge in front of us. More importantly, we need to see God at work in our church and our community. It's faith building!

This is one reason we have our fall and spring campaigns. We've used the *40 Days of Purpose* and *40 Days of Community* campaigns. We're planning on going into a *Stewardship Campaign* this coming fall, using Stan Toler's *Forward In Faith* to raise funds to purchase at least four acres of property to build Gateway's first permanent home.

Seeing God do great things in our church and community builds a culture of faith that says "whatever God calls us to do, He will provide the resources, the wisdom, and the people to accomplish".

Keeping the vision and the big picture in front of our leaders and our people is vitally important. We need to be reminded who we are, what God has called us to, and how we're going to accomplish that. Rick Warren gives a list of questions to ask and to answer for our people:

*Who are we?*

*Where are we going?*

*Why are we going there?*

*What does it feel like to go there?*

*What can they do?*

*How are we going to do it?*

*What will the rewards be?*<sup>1</sup>

The church is all about building God's Kingdom through living out the Great Commandment and carrying out the Great Commission. We need to continually keep this in front of our people. It needs to be the reason we do everything we do in the church.

1 Oliver Ottley, *Theory and Truth*, (Shamax Productions, 2004) 63, 64

2. Erich Bridges, *Don't Underestimate The Power Of Stories*, (<http://www.pastors.com/RWMT/?id=79&artid=3170&expand=1>, 2002)

3. Earl Palmer, *Mentoring That Makes A Difference*, (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/bcl/areas/shepherding/articles/le-scan-030210.html>)

4. Rick Warren, *You've Got To Speak Your Vision*, (<http://www.pastors.com/RWMT/?id=88&artid=3139&expand=1>, 2003)

## CHAPTER 10

# **Attraction And Assimilation Strategies**

By Gaye B. Marston

# **Introduction**

## **Gaye B. Marston**

Gaye Marston is co-pastor of Salem Fields Community Church of the Nazarene, along with her husband, Pastor Buddy Marston. Under their leadership, the church has grown in less than five years from 69 members to over 2,900 in worship attendance in Easter 2005.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Eastern Mennonite University in Health & Physical Education, a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology from James Madison University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist and supervises candidates preparing for state licensure through her private practice. She serves as a network provider for the national ministry of New Life Ministries and was the Missions Professional Counselor for Focus on the Family's "Brio" magazine's missions trips internationally. She has also served as Professional Counselor in the Contemporary Christian Music arena. Gaye is a licensed pastor in the Church of the Nazarene, nearing completion of her ordination.

Gaye and Pastor Buddy Marston have been married for 29 years, and together they co-lead Salem Fields Community Church.

**W**hen my husband and I submitted to the call at Fredericksburg Church of the Nazarene in 1995, it was a new role for both of us. We had served alongside one another in ministry for years, but never together leading a local church. It was a risky and challenging step to take, serving in a way that neither of us felt prepared for, yet willing to walk by faith into the unknown.

It didn't take long to observe that everything being done at this church, averaging 65 people for years, ministered only to the needs of a small band of committed believers that showed up on Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights. Church attendance was valued by this core group, but what impact was it making in the lives of people in the Fredericksburg area? We knew that kind of inward-only focus was not healthy.

So we decided to risk it all when God broke our hearts for the spiritually hopeless of our community and burdened us to be an effective witness for Christ as His Body. He clearly showed us that we needed to reach out to those in our city who were not attending church, to spread the gospel throughout our community in fresh, new ways and to create a place of hope and love where anyone could connect and be given an opportunity to hear about, accept and develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. So we took the challenge and committed that no matter what the criticism or obstacles, we were going to change our methods without changing the message we loved, and reach people for Christ.

Someone said that we've "captured the imagination of God." All we know is that we've been over our head from the beginning, relying on His guidance, strength and faithfulness. We also know that God has no choice but to honor an intentional focus on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. He promised to be with us as we carry out His main mission. In the beginning and out of our small thinking, we thought that if we grew to 250, it would be an incredible work of God's hand. As we approach the 1600 mark, He has shown us that He is "*able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work with in us,*" (Eph. 3:20) and for that we give Him all the glory.

## STRATEGIES OF ATTRACTION

### VISION

*Proverbs 29:18: "Where there is no vision, the people perish."* In the Message it says, "*If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over*

*themselves; but when they attend to what He reveals, they are most blessed.”*

Pastors and leaders had taken this local body to the “edge of the Red Sea,” but for some reason, had never taken the leap of faith to “step into the water.” As a leader, Buddy took that verse very seriously and began to pray that God would give him a vision for the local church in our community.

On the way to Promise Keepers, God was faithful. He gave “**4 Word By Faith: in Worship, Spiritual Maturity, Ministry to Others and Facilities.**” Buddy scribbled it down on a legal pad and knew he couldn’t talk about it until he talked with me. When he returned home, he shared it with me and I connected instantly. He presented it to the board, a group of people that wanted to be lead, and they immediately developed ownership of it. We were in unity. Everything we’ve done from that day to the present, has been about stepping out into the unknown by faith whether it has been in changing the way we do worship services, to our personal emotional and spiritual growth, to extreme giving to others, or building new buildings.

Buddy and I pray that this vision, which is not our vision, but God’s vision for Salem Fields Community Church will continue for generations long after we’re gone. For now, our responsibility as leaders is to keep people on course with the vision that God has given SFCC as well as finding and developing leaders to carry it forward. God gives vision through the leader. People are attracted by vision.

## PURPOSE AND MISSION

Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, led us in a process to define how we would carry the vision to our community. Listed were all the New Testament Scriptures about what the Body of Christ was to be in the world. Upon being passed through various groups of people who prayed, asking what those Scriptures were speaking to us, we arrived at our purpose: *To impact our community by REACHING the unchurched, BRIDGING them together with believers; STRETCHING to mature faith; GUIDING into purposeful service; and CELEBRATING Jesus.* Our mission became: *“To change the moral climate of our community and the world, one life at a time.”* As we stepped out in faith driven by the vision, still today, every method we use, every decision we make, every action we take, is explained by our purpose based on those Scriptures.

## CONNECTING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Jesus commanded us to “...GO...” (Matthew 28:19) and He told us that the primary purpose of the church is “*to find and restore the lost*” (Luke 19:10 TM). The strategy we’ve developed at SFCC to fulfill that purpose and command is to actively look outside our walls for ways to connect our church with the community.

### *Connecting Respectfully Through Relationship*

Years ago, I learned a valuable lesson about reaching and connecting with non-Christians, while studying Native American culture. I saw how the white man overtook that culture out of a motive of superiority that said, “You’re savages, so we’re going to make you like us because we’re better than you.” They stripped away the beauty of the people and began to shape them into a European culture – one completely foreign and frightening to the Native American. A beautiful God-designed people were put in a position to have to fight to defend who they were created to be.

Often, if we’re not careful and intentional, those of us in the church are in danger of approaching people outside the church in much the same way. Too often we might unknowingly be communicating, “Come to us and we will make you like us, because we’re better,” instead of, “Let’s learn to know one another, respect each other as human beings, and together in relationship, we’ll learn from one another.” As we find common ground through relationship, a person’s spirit begins to open to the Good News found within that believer. It takes time, but that kind of influence is respectful to human beings and powerful in the lives of those who don’t know Christ as their personal Savior. Examining our motives is crucial in how effective we’ll be in reaching and connecting to a lost and dying world.

### *Breaking Down Stereotypes*

We began to look through the eyes of those who were not attending church, who found it irrelevant to their everyday lives or who had never attended at all. We focused on breaking down stereotypes that many carried about church and “church people” regarding the way we dressed, asking for money, having long, boring services and judgmental and superior attitudes. We’ve intentionally looked for ways to extend our hand in service to our community through tutoring at schools, service projects, teacher work-day luncheons, or offering our building for community meetings, parks and recreation sports, after-prom parties, scouts, high school banquets, weddings and a variety of other community activities.

Through the Apple Tree Back to School Program, book bags are filled with school supplies and clothes for underprivileged children. We’ve opened our doors in the face of tragedies like 9/11 and Dale Earnhart’s death. We’ve invited area businesses to the *Maxwell Leadership Simulcast* and *America Prays National Simulcast*. We developed relationships with county administrators, school board members, community association presidents and school principals. We let them know that we wanted to be respectful of boundaries, desiring a partnership to make our community a better place. In turn, we’ve been respectfully invited in.

### *Creating A Welcoming Environment*

Though we expected nothing in return as we gave to the community, we saw that as our name spread throughout the community or people came into the building during the week, many would return for a weekend service. We focused on creating an environment that would be inviting and welcoming for an unchurched person. We dressed casual, served coffee and doughnuts, realizing that the comfort of that person was more important than the carpet. We allowed people to remain anonymous as long as they wanted and clearly communicated that everyone could move into involvement at their own pace. We added humor to our worship services to relax people, along with technology and high quality music.

Our goal was excellence in all that we did – not perfection, but excellence. Through creating an environment that focuses on inviting and celebrating the presence of God, one that is respectful to all people no matter where they are in their spiritual journey, the Holy Spirit has the freedom to convict, cleanse and change hearts. Believers grow through the Word, worship, the presence of God, serving in ministry and are taught how to develop relationships to carry the Good News into their work place as ministers of the Gospel.

### *Special Event Services*

Attention was given to special event experiences that connected with what people were involved in through everyday community life. We created weekend celebrations featuring Beach Day, a western themed Round Up Sunday, Biker Day, Teacher Appreciation Day, Neighbor Day, Grandparent's Day, NASCAR Sunday and Classic Car Sunday. We've had local radio stations broadcast live, awarded trophies for the best bike or car, had area business sponsors donate significant prizes, design event day T-shirts, and listened to the SFCC band play country music, pop music, jazz music and worship music. Many stories about SFCC have been written in the local newspaper. One about NASCAR Sunday popped up on the AP and Internet going around the world. Often we hear, "I didn't know church could be like this."

