

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

VBC Young Families Initiative

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to
the Faculty of the Liberty University School of Divinity
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Doctor of Ministry

by

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This research project is designed for Victory Baptist Church in Weatherford, Texas, to reach young families. The purpose is to design and implement a plan that educates, equips, and engages individual church members to evangelize young families in Weatherford. The necessity of this research is evident in the face of consequences surrounding the past three years involving the pandemic and a leadership change at VBC. The intervention is mobilizing the members of VBC to reach young families. This mobilization centers around training the membership to reach young families. Using surveys and questionnaires with the membership reveals what are the thoughts and feelings of the membership. This data, combined with the data of who has been visiting VBC in the past year provides a picture of the present state. Workshops that follow will educate, equip, and engage the membership to reach young families. Finally, a post-survey and visitor data will reveal if there is any change to the data. The VBC young family initiative addressed the problem but did not solve the problem as causation of positive results could not be established.

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Abbreviations (if needed)

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
VBA	<i>Victory Baptist Academy</i>
VBC	<i>Victory Baptist Church</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This action research project is centered on Victory Baptist Church and its ability to reach young families in the community. This section will overview the context of this ministry, the problem stated, the purpose of this action research, the assumptions the author has for this study, the definitions of keywords used in the study, the limitations of the research, the delimitations involved, and a thesis statement that incorporates the elements of this project. The context of the ministry will provide a picture of the current state of VBC. The problem presentation seeks to reveal a root cause within the ministry. The author has basic assumptions regarding this research and this ministry as well. Elements of definitions, limitations, and delimitations give clarity to the framework of the thesis. These items place a foundation for which research and intervention can be designed.

Ministry Context

The context of ministry for this action research project is Victory Baptist Church in Weatherford, Texas. This segment will overview the current nature of VBC as well as the community surrounding it. The current nature of VBC includes a current assessment of ministry involving efforts to evangelize Weatherford.

Weatherford as a city was founded in 1858 and has a history older than that. It was essentially a rural area until about 20 years ago as families moved out of the metropolitan area of Dallas-Fort Worth. To this day, many in the community commute to that area to work. As Weatherford has grown, the need to work in another town has diminished. Weatherford has rapidly increased in population within the last ten years due to people moving into the area from

other states. According to the official census, Weatherford's population has grown at least 10% over the past 2 years resulting in the population of the city as: 51.6% are between 18-65, 24.1% are under the age of 18, and 6.7% are below the age of 5.¹ The culture of Weatherford is changing with the influx of new citizens. What was a western type of town is now more of a suburban town west of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

Starting in 1959, VBC has grown to be a medium size church (300-400 Sunday morning crowd, 150-200 regularly attending members, and about 50-100 involved members) with a Christian School, Victory Baptist Academy. At the time of this writing, the assistant Pastor has been voted in as the new Pastor, which started at the end of January 2022. This change follows a particularly strenuous two years involving the pandemic, the results of announcing the Pastor's retirement without a timeline, terminating a position on staff, and turmoil surrounding the uncertainty of how the church will move forward. As the next pastor has been chosen, this does bring resolution to many of the unanswered questions. However, as there will be changes, other issues may present themselves in the coming months. There is still an ongoing season of transition that is uncomfortable. VBC is looking to the future as to what it will be like as the result of these changes. The new Pastor is concerned with reaching Weatherford, particularly young families, and is aware of this project.

VBC is an Independent fundamental Baptist church. It is more traditional and conservative in terms of music and in methods yet is more balanced with a few new songs and new methods. This balance is due to the membership adopting some "new things" if there is no doctrinal change. VBC has adapted in recent years with technology and has a wide range of tools at its disposal, including live stream.

¹ "QuickFacts Weatherford City, Texas,"
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/dashboard/weatherfordcitytexas/PST045221>.

In 2007, VBC started a private Christian school called Victory Baptist Academy. This has become an integral part of the ministry of the church. While VBA has grown, it has become a demanding ministry that affects church staff as it uses facilities shared with the church and the VBC staff has different roles in the school. Events, sports, and fine arts fill the calendar as the schedule is made. VBA has the potential to aid in any outreach endeavor involving families, as private school enrollment is on the rise.

Since the pandemic, some members moved to be with family, died, or have simply stayed home because of at-risk health concerns and join in on services via live stream. As variants of the virus continue to circulate, those who are at home during an outbreak will return when it is no longer a problem in the community. However, if an outbreak occurs, in-person attendance drops.

During the pandemic, VBC acquired the technology for live streaming directly to our website. As this technology aids in inviting people to observe church, yet it does have the tendency to be an “easier” way for people to “join” us for our services. Technology is an excellent opportunity to get the message of salvation out, yet in-person services are the priority.