### *Honoring Others in the Community*

We take every opportunity to honor those who make our community a better place. We've honored school sports teams no matter what their record - football, cheerleaders, golf, field hockey, wrestling, tae kwan do; emergency teams – EMT's, rescue squad, firemen, police, military. We show a two-minute recap of their team, bring them to the stage, give \$100 and a SFCC trophy, tell them how much we appreciate what they've done for the community and pray for them. We let them know that there is a church that cares and recognizes their hard work and sacrifice.

### *Life-Changing Messages*

Through life-changing messages, people can see how Scripture is relevant to their everyday lives and find it applicable throughout their workweek. In every service, people are given the opportunity to enter into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Believers are encouraged to continue to grow in their relationships through living out and applying what God speaks into their heart. One comment often heard is “I can take what I hear and directly apply it throughout the week to my everyday life.” We realize that the Gospel comes alive when it is lived out through the believer and encourage people often, not just to be hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word.

### *Authentic, Genuine Community*

One of the most attractive aspects of SFCC is the healthy, authentic environment that has been created. There is an atmosphere of acceptance where people are challenged to risk removing their masks without fear of judgment or condemnation. When we arrived at what was then was Fredericksburg Church of the Nazarene, our family was in the middle of a very difficult time. The church may not have been reaching out to the community, but they certainly reached out to us and allowed us to heal. It’s not common in conferences or training to hear about leading out of brokenness, weakness or failure. Yet, through transparent, vulnerable leadership, Buddy and I have attempted to lead not by covering up our struggles, but allowing others to see how God has transformed and is still transforming our lives.

We’ve decided to let people see how much we need God, how we worship God, how desperate we are for a loving, healing power that can set us free. Our brokenness exposed our pride, it showed us where our family needed attention, it humbled us before a God who loved us and wanted to mend us. Others saw us experience His mercy and grace firsthand and we learned a more accurate picture of ourselves in light of a holy God. We allow others to hear and watch as He is healing us as individuals, as a couple and as a family.

From that day to today, I am determined to press toward being a Body that accepts people right where they are, shows patience while they seek God, respects all people no matter what their background and lives the love and hope that only Christ can give. A place where believers can stretch, grow and find fulfillment in their walk, outwardly focused, very aware that it’s “not about us.” Where pastors are challenged to be ministering in their homes with their spouses and children and where all staff is challenged to live genuine, open, honest lives in fellowship with others. My commitment to SFCC is to never lose focus of how important it is to serve out of brokenness and weakness, for it is then that Christ is made strong in us and the reflection of Him shines brightly.

## ASSIMILATION STRATEGIES

Our target population and primary focus is the surrounding “Community.” If and when a person attends a weekend service, they are considered part of the “Crowd” and will have opportunity to connect to this local body in several ways. These are our connecting points and avenues for spiritual growth, although it may not happen in this order.

For anyone who is curious about finding out more about SFCC, there is a “Newcomers (Reception” - after the Saturday evening service) Luncheon” (after the 11:00 Sunday service) scheduled bi-monthly. They get great food and a brief introduction to the mission, vision and purpose of Salem Fields Community Church, all ministries from Joy Street (preschool children), Jam Time (school age children), LIFT – middle school, FUSION – high school, and small groups. They’re guided to see where they are in their spiritual growth path (seeker, believer, church leader) and informed about where they can connect next to continue that walk.

If someone raises their hand for salvation in a weekend service and enters into a relationship with Jesus Christ, there is a box to check on the connection card that’s inside the program (we’ve changed several words in our language to be unchurched friendly). They will be contacted and encouraged to continue the process by speaking with a pastor or connecting in the “Starting Point” discipleship class for new believers. If they don’t utilize the card, at the exit door and in the restrooms are “Next Step” packets with a Bible and a daily devotional schedule for them to begin learning. It also directs them to the “Starting Point” discipleship class for new believers.

Attendees are regularly invited to take the next step on their path to spiritual growth and connecting to the Body, but reminded that everyone can move at their own pace. Believers in the “Crowd” are encouraged to attend Class 101: Membership, which occurs bi-monthly on a Sunday evening, for 3 1/2 hours. It includes an in-depth background of our mission, vision, purpose, Church of the Nazarene doctrine, Articles of Faith, explanation of membership privileges and an opportunity to sign a covenant of agreement into membership. If the covenant is signed, they become part of the “Congregation.”

A postcard reminder will be sent in the mail to attend the next class, Class 201: Spiritual Maturity. Attendees are taught how to develop the disciplines of Bible reading and study, prayer, tithing, refraining from gossip and other destructive habits and connecting to the Body through a small group. Upon signing, they become part of the “Committed” and encouraged to continue on their path of spiritual growth by attending Class 301: Discovering Your Ministry. This class involves guiding people to assess their spiritual gifts, passion, abilities, personality and experiences to determine the ministry best suited for them. An opportunity will be given to sign a covenant

to find a ministry and get involved in serving others.

After completion, they become part of the “Core” that are the most committed to carrying out the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. They will then take Class 401: Discovering My Life Mission which is leadership and evangelistic training to go back out into the community and reach people for Christ, bring them into the crowd so that they can meet Jesus and be developed into a fully mature disciple to go back out into the community to reach people.

We have found this model of assimilation and discipleship to be effective. However, while we are continually striving to make it easy for people to connect, because of our fast-paced growth, it remains a challenge.

#### **DISCLAIMER**

I can't present these strategies without giving a final warning. Stepping out to change methods is not for the faint-hearted or the faith-deprived. There is a great cost. First, there is a great enemy who often seems bigger than he really is. He doesn't like people coming to Christ, he's cunning and he wages war. So, there's a need to be reminded often that he is quite powerless against our Advocate. Second, there are those who have great ideas, but many serve to skew the focus of the mission, vision and purpose that God has called your local Body to be. Be careful. Third, you might get the most pressure to doubt from those closest to you – your friends, influential people, great titheers or other leaders. That's why you have to be doubt-free, very clear and firm in your mission, vision and purpose. Fourth, there is great resistance to stripping down walls and living a genuine, authentic life in front of others. Sometimes it's easier to intellectualize than grow through relationship. Fifth, there are strong criticisms that will trickle back to you that will break your heart and even though you know it's being said out of ignorance, it still hurts. The challenge is to keep your eyes on Jesus, what He's called you to do and run the race to the end with the guidance, strength and faithfulness that only He can provide.



## CHAPTER 11

# **What I'm Learning about Hispanic Ministries**

By Brian E. Wilson

# **Introduction**

## **Brian Wilson**

Dr. Brian E. Wilson is District Superintendent of the Chicago Central District Church of the Nazarene. Born in Guatemala, Central America to Nazarene missionary parents, he spent the first 16 years of his life in Guatemala, Costa Rica and El Salvador. As an adult he pastored in Chicago, where he led his congregation in planting a Hispanic church. He then returned to Latin America as a missionary and served for eight years as a field director for the Church of the Nazarene in Colombia, Ecuador and Venezuela. 15 of the congregations on the Chicago Central District are Hispanic congregations, and the district has cooperated with neighboring districts in the planting of new Hispanic congregations across the Central USA region.

**W**hat an exciting time to be a Nazarene in the USA and Canada! The church is on the move, with new churches being planted in so many places and in so many innovative ways! One of the most exciting ministries today is ministry among, to and by Hispanics in the USA and Canada.

Hispanics (also referred to as Latinos) constitute about 15 per cent of the total US population. In Chicago, my city, they represent closer to 30 percent and, along with Asians, are the fastest growing immigrant group. Nearly half of the new congregations being planted on the Chicago Central District are Hispanic congregations.

As we celebrate the growth of the Hispanic population and the planting of churches that minister to them, we also recognize that we have much to learn from our experiences in trying “to do Hispanic ministry”. There are many more Hispanics yet to reach with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and we must find ways of being more effective and relevant in ministry among them.

The church is blessed to have a gifted national Hispanic Ministry Coordinator in our brother Roberto Hodgson. He is a man of vision, wisdom and passion. But he cannot do his job alone. He needs a church community that is united with him in missional commitment and passion, and that is constantly reinventing itself within a rapidly changing social context. We can be that church if we are willing to learn about Hispanic ministry and if we are flexible enough to adapt the way we do ministry to reflect what we are learning.

I suggest that this “learning and adapting” process is served by (1) identifying the contexts where our lessons are learned, (2) recognizing the diversity of the population we are talking about, (3) understanding how the Hispanic church in the USA/Canada is different from the Hispanic church in other parts of Latin America, and (4) suggesting some priorities and guiding principles to help us in the further development of Hispanic Ministries.

### **The Contexts I Observe to Learn about Hispanic Ministry**

In the process of writing this chapter, I’ve reflected on the various contexts where I’ve observed Hispanic ministry, and have tried to learn the different lessons that each specific context offers. I recognize that Hispanic ministry is taking place: (1) in the international context (with a century-long history of foreign missionary influence and indigenous leadership development among the Hispanic populations of Mexico, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa); (2) in the Hispanic community

of the southwest USA, primarily California and Texas (where it also has a history that extends back to Bresee's times); (3) in many other parts of the US and Canada where significant numbers of Hispanics live due to immigration and employment factors, and among those is (4) my own backyard, the city of Chicago.

Along with the geographical contexts, there are three additional contexts that inform my understanding of the current state of Hispanic ministry: (5) the educational context, both in our Nazarene universities and the ministerial training programs we offer; (6) the church leadership context (i.e. the participation or lack thereof by Hispanics in local, district, regional and global leadership roles), and (7) the context of the support systems of the church, such as the development of contextualized literature resources.

Each of these contexts offer insights and lessons for us (each worthy of their own individual study), and each is also reflective of the significant diversity that exists among Hispanics. To that diversity we now turn our attention.

### **The Diversity of the U.S. Hispanic Population**

Students of Latin American culture understand all too well that Hispanics are not a homogeneous group. Despite similarities in language, and historical heritage, there are significant differences between people from various Latin American countries. Mexicans are very different from Guatemalans, Argentines from Ecuadorians. Even within a single country, a variety of subcultures exist. Colombians from coastal Cartagena, for example, will express values that are different from the "Bogotanos" of the inland central valley.

The level of diversity among Hispanics increases exponentially when people groups from Latin America adopt a new homeland in the USA or Canada. A Bogotano in Los Angeles and a Nicaraguan in Toronto would represent just two of possibly hundreds of cultural subgroups within the Hispanic-American/Hispanic-Canadian world. Also forming part of the Hispanic-American world are those Hispanics/Latinos who have not moved to the US or Canada from another country, but whose families have lived north of the current Mexican-US border even before their territory was claimed by the United States.

The diversity among Hispanics is being documented with greater precision and noticed by more and more service systems in the US and Canada. Consider a recent study conducted by the University of Florida, which notes that health concerns are different for Hispanics, depending on their country of origin.

Health deteriorates for Mexican immigrants after they become Americanized, but it improves for Puerto Ricans – and some Cubans and

Dominicans – the longer they remain in the United States. “Latinos clearly differ by groups when it comes to health, despite the tendency to lump them all together and assume they’re identical because they come from Latin America and speak Spanish,” said Barbara Zsembik, a UF sociologist whose paper has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Social Science and Medicine*. (The University of Florida News, 2000-2001, Gainesville, FL)

The implications of this kind of diversity for the ministry of the church in the USA and Canada are many. Two stand out for me: (1) That a Hispanic pastor will not be effective among Hispanics simply because he is Hispanic. His nationality, if different from the majority in his congregation may be an obstacle. That obstacle may be overcome somewhat with transcultural ministry training; (2) That the programs, resources and plans developed in Latin America (i.e. Latin America outside the US and Canada), by Latin Americans, for Latin Americans are not always developed with the realities of the Hispanic church in the USA/Canada in mind, and may not be very effective in the northern context. The church’s leadership would be well served to avoid the practice of depending on the Latin American church to determine the direction for and resourcing of the USA/Canadian Hispanic church. Instead, a USA/Canadian Hispanic church strategy should be developed by leaders in the USA/Canada (Hispanic and non-Hispanic leaders), specifically identifying areas where collaboration with other Latin American churches is appropriate and areas where new, original and contextualized resources are called for.

#### **How the Hispanic Church in the USA/Canada is Different from the Church in the Rest of Latin America**

The following brief notes are a beginning point for the development of an understanding of the rich uniqueness and diversity of the Hispanic Church in the USA/Canada. The Hispanic Church USA/Canada is indeed different from the church in the rest of Latin America.

##### **The Role of the Hispanic Church in US/Canadian Society is Different**

The church is a place of security and refuge for the new immigrant.

The church is a place where the cultural values, norms and practices of the motherland are reinforced on a regular basis.

The church is a place for personal affirmation while the process of cultural adaptation takes place. Resources for adaptation often are offered at the church, such as language learning and job skills training.

The church is a place for the offering of social services, such as health services, legal services, and education.

The church becomes a place for transferring some Hispanic cultural heritage to a new generation that has not grown up in Latin America. Research has shown Hispanic/Latino women (mothers, grandmothers,

aunts) to be the main transmitters of that heritage, with the church serving a secondary but very significant role.

\_The church is a place of cooperation (even for those with differing theological and political stances) for the greater good of transforming society.

Parishioners hope the church's leadership will proactively try to influence public officials on issues of morality, society and politics. This hope has been largely unfulfilled.

### **The Ethical and Moral Issues**

The church in the US and Canada address are often different from those of the rest of Latin America (e.g. Some of social concerns are not as great an issue for Hispanics as are racial profiling, access to education and pay equity.)

### **A Multicultural Context**

The Church worships and carries out ministry in a multicultural context.

Communities and neighborhoods where people live and where they worship very often consist of many ethnic groups.

Hispanic ports of entry are no longer limited to urban neighborhoods, but now have extended to suburban and rural areas where established family members, often better paying jobs, safer neighborhoods and better schools make them more attractive ports of entry into the US/Canadian society.

Couples/Families who attend Hispanic churches are often of mixed racial and ethnic heritage.

### **A Multicongregational Context**

The USA/Canada Hispanic church often worships in a multicongregational context. This is a growing trend.

\_Many Hispanic congregations in USA/Canada get their start in buildings owned and/or used by congregations of other ethnicities. Thy dynamics of ministry in that kind of setting require coordination with the other congregations and with their ministries. The kind of programs and materials produced for these Hispanic congregations needs to take into account these dynamics and ministries that will be shared by the various congregations.

A growing number of Hispanic congregations in USA/Canada are permanently in multicongregational situations. That is, they intend to continue to share facilities with other congregations.

\_Many USA/Canada Hispanic congregations are not organized as separate churches, but exist under the organizational umbrella of one church

with several congregations. Leadership is provided by a multi-congregational representative church board.

Many USA/Canada Hispanic pastors are considered either co-pastors, associate pastors, or senior pastors in multicongregational situations. Their roles vary in terms of decision-making and influence.

### **Political and Missional Perspectives in the USA**

The USA/Canada Hispanic congregations have political and missional perspectives on the US and the rest of Latin America, that are significantly different from the perspectives of other Latin Americans, and of USA/Canada non-Hispanics.

This affects how we present the missionary challenge

This affects how we refer to USA/Canada and Latin America in our church literature.

### **The Generational Differences in the Hispanic Church USA/Canada**

The second-generation Hispanic in USA/Canada identifies closely with the general USA/Canada population and culture, and not as much with the culture of their parents' motherland.

Second and third generation Hispanics (the fastest growing segment of the Hispanic population in USA/Canada) often either (1) prefer to use English in the church context, or (2) no longer are fluent in the Spanish language. English is often used at church, especially in Sunday School and youth gatherings.

English translation of services is frequently needed. Some Midwest USA Hispanic pastors are asking their districts for help in starting English-language ministries for the younger generations. This is true of most ethnic groups with a growing second generation.

On multicultural districts, districts with churches representing several cultures and/or languages, one of the significant challenges is finding ways to connect the district youth, Sunday School and Missions programs with parallel programs that may have developed among the first generation but now are faced with transition to second-generation leadership.

In Chicago, for example, a Hispanic NYI program (developed spontaneously by local churches) and the traditional English-language NYI duplicate many activities, and often times are not aware of what the other program has planned. How can/should the district facilitate communication and coordination between these parallel programs, and still allow a unique "space and place" for Hispanic youth to be both Hispanic and American?

### **Apportionment Payments**

USA/Canada districts expect Hispanic congregations to meet the same level of participation in apportionment payments as other congregations. Many Nazarene churches are expected to pay 20% of total funds received (the

current cap on apportionments), compared to the “tithe of the tithe” encouraged (and not often expected) by the Church of the Nazarene in other parts of Latin America.

### **Securing of Buildings**

The securing of buildings for use by congregations is a much more expensive and bureaucratic process.

In Latin America, Work and Witness teams help provide for church buildings, at a much lower cost than in the US/Canada. With US/Canadian local labor union practices and the need for building permits, it is improbable that Work and Witness teams could build a church building for a U.S./Canadian-Hispanic congregation.

As a result, most congregations will either need to be larger congregations (200 or more in attendance) in order to be self-supporting in their own building, or will need to rent or share facilities with other congregations, or function as house churches.

When Hispanic pastors have come from Latin American churches where property and buildings may have been provided to the congregation by “the mission” (the mission organization), there is often the expectation on the part of the pastor that in the US/Canada “the mission” (the district) will also provide a building.

The turning over of buildings from closed churches may perpetuate that expectation. However those cases are limited, and often Hispanic congregations display a dependency and may attempt to explain lack of growth as the failure of “the mission” (the district) to come to their aid. This way of thinking may create conflict between local church and district leadership, and may discourage district leadership from further attempts at starting Hispanic churches.

### **The Economy of the Church**

In 2005, and depending on the region of the USA, roughly US\$100,000 to \$125,000 is required for a local Nazarene congregation to become self-supporting, paying a livable salary to one full-time pastor, paying all its assigned apportionments, properly maintaining and insuring its building, and carrying out essential local ministries.

Most predominantly-Anglo churches in the USA, for example, average US\$1,000 or more per person in annual tithes and offerings (i.e. A church with an attendance of 100 raises approximately \$100,000). Most Hispanic churches average half or less that amount given per person.

Many Hispanic immigrants to the USA/Canada send a significant percentage of their earnings back to families in Latin America. As a result, less is left for charitable giving.

In the USA/Canada “culture of plenty”, the call to sacrificial giving that

comes with Christian stewardship training, is a confusing message to many who come to these countries to “get ahead”, not “give away.” Hispanic pastors in the USA/Canada tend to shy away from the responsibility of preaching and teaching Christian stewardship. The development of Christian stewardship habits will be critical if Hispanic congregations are to be considered equal partners in the mission of the church in the USA/Canada.

### **Leadership Styles**

The styles of leadership in the USA/Canada are expected to be much more participatory than in other countries. Strategies and programs that are developed and promoted in a top-down fashion are likely to be rejected by non-Hispanics. The encouraging atmosphere that is developing on many districts is that of a “partnership” between local churches and districts and general church.

### **Significant Autonomy**

While many Hispanic/Latino districts globally are in various stages of development toward self-support, most USA/Canada districts are Phase 3 (self-supporting) districts, and have significant autonomy. This affects the way programs and mission strategies are developed and implemented. Rather than programs being instituted by a Regional Office (as may be the case in World Mission areas), in the USA and Canada the District Superintendent and other district leaders must be both consulted and included in the earliest discussions and planning efforts if a program hopes to have any degree of broad acceptance and successful implementation.

The District Superintendent is the key person who can create a sense of mission and program ownership on the district. The Regional Strategy Committees (RSC — consisting of all superintendents from a particular region) are essential to collaborative efforts across district lines. The District Superintendents' Advisory Committee (DSAC — consisting of one District Superintendent from each region) facilitates awareness and communication, in the national/international context, regarding national and international collaborative efforts.