The author of this paper has served as outreach director pre-pandemic and as a volunteer director in outreach post-pandemic. The current outreach ministries are limited to monthly outreach, junior league basketball, and camp hope. Monthly outreach involves follow-up, new move in visits, and canvassing neighborhoods. Attendance is low as Saturday is a busy day for most of our members. Junior league basketball is a community league that uses the gym at VBC/VBA; that is founded on the idea that the league can use the facility if we get to present the Gospel before every game. The season lasts for eight weeks between January, February, and March. Camp hope is a mobile vacation Bible school in a rough neighborhood on the other side

of the county. It usually lasts for five weeks in the Summer. As of this year, VBC has temporarily halted its Camp Hope endeavor in favor of having our vacation Bible school reinstituted after a couple years of not having it. This summer program is formally a Vacation Bible School Day Camp which lasts for three days in June and operates more similarly to a school day. There currently is an emphasis on growing in the faith, so discipleship in Sunday School and other similar events are starting to gain momentum. Since January, the current Pastor has preached many times on sharing the Gospel with the community.

Problem Presented

Victory Baptist Church has been in Weatherford, Texas, for about 63 years and has about 300-400 members. Weatherford has many Gospel preaching churches, yet the population has changed drastically over the last ten years, most of whom come from out of state, are younger families, and have no Christian background. These people live, work, and play in the presence of Christians. However, faith is a private part of life for most Christians in Weatherford, even in Victory Baptist Church. Furthermore, at VBC, the tendency in the past has been to have big conferences (such as missions or stewardship) that can emphasize good spiritual items yet make outreach less of an important facet compared to the changing of what is most important throughout the year.

The community is busy with sports and community events. Consequently, this includes the membership of VBC. VBC has a Christian school and a consistent youth group with its own sports and events. Attendance with the college-aged group fluctuates with the school year. Much of the membership is older, and there is an age gap between the youth and the middle-aged group, meaning Victory Baptist Church is not reaching younger families or is not keeping young

families. This may be the result of many years of not having a targeted strategy of outreach, or a dedicated staff member that reaches out to young families. Another factor is the advent of Covid and its subsequent effects, as it has hampered what little evangelistic activity there was before and the perception of in-person services post-pandemic and ease of live streaming services. While many members are willing, and some invite people to church, there is a gap of young families not being reached. For various reasons, those who were the young families in the church and those who ministered to them have left VBC. There is a gap that is not being filled. A concern is that VBC will shrink in size and effectiveness, as it can be argued that there is no future when there are no new generations. This is concerning to those who are looking to the future at VBC.

A problem, but not the root problem, has manifested itself by lower attendance by young children and young marrieds. While VBA attracts many young families, it does not mean those young families are looking for a church. Some of the parents visit VBC but do not stay. This could be the result of not having a focus on young families or having classes or events specifically tailored for them. There are special events for missions, stewardship, women, and men, but no special events or emphasis for young families. Currently, there are few events, outreaches, or emphasis on children. A lower priority on younger families could be the cause for not reaching them in the community. In addition to this lower priority, there are few resources or opportunities that are available to the membership in reaching young families. This creates a revolving door of young families visiting but not staying as there is nothing for them. The problem at Victory Baptist church is that most of the membership does not conversationally share their faith with younger families in the community.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to design and implement a plan that educates, equips, and engages individual church members to evangelize young families in Weatherford.

Educating the church members on how to share their faith with young families in the community only addresses the need for knowledge. Classes or some form of instruction is required so that the membership will know how young families are to be reached by VBC. Educating the members is the main objective, yet it does not completely solve the problem. As this is the case, the solution requires equipping and motivating the membership to act on that strategic plan. Equipping and engaging are required to prove the necessity of the educational facet of the plan to evangelize young families in Weatherford. Educating the church members will be done by a brief series of workshops focusing on reaching young families in Weatherford. This educational time will point members to methods on how to share the message of salvation and invite young families or whoever to church. Education also involves what not to say or how not to share the Gospel. The understanding of how to communicate care is fundamental to educating VBC members in reaching others in the community. While this educational aspect will be formal, it is not to be completely rigid as it is designed for VBC to reach young families in Weatherford.

Equipping the church members with resources that can aid in sharing faith (media, literature, follow-up lists) provides for the church member to utilize their knowledge (from education) and allows for options in action, including church services. Items such as using events, facilities, and deliberate community interaction by VBC are opportunities that members

can have in reaching young families. With the advent of social media and other avenues of interacting with the community, there is a multitude of opportunities. The individual church member will be provided with tangible invites and Gospel literature as well as instruction on how to utilize their social media or other tools at their disposal. While having resources provides the potential to reach young families, resources do not inherently cause action and intervention.