## **Some Priorities for Hispanic Ministries**

### **Training Priorities**

1. Because Hispanics are the most effective at evangelizing Hispanics, provide Ministerial Training Systems (curriculum and delivery systems) that are contextualized for the Hispanics in the USA/Canada (provide space and place for this to happen). Given the many religious backgrounds of Hispanic immigrants, special emphasis should be given to clear holiness teaching.
2. Provide evangelism training for pastors, for Hispanic God-called

evangelists and for local congregants.

3. Providing Training for non-Hispanic church leadership at local, district, regional, Nazarene university and global levels regarding (1) the diversity and uniqueness of the USA/Canadian Hispanic population, (2) the various strategies for Hispanic church planting, including multi-congregational and “stand alone” models; (3) the dynamics of multicultural ministry teams, and (4) the relevant and immediate application of the Gospel to the special socio-economic-educational-religious dynamics of Hispanic life in the US/Canada..

### **Resourcing Priorities**

1. A regionally and nationally coordinated system for developing and sharing Spanish-speaking teachers for ministerial training programs.

2. Developing (or providing access to already-developed) Christian Discipleship material for use in local churches with new Christians.

3. Provide annual stewardship training material contextualized for the USA/Canadian Hispanic Nazarene.

4. Provide training materials (in Spanish) for local church board members and other local leaders, some who may be trying to reproduce the church they knew in Latin America, and some who may have no background whatsoever in church administration and leadership.

5. Develop contextualized evangelism support material, including promotional material, material for use during evangelistic campaigns, personal and mass evangelism material, follow-up discipleship material, and membership material.

6. Multi-language signage for use in local churches.

7. Spanish-language choruses and hymns for use as transparencies or PowerPoint presentations.

8. Translation into Spanish of many of the US/Canada resources for pastors and churches (e.g. HQ websites, email services for pastors such as Soul Care, General Treasurer Remittance Forms, Child Safety programs for the local church, etc.)

9. The development of original Spanish-language material written by and for USA/Canadian Hispanics for the USA/Canada context.

10. Scholarships and endowments that will promote the enrollment of our second generation Hispanics in our Nazarene universities.

11. Scholarships and endowments that will assist our U.S. Hispanic leaders in pursuing the highest levels of academic training, such as Ph.D. and D. Min. programs which have not been accessible to them due to financial or ministry reasons.

### **Some Guiding Principles for Hispanic Ministries**

1. Recognize that not all Hispanics are alike. Find out the characteristics of those Hispanics among whom your local church has the opportunity of ministering. Along similar lines, recognize that not all Hispanics will be accepted or effective as spiritual leaders if their particular ethnicity or cultural identity is significantly different from the congregation, especially if they have not developed intercultural ministry skills and sensitivities.

2. Determine what role the local church plays in the life of the Hispanic. Is it viewed as the locus of communication, legal advocacy, health care provision, language learning, religious celebration, a respite from a week/day of dangerous and uncertain social experiences, a connection with homeland culture, a culturally inclusive exception to an exclusive society (or vice versa)? Identifying expectations of potential congregants give clues as to the shape the ministry will need to take.

3. Allow for Hispanic congregations to take on different forms of ecclesial structure, either as part of a multi-congregational church, or as stand-alone churches, or language Sunday School classes or missions. There is no "one size fits all" approach.

4. Give attention to creating "space and place" for a congregation to be able to worship and develop identity as a congregation, enjoying both a sense of security and permission to reinforce cultural and spiritual values, as well as safe space for selective acculturation to take place.

5. Accept Hispanic as equals in a culturally diverse mission field of USA/Canada. They are not simply a group to be evangelized. They are, or at least have great potential to make contributions as, church leaders, and can help the church evangelize many groups.

6. As we learn about Hispanic ministries, we ought also to reflect on the non-Hispanic church, learning about the culturally and socially formative influences in the USA/Canadian church of the past 100 years. As we distinguish between cultural and biblical influences on our life as faith communities, we develop a more biblical theology, and a clearer understanding of who God is and how He is at work among the various people groups of the world.

7. Generally speaking, Hispanics want what everyone else in the USA/Canada wants: opportunity for employment and a better lifestyle, quality education for children, access to healthcare.

8. Since much of the US/Canada church leadership makeup is election-determined, it will be necessary to find creative ways of making space on leadership teams for Hispanics (and other ethnic groups). At times, "parallel" structures may be developed, as long as there is significant interchange between the structures and the "parallel" structure is not intended to isolate, or has that effect unintentionally. For example, a Hispanic NMI council may be created to fulfill the mission of NMI on the district's Hispanic churches.

However, joint meetings of the Hispanic and non-Hispanic NMI councils will be necessary for maintaining a single district identity, and to affirm the inclusive nature of the church's mission.

9. In order for Hispanics to enrich the church, they must be more than simply a "feather in the 'Americano' pastor's cap". They must be seen as equals and be given "space and place" to become all that God can make of them.

10. God speaks Spanish, so we would be advised to start learning it now. The real Bible is the Reina Valera version of 1960. Just kidding, about the version that is.

## CHAPTER 12

# Doing Church for the Unchurched

by Brett Rickey

# **Introduction**

## **Brett Rickey**

Senior Pastor of Tulsa Family Church of the Nazarene. This NewStart was launched in 2000, has grown to 725 in worship while still meeting in a school. Tulsa Family recently purchased 40 acres to build a church.

BS in Management from Southern Nazarene University

MA in Practical Theology from Oral Roberts University

11 Years of experience in the Insurance Industry.

Brett and wife Mindy have 3 daughters.

**T**he title for this chapter is a little misleading. When thinking about it, I felt a little like a science student asked to describe every species of mammal in 6 to 8 pages. It's a broad topic indeed. So I will try to just describe what we have done at Tulsa Family that has worked and what we have stressed to reach unchurched people. This is just one way to do church, and it may not work everywhere with anyone. But it's what God is using here and some things will always translate.

Here's a little history on our origin and style. We are a new Nazarene church out of Tulsa Central. We left our mother church about 4 1/2 years ago with about 80 people, about one-half of those were children under 11. We meet 3 miles away from Central in a school cafetorium and reach a totally different crowd. We now have 3 weekend worship services. Tulsa Family recently purchased 40 acres of land and are now planning our first worship facility. Since January, average attendance is 725. We are a cell based church in regards to small groups. Our worship celebration is very loud and our environment very casual. We have been blessed by God to be able to reach many unchurched people.

I want to stress the fact that we are not doing anything that new or radical at Tulsa Family. Most of what we have learned has been successful elsewhere and we just did the most original thing you can do with good ideas: we "borrowed" them. Not everything has worked well, however, and I will try to let you in on our flops as well. Also, most of the successful outreach we have done has been driven by our weekend corporate worship times. We haven't been successful using the servant evangelism technique.

After talking about this with our staff, it came down to three things that we do to reach the unchurched. If you get these three things going together, almost any church can reach the unchurched in my estimation.

*First*, we create an environment that makes sense to an outsider. We always stress the fact that we are doing church for the people who don't yet attend. *Second*, we provide multiple opportunities for people *to* connect with one another and make new *relationships*, both in worship and outside. And third, the *fire of God* must be in evidence. Many churches have the first 2 but miss the 3<sup>rd</sup> thinking it will be too much for an outsider. (A very sad misconception) So their worship times may be slick but lack the heart and fire needed to connect people to almighty God. So let me dig into each element in more detail.

### **The Right Environment**

Our worship environment is built in a number of ways down to very

small details in how we package and brand our experience. First, we are casual in dress, which is a plus for our area. Many people grew up around church but hate church clothes. They love coming to church in the summer in shorts, but they may sit next to somebody in a coat. Somehow it all works well together.

We have a free coffee bar situated in the rear of the worship area where people can grab some fruit, bagel and a drink. We use this as an invitation tool and tell people, don't worry about breakfast, we'll feed you. The graphic elements, like the bulletin and information folders, are 4-color and professionally produced. Good graphics speak to creating the idea that we know what we are doing, even though we meet in a school.

The flow of our worship is very experiential and fast paced, using a lot of visual elements including many videos that we produce in house. Many times our band plays secular music groups like from Lifehouse, U2, Eric Clapton, etc., in the warm-up time or during our offerings. We sometimes have to change the words to be spiritual, but unchurched people like knowing the music you sing, even if they don't participate. All of this says to an outsider, "This church likes my music", instead of vice-versa. The sermons are always application driven, hard hitting, and have appropriate elements of pastoral transparency in them. People always remark about how they understand the messages at Tulsa Family for the first time in language that they can receive. They are glad to know that they have a pastor who doesn't pretend that he is better than everybody else.

We are blessed to have at least 60% of our adults involved in volunteerism of some kind. About 40% of our church attendance is under 14 years old. We have trained our volunteers to seek out new faces every Sunday and connect with them. Ongoing volunteer training is a key to keeping that vision alive and for connecting new people to service.

At the outset, our primary evangelistic strategy has been to reach the children under age 11 for Christ. We were convinced that they were the easiest to reach and that they would end up bringing their parents and break down that wall for us. And it has worked. To date nearly 300 kids have made first time decisions for Christ. Many of these unchurched kids brought their parents and are now members and active in the church. The leader of our Celebrate Recovery ministry, Buddy Davis, was brought to church by his son who was saved in ROCK church. Buddy was previously unsaved and totally unchurched.

Our kid's ministry is terrific thanks to good leadership and vision commitment. We always have young ones dragging their parents back to church. Children's pastor Brad Farnsworth describes the style of ROCK church as "Nickelodeon on steroids." We make sure kids *don't* sit still. We encourage movement and active participation in worship with their whole bodies with clapping, lifting hands and dancing. All the while, they are being

taught about the word and how much Jesus loves them. We know that even if they reject their faith as teens, they will always remember that church was a fun place when they have a family of their own. We ask for decisions every week.

None of this would describe the church environment that I grew up in. My father, Norman Rickey is a Nazarene pastor, and a good one. And though our churches were pleasant for the insider, they were not that concerned with being relevant to the outsider. They just didn't know *how or why* to change. We expected people to know the rules and the songs. In those days, kid's ministry was just something for old ladies to do. We measured success by dedication, not by results. And we missed the point and lost a generation.

I believe that one reason most churches become entrenched in traditionalism is that they don't kill their sacred cows. So at Tulsa Family, we are active in looking for ministries and committees that are no longer functioning toward our purposes. When we find something that doesn't work, we "kill it and grill it."

Our environment is geared toward change. Our worship order is rarely the same from week to week and we always try to have some surprises. We just have never been afraid to try new things and fail. If they don't work, we chuck it and move on.

We continue to spend nearly 10% of our budget in advertising of some kind. In our first year, we brought in supermodel Kim Alexis to speak and had a record crowd after mailing 25,000 invitations in 4-color. Four of those families are tithing members who are active in ministry and still with us. Advertising is always an investment, not an expense, when done right. We have used direct mail about twice a year to invite the unchurched to something we are doing or to a sermon series. It always seems to get people in the door. Again, this goes back to creating an environment that says we are doing church and investing money in those who don't yet attend. This year our biggest outreach event was CandyMania, which we did on a Sunday morning. We encouraged kids to dress up in Halloween costumes and we'd have all the candy they could eat and to bring friends. We had our biggest crowd other than Easter on this Sunday. Easter attendance in 2005 hit a record 1,035.

### **A place for new relationships**

As many people have written about, most unchurched people just don't have that many intimate friendships. This is where the church can shine the brightest in my estimation. We have chosen the cell church model for discipleship, and the results have been good.

Many unchurched people will go to a house before they will go to a Sunday worship time. We have numerous groups that meet in homes on most

nights of the week. Two times per year we have Sunday night, all church connection events designed to allow people to find a small group and to start new ones. We also have adopted class 101, 201, and 301 from Saddleback as ways to connect people to one another and to God.

We have produced much of our small group curriculum in-house. I will record video Bible studies then Administrative Pastor Jason Hill edits and writes the questions and application. That idea came from the *40 Days of Purpose* the church did 3 years ago.

As Senior Pastor, I am involved in starting new cell groups with the newly churched people. In our current group, 7 out of 13 adults were unchurched prior to coming to Tulsa Family. We will get this group going, find a leader in the group, and let them go and start a new one. My wife Mindy leads many women's Bible Studies that are huge attractors. As many as 75 women have been involved at one time.

Unchurched people need a job in the church to stick around. They want to feel useful to God and to the local church. We have found that our greatest retention of unchurched people happens when they take on a ministry job and keep it. We have ministry fairs twice a year to facilitate this, but all our volunteers know that they are the chief recruiters, year round.

Many weeks, at the end of a sermon, I will have people circle their chairs and talk through what they heard in the sermon in small groups of 4-6. This allows interaction and connection, and then we ask one of them to pray out loud. Every time we do this, I will hear comments like, "That was the first time I have ever opened up about spiritual issues to anybody." Even though it's not seeker sensitive, it works to move people out of their shells and experience fellowship - and 99% of people really like it.

Two years ago, we began a group called Celebrate Recovery that meets on Saturday nights. It is a great place for people to go to get rid of their hurts habits, and hang-ups in a large group worship setting, and small group accountability. We regularly have over 100 in attendance as this has been a great outreach rather than in-reach. We also are able to bus in minimum security, non-violent inmates to this event. Many of these folks have become active parts of our church after release, attending via Celebrate Recovery.

### **A place where the fire of God is evident**

In Acts chapter 2, the moving of God was not at all seeker driven and Peter's first sermon was not timid in any way. Instead it was full of direct truth and power. Peter didn't mind stepping on toes to make his point for Christ and 3,000 were added to the kingdom that day in response to the fire of God.

When I use the term fire, what I mean is passion, freedom and enthusiasm. These are things that people notice right away and they should

point back to the fact that you are buying what you are selling. All of us have been to events that have great content, but lack fire, made famous by some institutions of higher learning. And we have seen the error of *only fire* with no content, this leads to empty emotionalism.

Our model for ministry to the unchurched leaves room for the miraculous in a way that people understand. We have seen many unbelievers receive physical healing after prayer. We pray for the sick of body or heart during our worship in song. Jesus sent out the 12 like this. “*He sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.*” Luke 9:2 (NIV) I believe our modern day approach ought to be the same. Preach the gospel and heal the sick. We’re finding it still works!

In our worship times, we always give a chance to respond in some way to the message. The altar is always open for people to come and pray and it is a good thing, even for the unchurched, even if they don’t know what to do with it at first. One lady responded to the invitation by coming forward to the altar and sitting on it!

Prayer evangelism is also an element of fire. In 2004, I started what I called “The Greatest Gift” campaign. We had everyone submit the names of 3 unchurched friends that they would commit to pray for them, prepare their story to tell them, invest in their lives and invite them to church. We even had the formula down as P2 +I2. We sent them back the names they gave us on a laminated refrigerator magnet and committed to call them quarterly to see how their friends were doing on their march toward Jesus. We had dozens of stories about people who had their entire list in church with them within the first month and many made decisions for Christ during that year. That was the year our attendance jumped by 67% over the previous year.

All of the things I have written about are aimed at generating excitement for the gospel and for Jesus. We are careful not to put on a show just to do it. We try to make sure we are doing church on purpose not to just be cool or innovative. Structurally, we attempt to be free under the moment to moment leadership of the Holy Spirit and let Him do what He wants to do. We are praying and planning to plant a church ourselves this year to continue what God has done. We believe God has even bigger things in store as we relearn how to reach the lost.



## CHAPTER 13

# REACHING THE NEXT GENERATION

By Wenton Fyne

# Introduction

## Wenton Fyne

Wenton Fyne was born on the Island of Jamaica, West Indies. He accepted the Lord as his personal Savior at the age of 16 and went on to fulfill his calling, that of a pastor.

In preparing this chapter, Dr. Fyne writes “We have relied on personal experience, while also drawing from the works of Doug Fields, Youth Pastor @ Saddleback in “Purpose Driven Youth Ministry”, Robert Coleman’s “The Master Plan of Evangelism” and “Worship Centered Youth Ministry” authored by Jon Middelndorf, son of General Superintendent Jesse Middelndorf.

Pastor Wenton planted and pastored the Far Rockaway Church of the Nazarene for 15 years. In his present assignment, Dr. Fyne pastors at the Beulah Church of the Nazarene where significant growth has taken place since his pastorate began.

Dr. Fyne and his wife Olga have three children - Kerriann, Dwayne and Justin

To address the assigned topic “Reaching the Next Generation”, the first and crucial task must be to identify that core of constituents referred to in the term “next generation”. I think we would agree that this group which is the center of our focus is our youth and children.

However it is not enough to identify the group, but if we are to adequately address the task of discussing how to effectively reach this group, we have to understand the group or at least, attempt to do so. We will therefore attempt to explore the world in which this generation of children and youth live and in doing so, allow this exploration to inform our efforts to meaningfully engage them for the Kingdom of God.

No in-depth research is required for us to recognize that this generation of which we speak is a very technology savvy group. The ease with which they can master the seeming complexities of the personal computer, DVD, I-POD and the whole range of other technological innovations give testimony to this fact. Another thing we know about them is that they are not a generation of avid readers (at least not of books) and music and movies are a big part of their lives. In fact according to Middendorf, an average teenage girl in America spends \$3,000 on entertainment a year.

Middendorf suggests that youth ministry has passed the period or ministering to Generation X (Xers) and in his words, “we are all hip-deep in millennials!” According to him, “they’ve been called everything under the sun: the Y generation, the 2K generation, the net generation, the echo boom generation and many other terms, including his preferred “millennial generation”.

A study of freshmen conducted by Beloit University in Wisconsin identified the following characteristics of this “millennial generation”:

Millennials have no recollection of the Reagan presidency  
and very little of the Bush (Senior) presidency.

They look at the Gulf War and lump it into the same category as the  
Vietnam War—something that happened in the past.

They don’t remember the cold war.

Bottle caps have always been screw-off and they’ve always been plastic.

Vinyl records are antiques; the phrase  
“you sound like a broken record” means nothing to them.

The compact disc was introduced when  
the older millennials were one year old.

Many have never known a television set without a remote control.

On a positive note, many studies have shown this generation to be the one that values diversity, tolerance, collaboration, the family and dozens of other positive, healthy ends.

Another reality, albeit a sad reality, is the fact that many of this generation are (will become) the product of broken unions. It is suggested that this is why we are seeing this generation redefine words like family and home. Middendorf suggests that family is not necessarily the people that live under one roof, but rather, family has come to refer to the people that teens care deeply about and vice versa. It is no surprise therefore that one fundamental characteristic of the millennial generation is the overwhelming desire to belong. We will explore this in greater detail in the pages ahead.

Another pleasing characteristic of the millennial generation is their spiritual hunger. The flip side to this however is the fact that this hunger is not leading them to look for truth as we understand it, and they aren't looking for it where we want them to look for it. In fact it is reported that adolescents as a whole are one of the largest buyers of New Age spiritual literature.

Middendorf depicts it this way. "When our millennial truth-seeker finds some nugget of spiritual truth that he or she likes or feels 'Works for me,' it is put into his or her bag of spiritual truths. And then off to somewhere else, looking through a completely different source, finding a little bit to like over here, and that goes into the bag. This process is repeated over and over. And at the end of the day you have a completely individualistic, privatized spirituality that doesn't look like anybody else's spirituality."

He recalls a conversation with the son of a Baptist music minister who remarked "I am kinda different because, you know, I really like Jesus and all, but you know, I really like some of the things that Buddha has to say too. This Buddha stuff is working for me . . . to be honest with you, I consider myself to be a Buddhist Baptist."

Middendorf encourages us not to think that we are faced with a generation that has turned its back on God. On the contrary, today's teens are looking for relevant, practical faith – the kind that "works" everyday. They're starving for personal encounters with the living Christ who makes a difference today, in the real world.

The lack of authenticity or the perception of a lack of authenticity in our church has made it difficult for the church to attract and retain this millennial generation.

As noted earlier in this discussion, the millennial generation is also characterized by the overwhelming desire to belong and this is no surprise in the wake of faltering families and divided homes. It's the same reason that is responsible for the prevalence and appeal of gangs.

According to Middendorf, this spiritual hunger discussed above is often

satisfied just by buying into the beliefs of the group they feel they belong to. “They may not initially believe what their friends are saying, but they’ll adjust to it and eventually believe it because the desire to be accepted and loved is so strong.” Because our teens feel isolated from and wounded by the adult world around them, they deal with their problems by belonging. In an effort to find that group, that place of belonging, teens will gravitate towards anyone who takes them seriously and validates the pain in their lives.

So armed with this insight into the world of the millennial generation, then we can take the next logical step which is to use this acquired knowledge to inform our approach to evangelizing this critical group.

As much has been said about their need to belong, this should therefore be an area to receive considerable attention. If we are going to attract and retain this generation of youth and children, our churches must be welcoming communities of faith and family, able to meet that need for belonging. Our churches must be intentional in communicating a sense of importance to young people.

The previous (pre-2001) constitution of Nazarene Youth International began with a simple but crucial phrase; “The Church of the Nazarene is vitally interested in young people.” This statement spoke volumes for us as an organization. It said that we are an institution that understands that our existence is inextricably linked to our emphasis on youth and the quality of our youth ministry. Of course stating it is only a component of the approach, living it out is the real challenge.

Relationship building must be critical to any attempt to reach the millennial generation, both relationships between leadership and youth (and children) and relationship among millennials themselves. The youth will be attracted by and will remain because of relationships more so than through programs (at least initially). The simple truth is that very few young people and children expend vast amounts of time and energy analyzing theology and dogma before deciding which church or youth group with which to identify. Instead they will go where their friends or people they respect invite them and make them feel a part.

For this reason it will be essential to communicate this to our church youth and children, sensitizing them to their role in this generation for ‘friendship evangelism’. Youth are attracted to other youth. Crowds attract crowds. Our youth gatherings must therefore be welcoming events characterized by a spirit of excitement where our members live out their Christianity in meaningful, practical ways.

To reach and retain this next generation, we must provide them with opportunities for ministry and involvement in the life of the church. We must not send the message that young people and youth ministry are appendices to the business of church, but rather they are central to the life of the church.

This sense of importance must also be reflected in the physical structure of the church. Rev. Clinton Chisholm; a leading Jamaican Baptist preacher / lecturer once made the point that a church that is not mindful in creating physical space for its youth and children, is a church with a thwarted sense of ministry and an uncertain future. Well equipped youth recreation centers and children's facilities must be a major component of any building development for the progressive church today.

In many cases, young people do not like to stay at home and so church should be the place where they feel they can hang out and be 'at home'. It is our experience that our young people welcome any opportunity to be at the church with each other, even when there are no events requiring their presence. This provides an opportunity for interaction with each other and with adult staff and volunteers etc. Teenagers and children may say more over a game of ping pong or Sony's GT3 than they would in a Sunday School class or NYI session.

In addition, our desire to reach the next generation will also call upon us to "do church differently". The average church worship service caters to the adults in the congregation with little or no special emphasis on the youth. Clearly not every pastor has the gifts or abilities to connect meaningfully with youth and children from the pulpit, and certainly not while also seeking to connect with the adult worshippers.

It is for this reason that specialized worship experiences and opportunities will also need to be a feature of the progressive church seeking to reach the millennial generation. Such events would need to be high-energy assemblies, utilizing the latest available technology and featuring contemporary music, drama, dance, etc. Remember, we are competing against MTV, and BET and VH1 (even Cartoon Network) and the list goes on and on.

Fields identified four transferable principles which should characterize effective youth events:

1. A positive environment
2. An element of fun
3. Student involvement
4. An understandable message

In addition, Fields further emphasizes the importance of a stated purpose in our programming to the millennial generation and encourages persons seeking to reach this generation to construct a purpose statement. A sense of purpose, articulated through a carefully worded statement, will act as a guide as we plan events and activities to fulfill that purpose. A purpose statement will clarify our ministry and keep our activities and events more effective. This is important as "people are attracted to ministries that honor their time and provide meaning for their lives. People are selective with their

time and won't expend much effort if they sense a lack of direction.”

As alluded to earlier in our presentation, the millennial generation is looking for an authentic spiritual experience to satisfy their spiritual hunger of which Middendorf writes. If we as a church are going to be effective in reaching them, we have to be a church of genuine authentic believers. In essence we have to be people of integrity if we are going to win the trust and confidence of the millennial and love him / her into the Kingdom. In the words of Doug Fields, “I can't talk about the importance of servanthood, if I'm not stacking chairs or picking up papers at the end of a program.”

In addition, we must be intentional about catering to the total person. We will not win the next generation by only demonstrating an interest in their salvation and sanctification. Such exclusive concern may be perceived (whether rightly or otherwise) as a concern for church growth more so that personal growth. Our ministry to the next generation must therefore reflect a concern for and desire to provide holistic ministry to this multi-faceted creature, we are calling the millennial.

Our GED and computer education program at Beulah has been the doorway through which several persons have entered our church family and ultimately, the kingdom of God. The creation of service and ministry opportunities (e.g. Youth in Mission) will also be essential in reaching the next generation and developing a socially conscious generation that cares about issues other than their own and people other than themselves.

Finally, as family life and relationships have been identified as one of the core values of the millennial generation, the church must be intentional about impacting the families of the millennial youth. Working with parents must therefore be a component of ministry to this generation. In fact effective youth and children's ministry can even become an avenue for reaching un-churched parents and relatives.



## CHAPTER 14

# **Challenges and Celebrations for Multicultural Churches**

by Ian Fitzpatrick

# **Introduction**

## **Ian Fitzpatrick**

Rev. Ian Fitzpatrick currently serves as District Superintendent for the Canada Central District.

Previously a senior pastor at Toronto Emmanuel Church of the Nazarene. Under his pastoral leadership, Toronto Emmanuel became a multicultural congregation with eight different congregations sharing the same church property.

Ian has served on the USA/Canada NewStart Task Force and presently chairs the Multicongregational Task Force, while assisting in the leadership of the NewStart Taskforce for Canada.

**T**he mission of the Church as outlined clearly by Jesus of Nazareth, is recorded for us in Matthew chapter 28:18 – 20, “*Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you and surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.’*”

The command of Christ is to “go” and teach all nations. To go and make disciples, to go and teach everyone everything that has been commanded. Now, we have done and continue to do a wonderful job of “going”. We extend the Gospel message far and wide even “to the uttermost parts”, but there is a new development which requires the same passionate response with emphasis not on “going” but on “receiving”.

The Lord is placing into our hands new babies, new converts. He has done His job, for He alone can save. However, He now gives to us the daunting task of nurturing and teaching and discipling people from all over the world who have come to our shores. These precious gifts of God are making their way to where we are and the desire to “receive” and the quality of our “receiving” will be determining factors relative to the success or failure of our mission.

I would like to address the Challenges and Celebrations associated with ministry in a multicultural context. Just two of the many ways in which we can successfully bring in this new harvest are the multicongregational church and the multicultural church. Both models present us with some challenges, but with great opportunity to fulfill the mission of Christ.

#### **The Multicongregational Church:**

*“One church, many congregations”*

The multicongregational church is any gathering center that provides opportunity for people to worship in their own language and culture, with their own pastor or leader. There can be many groups meeting in one facility or in “extension” facilities not physically connected to one church building. These “sibling” congregations are part of the same family, but have a unique identity. (Example: Toronto Emmanuel: Anglo, Spanish, Korean, Tamil and West Indian). All of these congregations share not only “space” but also a common purpose.

#### **The Multicultural Church:**

*“One congregation, many cultures”*

The multicultural church is any church that is made up of people from

all over the world speaking and worshipping in the same language. The language will reflect the predominant people group in the church. This is not always English. In some cases the predominant language may be Spanish. It is not uncommon to find upwards of 15 to 20 different cultures represented in an urban Nazarene congregation.

Both of these models are being employed today in an effort to maximize our ministry potential to “all people”. As with any shift in strategy, there are challenges. We must however not lose sight of the tremendous blessing of being obedient to the Great Commission, no matter what the challenge, no matter what the cost.

Whichever model one chooses, and there may be more, there will be inherent difficulties associated with this type of ministry. For the purposes of addressing the issue at hand, let’s agree to bring the models under one banner, the multicultural church. As I see it, three major challenges exist for multicultural churches.

### *A Theological Challenge*

Any approach to multicultural ministry will require a proper understanding of the nature of the church through the eyes of God. The Church of Jesus Christ is the gathering of people who are “the Redeemed”, born again of His Spirit. People who have responded to the invitation of Jesus to repent of sin, to be forgiven and then to encounter the holiness of God, to submit and surrender to it in a transforming crisis and then to live out and exemplify the holy life. There is however a real danger that those who were once part of the *inclusive* “whosoever will” tribe could quickly become members of a very *exclusive* group. The “all of us” mentality of lostness rapidly becomes the “some of us” mentality of being found and embraced by a Messiah who must surely talk like me and dress like me and looks like me. This then creates a tension between the “inclusive and exclusive” nature of the church and in an ironic twist becomes a necessary reality for the Church. Let me explain. By its very nature the invitation of Jesus to mankind is inclusive.

Jesus said: *“For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that “whoever” believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16)*

Jesus said: *“Come unto Me “all” who are weary and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)*

Paul said: *“For “all” have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”(Romans 3:23)*

If there is universal transgression then there is universal opportunity for forgiveness. Therefore we conclude that there is a definite inclusive reality and this reality is not only in the Church, but is the Church.

But, by its very nature the Church, made up of those who responded positively to the invitation of Jesus is exclusive.

John said: *“Yet to “all who received Him, to those” who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become the children of God.” (John 1:12)*

Jesus said: *“My sheep listen to My voice; I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one can snatch them out of My hand. My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of My Father’s hand.” (John 10:27-29)*

John said: *“He who has the Son has life and He who does not have the Son does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” (I John 5:12-13)*

Therefore by definition, we are an exclusive church, in that, only those who are saved, can belong to it. But, we are an inclusive church, in that, those who are saved not only belong to it, but also have equal access to all that it offers. The tension between inclusive and exclusive is a necessary reality for the Church, in that it identifies who is and who is not a true believer in and follower of Jesus Christ.

However, the tension between inclusive and exclusive *must not* be a reality in the church because inclusion and exclusion has already been determined by one’s own acceptance or rejection of Christ’s offer of salvation.

Jesus said: *“I pray....that all of them be one....Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You....may they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as we are one. (Matthew 17:20-22)*

Paul said: *“You are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:26-28)*

We simply cannot speak about the multicultural church without making a clear statement regarding its inclusive necessity. The use of the term “multicultural” implies that we are all multicultural. We cannot say “they” are multicultural and “we” are not. We must operate as “us”. This is a great challenge and we need a heart that is open enough, big enough and soft enough to embrace a new and exciting vision for the “whole world.” The whole world is not only “over there” but is also “right here”.

This challenge to understand what God expects from us is fundamental to opening the heart and the mind to the potential of multicultural ministry in the local church.

### ***A Territorial Challenge***

There is a great challenge before us to make room for all people. As we

seek to build the church “making room” means more than re-arranging the physical plant to accommodate the people. Making room for new people, especially people of different ethnicities requires a re-arranging of thought processes within the minds of the predominant people group. The territorial battle is fought in the heart and mind and not in the floor plan. Once the battle is won in the heart, then heaven and earth will be moved to make it work.

It is necessary for all of us to be reminded of the history of our own “invasion”. We “Gentiles” moved in on the church (The Jewish Church) and it was not without its territorial battles, but eventually the way was paved as God gave “Pentecost” to not only the Jewish believers, but the Samaritans (of all people) and the Gentiles. The lesson Peter learned is the lesson we all must learn. Making room must not be an obligation, but a pleasure and the “norm”.

This “Territorial Challenge” must be addressed then in the context of the two models. In the Multi Congregational Model the leadership of the church must overcome the idea of “ownership” even though there has been much sacrifice on the part of many to have a building.

We must not lose sight of the fact that our properties are really not ours. They belong to God, they are to be used for His glory and we are simply stewards of them. This concept must not only be understood by the pastor and leadership team (church board), but it must also be communicated to the congregation not as if we are extending favor to others, but we are simply responding in a natural development of the church family. This is a tough challenge, and to ignore it will be costly. In order for us to move away from the landlord / tenant arrangement to the intentional, cohesive international, intercultural, unit the “Territorial Challenge” must be met head on.

In the multicultural model we are presented with another type of “territorial challenge”. This manifests itself, not so much in terms of making room for other groups to meet in “our” space, but in expanding “our” space to reflect the cultural diversity that makes us “us”. This means that we must understand who we are. Not who we were 10 years ago, or who we were when the charter members lined up at the front of the church to be ‘organized’, but who we are now.

This is indeed a “Territorial Challenge” that will require more than management skills on the part of leadership, it will require a spiritual “territorial surrender”. Once this takes place, then church nominating committees will create an arena into which all people have access to leadership and fulfillment of ministry. Once this takes place the church board and auxiliaries take on different complexion. Once this takes place then the platform team and up front ministry personnel take on a different style and different color and an accurate reflection of who the church is.

I believe in the spiritual, Biblical qualifications for leadership in the church. Therefore, God raises up people of all races who are equipped to take on the role of leadership. To short circuit this process simply to have the appearance of equality will do an injustice to any attempt to build a strong multi cultural church.

If we are willing, to surrender ourselves to the will of God concerning our local church, then those God has brought through our doors, who have been transformed by the blood of Jesus and have been cleansed and empowered by the Holy Spirit will be readily identified by those of the “same Spirit” (witness) therefore removing any hint of tokenism.

This “Territorial Challenge” is the hinge upon which this “door” opens to, or closes on, our ministry potential in fulfilling The Great Commission to the whole world that has come to our shores.

### *A Logistical Challenge*

The last of the three challenges is easy or difficult depending on what we have done with the previous two. If we have not worked through the theological and territorial implications we will not be able to deal with the logistical challenge.

It should be noted that it is possible to deal with some and not this entire trio. One can deal with the theological challenge and feel that it has been settled. But if it is not taken to the next level, it will remain the stuff of textbooks and seminars, of theory and discussion.

One can deal with the theological challenge and the territorial challenge and feel that they have been settled. But if not taken to the next level, they will remain conceptual; they will be the architectural and mechanical drawings on a blueprint. Many churches have begun well, but have become quagmire in the theoretical planning.

The march has taken us to the gates of the city of opportunity, everything has been carefully planned and now, in order for us to “do the job” we need foot soldiers. Theologically we understand, territorially we have surrendered, and now we must demonstrate our allegiance and commitment to a new way of thinking about the Body of Christ. This is where the territorial surrender of the heart manifests itself in the territorial surrender of rooms, and furniture, and office space and parking space. Now while this is a particular challenge for the multi congregational model, it is also a challenge for the multicultural model, like the culturally specific gatherings within the larger body.

Therefore, we must mobilize the troops to re-arrange our facilities to optimize ministry potential for all people. At Emmanuel Church in Toronto a group of dedicated, transformed, formerly territorial people, set about the task of transforming a large classroom into a beautiful International Chapel.

This same group set about the task of creating office space of each cultural pastor, and storage space for each congregation.

Was it a logistical challenge?                      Yes!

Was it without its headaches?                      No.

But has it produced ministry and a response to the Great Commission of Christ? Most definitely.

Not only does the logistical challenge touch the hardware of the operation, but it will sometimes also require re-arranging service times, on Sunday and weekday activities, to accommodate the myriad of ministries now being offered by the local church. I would suggest that every organization that has moved progressively forward has had to not only face the logistical challenge, but rise to it and overcome it and recognize that it will be an ongoing challenge.

*To operate as “us” requires:*

A God given desire and a concerted effort on the part of every pastor, every church board and congregation to make the concept a reality;

Open dialogue and conflict management and much prayer;

A close working relationship between all parties;

A conviction in the heart that this is what God expects and nothing less;

Surrendering ownership of a building and embracing partnership in a mission;

A clear and concise “Statement of Understanding” (Missional Partnership Covenant).

### **A Final Blessing**

The end result of our faithfulness to the mission of Christ is spelled out clearly in His word. The blessings experienced by the church that has embraced the concept that our world has come to us and we must minister to them, are abundant and immediate. Words like fellowship, family, mission, prayer, obedience, care and compassion, all take on new meaning, not because we have defined them by dictionary standards, but because we experience them in everyday congregational living, and we watch them being extended to communities that no one cultural group could minister to alone. Therefore in addition to the blessings listed, we see tremendous numbers of people being added to the Church. Surely this must cause us all to face the challenges - and they are real - and to work through them in the power of God, with great confidence that His smile is upon us.

## CHAPTER 15

# **Discipleship: Practical Ideas That Work**

By Woodie Stevens

# **Introduction**

## **Woodie Stevens**

Dr. Woodie J. Stevens, superintendent of the New Mexico District Church of the Nazarene, accepted his assignment in May of 1994 after serving nearly eight years as Senior Pastor of Colorado Springs First Church. Previous pastoral assignments include churches in Mundelein, IL (1978-1987) and Vermillion, SD, (1976-1978). He was ordained in July of 1978.

Dr. Stevens earned the Doctor of Ministry degree from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, Il) in 1982. Earned His Master of Divinity degree from Nazarene Theological Seminary in 1976. Bachelor of Arts degree from Mid-America Nazarene University in 1973.

**H**oliness evangelism has always been a priority in the Church of the Nazarene. Our disciple making mission has fueled the world-wide advance of our church as a part of the kingdom of God. Historically, we have been a people with an evangelistic zeal to spread the good news. Today, all around the world we are seeing the successful efforts of our world-wide mission efforts. Those efforts have been primarily motivated by an evangelistic passion for lost and broken people in our world.

We live with a shrinking globe, complex societies, increasingly interdependent economies and incredible opportunities for communicating the good news with new methods and technologies. Global travel is rapidly breaking down barriers of culture and geography so that exposure to and contact with cultures of the world is increasingly common. The world has come next door. Wherever we are we find a ripe mission field filled with people who desperately need to know Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Precisely at the point of the wide open door of possibilities for effective evangelism and discipleship, the enemy of the church seems to have planted some deep philosophical divisions over what it means to “make disciples”. To the extent that some lean towards a universalism which does not value evangelism, missions and the necessity of a new birth, our effectiveness is at risk.

Without a desire to glorify God in reaching the lost we dissipate our efforts in the pursuit of the great commission. Churches that have moved towards a belief that ultimately everyone will be saved are experiencing a dramatic drop in the number of missionaries sent and in the level of support they receive.

Effective evangelism today begins with a profound sense of obedience to the mission. If we have no intention of obeying the command to “go and make...” then the ideas of sharing one’s faith, winning a person to Christ, crossing cultural barriers, seeking the lost, and even preaching the good news become unnecessary and useless baggage.

Antinomianism, “that enthusiastic doctrine of devils,” as John Wesley called it, subtly saps energy from our calling and mission. A passionate drive to reach one more lost and broken person for the glory of God in Christ Jesus is a foundational motivation for what we do.

If you were the enemy of the church, how would you keep the church from fulfilling its mission? Wouldn’t you try to fog the thinking of its leaders at the most critical point of advance? The enemy of the Kingdom tries to convince each local church to be preoccupied with itself. Satan delights when

a local church fusses about the maintenance and structure of their organization. The enemy wins when we find ways to consume our time, energy and finances with buildings and committee meetings. When Sunday School classes focus primarily on fellowship and compassionate service as their highest objective, Kingdom advance falters.

The enemy of the church is most effective in hindering us from our mission by selling us on the importance of shaping public worship services to cater to the felt needs of our members. Apparently the enemy has been quite successful, because I often encounter local churches who are quite busy and very effective doing everything but making disciples. Every ministry in which a local church engages should be evaluated in light of how it relates to the fulfillment of the great commission.

Effective evangelism is rooted in a profound sense of obedience to the great commission. Out of this foundational conviction of obedience comes the essential component of prayer. We are engaged in a war and the “weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds” (2 Cor. 10:3-5). Paul encouraged Timothy, “This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may *wage the good warfare*” (1 Tim. 1:18). Without prayer nothing much of lasting significance happens. Without prayer victories are not won. The anointing of God’s Spirit upon His church and His servants is essential. Prayer is not optional.

We are engaged in a spiritual battle, not against flesh and blood, but “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this dark world, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). We are urged to pray in the Spirit, all the time, with all kinds of prayers, for all the saints, that we may declare gospel fearlessly. Jesus reminds us, “Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me...apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:4-5)

Why would we enter into a spiritual battle without spiritual empowerment? To attempt to make a disciple of Christ without the enabling power of God’s Holy Spirit is an exercise in futility. When God’s people fail to pray, we fail to be effective in the battle. When we are defeated in battle we tend to disengage and become discouraged in aggressively sharing Christ. Most disciples demonstrate by their priorities and their casual approach to spiritual things that they think we are in peacetime, not wartime. They don’t believe their neighbor is lost outside of Christ. When the church is involved in everything but the essential battle of winning souls, we have lots of activity but little victory and no Kingdom advancement.

I have discovered my efforts, my energies and my strategies are insufficient and unfruitful without the anointing power of the Holy Spirit upon our work. It is only as we abide in Christ and He abides in us that we bear fruit that remains. Jesus modeled for us the absolute necessity of prayer.

Don't you find it fascinating that He who needed to pray so little prayed so much, and we who need to pray so much pray so little? The single most effective thing a disciple can do to make a disciple is to pray. It is amazing how many opportunities the Spirit provides for us to share our faith when we simply ask Him for a chance to share Jesus with someone who needs Him. Disciple-making that works begins with prayer.

Many modern methods of evangelism have approached the unconverted by trying to convince them to try Jesus. We say, "Come to Jesus. He will give you peace, fulfillment and lasting joy. He'll give you a happy marriage and solve all your problems."

The problem with this approach is that it caters to our narcissistic, hedonistic preoccupations. People think, "Hey, I've tried everything else for a high; maybe this Jesus will give me a high that won't let me down." Radical self-interest penetrates even to our evangelism techniques.

We try to convince people to come to Christ, because it is a better way. The unconverted are always looking for a better ride, a new self-improvement program, something that will get them more pleasure or an easier life. Coming to Jesus sounds like a good deal for them, but it only feeds their self-orientation.

In addition, many people in prosperous America don't think they need a better way. They do not believe they are lost and need a Savior. They think, "Hey, I'm doing just fine, thank-you. I've got a good job. I've got money in the bank. I've got what I want, or I'm going to have it soon. So why do I need Jesus?"

We say, "Here try Jesus; He will make your life better!" But that is like saying, "Here, take this aspirin; it will help your headache." And the guy says, "But I don't have a headache." Most people today are pretty much convinced they are basically good. They will say, "I'm not a bad person. I haven't killed anybody, yet. After all nobody's perfect."

The preaching of grace without the law makes a mockery of the cross of Christ. John Wesley instructed his lay preachers to preach 90 percent law and 10 percent grace. Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." Romans 3:19-20 says, "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that *every mouth may be silenced* and the whole world held accountable to God ... through the law we become conscious of sin."

We live in a society where "there is no fear of God before their eyes." Young people have grown up in a culture that has little or no consciousness of sin, not to mention a profound understanding of right and wrong behavior. In order for a person to genuinely come to Christ they first must realize their need. God gave the Ten Commandments to help us understand who we really are and why we need a Savior.

We need a Savior, not because we are basically good people and are looking for lasting peace and happiness. We need a Savior because we are sinful and rebellious and have deeply offended a righteous God. It is precisely as St Paul writes, *“There is no one righteous, not even one; no one who seeks God. All have turned away; they have become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood, ruin and misery mark their ways, and the way of peace they do not know”* (Romans 4:11-17).

The Gospel begins with some pretty bad news. We are in deep trouble with God. Only after realizing the depth of our sin as we seek forgiveness and mercy do we discover the Good News in Christ Jesus.

When you are feeling just fine and I say to you, “Here, take this medication, it will help you feel better.” You think, “Why should I? I’m not that sick.” But if I show you the doctor’s report that tells you without this medication you will die within the week, all of sudden you take the medicine. You take it with gratitude knowing that it will save your life.

Evangelism that does not help a person realize how spiritually sick they are, may result in a person trying Jesus because it promises peace and happiness but when troubles and hardships come their way, they think, “This Jesus thing doesn’t really work, none of my friends have to go to church. They party all night. They don’t deny themselves. They seem to be doing just fine. They don’t even tithe. Thanks, but no thanks, this Jesus stuff is not for me.” And the end product is worse than the first because we have failed to effectively preach and teach that “the wages of sin is death.” We much prefer teaching, “the gift of God is eternal life.” Is it any wonder people are so critical of the church? We promise a better life, but Jesus invites his disciples to a life of self-denial, sacrifice, and the way of the cross.

Rick Warren teaches, “Methods are many, principles few, methods change, but principles never do.” There are many effective evangelistic tools, but none are ultimately effective unless the Lord gives the increase. “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” (Ps. 127)

Bathed in prayer the Lord uses many evangelistic approaches to reach people. Obviously, building relationships one at a time, inviting people into the experiences of our lives, opens the door for them to see Christ in us. I asked a pastor what he was doing to reach others and he responded, “After this weekend, I will be able to tell you how the postcards worked. This may draw some people, but NM is hard territory and people are critical of the church (as a whole). We are doing everything we can to follow up on them and get to know them. The most effective tool has been one at a time, one at a time, one at a time—through relationships. For instance, we sent out almost 13,000 postcards, had an article in the paper, posted flyers and put out road

signs for a FREE catered lunch, games, and an Easter Egg Hunt last Sunday. We only had about 50 kids show up... Anywhere else we would have had 250+.”

I tried to help the pastor see the value of the fifty and not worry about what might have been somewhere else. If he wins them one at a time through relationships then He clearly has his work cut out for him. He is right about the centrality of the building of relationships. Developing relationships provides the opportunity for personal evangelism, and that naturally leads to follow-up discipleship.

David and his girl friend Jan were living together in a little house not far from our church. I reached out to them. I invited them to visit our worship services. David and I began to spend time together. I invited David to play racquet-ball with me, to go on men’s camping trips, to have breakfast on Saturdays with some other men in the church. The Lord’s Spirit began to deal with David and Jan. Others would come up to me and say, “When are you going to talk with them about living together?” I replied, “As soon as the Lord does!” It wasn’t long after that, David received Christ into his heart, started doing the Basic Bible Studies for New and Growing Christians. Shortly afterwards they got married. Evangelism and discipleship grew out of a personal relationship. Many conversions have come through simply being with people, getting involved in their lives, loving them as they are and lifting up Jesus as the transforming power of my life.

The lack of intentional relationship building with non-Christian people is a major hindrance to effective evangelism in our churches. I used to think that if I could get my old timers to connect with the new people in the church, they would develop relationships and they would be drawn to Christ and the church. But then I discovered the folks who have been in the church for many years did not have time or feel the need for new relationships. They would be nice to visitors, but they really did not have room in their calendars to reach out to new people. Their lives were already filled with their existing friends.

Anyone new joining their schedule would mean no time for one of their old friends. Like Lego blocks with a limited number of connecting points, most people have a limited number of friendships they can build. The key is to help new people to connect with new people. Training those with the gifts of hospitality and evangelism to be sensitive to this social dynamic helps them understand how they can best use their gifts to build relationships. It is important for disciples to keep a connection point or two open so the Lord can bring someone new into their life as a potential disciple.

Recently, I have been asking people in the church if they have ever been discipled? I ask, “Have you ever had someone meet with you on a regular basis to teach you how to walk faithfully with Christ and then taught you how

to disciple someone else?” Hardly one out of ten indicate they have been disciplined. Perhaps our people are not making disciples because they have never been disciplined. Paul’s instruction to Timothy to find reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others, (2 Tim. 2:2) is a crucial ingredient in our discipleship efforts that must not be neglected.

I have introduced people to Jesus using all kinds of methods. I have shared the four spiritual laws, used the Roman road to salvation, and led seekers through the Kennedy Plan. I have preached in revival services, camp meetings, teen camps, and district and zone rallies. I have written an evangelistic appeal to youth, entitled, “How to Fill the Emptiness.” It has been translated into Mandarin and used as a give away through our radio outreach in China. The Lord uses many methods. In Central and South America the Jesus film and the Evangecube are being used effectively to reach people and even to launch new churches. I believe that revival services can still play a role in introducing people to Christ. Evangelistic campaigns and the planting of new churches have been effective tools in reaching others for Christ and the church.

The methods are many. The Scriptures are stunningly silent about the outward forms of worship and evangelism but they are radically focused on the inner experience of knowing God. The Bible is a book of vision for evangelistic outreach to the cultures of our world. It is not a step-by-step instruction manual on “how to do evangelism” in our culture.

Therefore, we must continually pray the Lord of harvest that He would use us as His fruitful laborers in the white harvest fields of our assignments. We must seek to “hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches” today. Pray that we would always be about the mission to the glory of God.

“Go...make disciples.”