Engagement (preaching and demonstrating a burden for the lost) is a process to edify the role of evangelism applied to young families in corporate worship and in corporate evangelism. Reaching young families as a priority will aid in the motivation for the membership to interact with the target demographic. This promotion of reaching young families should come from the pastor, staff, deacons, and Sunday school teachers. The leaders should also try to reach young families themselves so that they are practicing what they are promoting. In a sense, engagement provides the impetus for VBC to reach young families.

The model of educating, equipping, and engaging follows the concept of training the head, the hands, and the heart for the purpose of evangelizing young families. The specific action is using personal and intentional relationships, personal investment and involvement, and the church as a place of community for the young family. Each item of the purpose is designed to mobilize VBC to reach young families. Each item will not succeed in this purpose if they are isolated from each other.

Basic Assumptions

This section will include assumptions that the author of this research project possesses. These assumptions include items in the methodology of the research and outcome. These assumptions are linked to the participants interacting with the study. By default, the participants

are not perfect, so the results may not be clear. This section overviews relevant assumptions related to the study and intervention.

A common assumption that this author has is that the population interviewed will answer questions based on how they will be perceived. To avoid this, the surveys or questions will be anonymous. However, there will be a tendency to answer based on how they will want to be perceived, even if anonymity is maintained. Tied to this, another assumption is that attendance to outreach activity or noted by the record of invitation can aid in keeping the surveys accurate. It is assumed that if an individual at VBC is concerned with reaching young families, they will attend the opportunities that involve outreach. While that does not necessarily indicate a heart for reaching the lost, it does provide a lens with which to view the surveys. There are those who cannot attend current outreach opportunities but do invite young families to church, as indicated by visitor cards that record how the person heard about the church. It is assumed that through looking at the surveys or answers through the lens of the data from the previously discussed outreach records, would accurately provide information for the research aspect of this project.

In this research project, it is also assumed that Weatherford will continue to grow and transition from a rural town into more of an urban area. This ensures that the action research project will be applicable for some time into the future. The assumption is that reaching young families will continue to be vital for VBC in the coming years. In a sense, the project assumes that VBC will need to reach young families in order to exist in the future.

It is also assumed that the best solution will incorporate elements of various outreach methods, events, and specific activities tied to VBC or that VBC has the potential to perform. This is assumed as a variable approach seems to be able to provide a better solution that can reach young families through conversation and community at VBC. Putting elements of

knowing, showing, caring, and doing together is assumed to bring results as it engages individuals to action.

Another assumption is that it is the tendency of participants to be more invested in survey parts of the intervention versus the workshop phase. This is assumed as a survey is a small commitment, while a workshop is a larger one. Many members have a lot going on in their lives, but participation in all areas will show the heart of the majority. Tied to this is the assumption that participants will tend to be inactive unless key staff promote and encourage the need of reaching young families. The action research project is not a panacea; it requires participation from staff and members at VBC.

It is assumed that this action research project will mobilize VBC to reach Weatherford. While it is designed to reach young families, it can provide a foundation to reach the community. This is based on the emphasis that the study will provide on actuating sharing faith on an individual level. The assumption is that if a need (reaching young families) is emphasized and met, it will provide a pattern that meets other needs related to it (outreach and evangelism in general).

Definitions

Key to this action research project is an understanding of the terms involved. While most terms that are used can be understood in general thought, certain terms need to be defined for this project to produce an adequate evaluation of the topic. The terms that need to be defined in this project are outreach, evangelism, young families, and community. Each term will consistently be used in the contexts of the definitions provided. While there are some double meanings between some of the words, it should be understood that the following definitions show the distinction.

Community is the term that will be used in this project that refers to the church as a place of togetherness for the members to fellowship, grow, and minister. It is not just the community aspect that is used to reach others, which does happen. The priority for the community is to worship, as Jared C. Wilson wrote, “the church as a community that certainly values the worship gathering (and even the quality of the experience therein), but not as the central hope of evangelism or life change.”² In this project, community is a place for the members, especially young families. This is not the physical community of Weatherford but the VBC family. While the goal is to reach young families in the community of Weatherford, the goal is for them to be a part of the community of VBC for their own spiritual growth.

Evangelism is, as Walter A. Elwell defined, “The proclamation of the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ with a view to bringing about the reconciliation of the sinner to God the Father through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.”³ In this project, evangelism is the actual sharing of the message of salvation. This does not mean that evangelism is complete when a person becomes a born-again believer. Discipleship is part of evangelism, yet for this project evangelism in action involves reaching out to the unsaved in the community with the purpose of sharing the message of salvation. Those in the community that are saved, may not be discipled or part of a local church, in which case they still need those. Evangelism is a continuing process that happens when a church is mobilized to share the message of salvation by its individuals who are educated, equipped, and engaged to reach the lost. While evangelism starts with sharing the message of salvation, it does not end with the acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Savior of the individual, it is a life-long process. As Martin Davie expressed that evangelism, “can be

² Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 62, <https://app.logos.com>

³ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2017), 360, <https://app.logos.com>.

described as the proclamation of the rightful and gentle rule of Jesus Christ, and the gracious invitation to bring a person or community's life under that rule, to learn its disciplines, its privileges and culture.”⁴

Outreach in this project means any effort of the corporate church to reach individuals or groups with the message of salvation. Use of church resources and facilities are included in outreach. Any community action project, even canvassing a neighborhood with VBC leaflets, is outreach. Outreach is the activity that leads to evangelism. Outreach involves instruction and physical resources for a specific time. For VBC, outreach is the external actions of the church in the community that draws others to Christ. Each member is an ambassador for Christ, but also an ambassador for VBC. Outreach is the public relation aspect that each member can perform on an everyday basis. Evangelism is a life-long process, outreach is a method that promotes evangelism at a specific time and place and is short-term in duration but can be repeated.

Young families are those who are recently married or married and have children that are infants or elementary school age (families aged around 20-35). Usually, this demographic is younger than middle age and older than college-age students. There are exceptions with people that are older or younger than the usual demographic that fit the description as newly married or married with young children. In that case, the needs are still similar as they have many items in life that require their attention. While this seems like a large demographic, they are selected as they make up the smallest demographic at VBC. Young families, according to this definition, are selected as they share many of the same challenges and needs in their lives at this time.

⁴ Martin Davie, Tim Grass, Stephen R. Holmes, John McDowell, and Thomas A. Noble, eds. *New Dictionary of Theology: Historical and Systematic*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 314, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Limitations

One primary limitation is that there could be many changes in the church (structure, leadership, vision, and mission) as the result of having a new Pastor that will affect the research done in this project. More outreach opportunities, or less, may be determined by the new Pastor, which would affect how participants answer on the effectiveness of current outreach events. It may affect participation or the way participants answer the questions. The fear of casting the previous leadership structure in a negative or positive manner may limit the truthfulness of the evaluation of the past. The danger is the mindset that the past was better or worse than the present affecting the study. It could be considered that the participant may be taking a side or preferring the past leadership or the new leadership.

The major limitation is the participants' reaction to the questions. As mentioned in the assumptions, the participants may feel that they should answer what they think is "right" versus what is happening to be better perceived. No matter what steps of anonymity are taken, the instinct is to answer what should be or what is thought to be right instead of truthfulness. This instinct is like the previous limitation as VBC is in a transition period, during which a survey could bring up items that the participants cannot separate the way that they feel about the transition from their answers. To a degree, this is helpful in evaluation, yet at its worst, it can skew the results to reflect what the participant wants to be right or to be perceived as better.

Survey and questionnaire participation is a limitation as anonymous surveys may not be numerous or may not present a plethora of data. In this case, the data of the visitor information coupled with outreach attendance will address the need and relevancy of the study with the surveys and questionnaires to analyze what is perceived and felt even by a smaller percentage of members.

Another limitation is the faithfulness of the participants. People leave church for various reasons, which may not be negative. The participants may leave during the process of the research. People may not participate adequately, such as the instance of not answering or forgetting to participate. Participants will be asked to not withdraw, but they can if needed. Church members who participate will be motivated that the study will help VBC. Tied to this is the participation of staff in the research process. The staff may change, or roles may change, as well from the changes taking place in church leadership. The leadership should be able to participate at the current state of the structure. The faithfulness of the participants can be affected by a plethora of events.

In the past two years, another limitation specific to outreach research has materialized. It is the shutdown or reduction of outreach activities due to a pandemic. In this scenario, outreach events might not be possible in the traditional manner, which would hinder participants in how they will be surveyed. This also affects the results of outreach events, as strangers to VBC will be hesitant to attend or communicate to members face to face.

Delimitations

Delimitations in this research project are the demographic, church, and topic. Each focus on the aspect of reaching young families. The delimitations are designed to yield precise results, rather than simply proving a hypothesis. Members should be able to participate in necessary tasks in a clear manner (surveys, workshops, questionnaires) because of these chosen limitations.

The demographic that will be the focus of the questionnaire and survey is the young families already at VBC. This is one of the smaller demographics in the church but will provide insight as to their needs, sense of community at VBC, and reaching their own demographic in

Weatherford. The survey group may extend to other demographics to see if the church members have the same understanding of reaching young families. The survey group would be extended to provide quantitative data, while the young families participating will be subject to a questionnaire. This limits the project as it still targets existing members of VBC. In addition to this, only those who complete the consent form will be able to participate in the study.

The demographic that this project seeks to reach are young families in the community of Weatherford, Texas. This limits the scope of the study as it interacts with VBC to reach this specific demographic. If the study and intervention result in other demographics being reached, it is unintentional but welcome.

VBC is the church that will be evaluated and surveyed. As the purpose is to design and implement a plan that educates, equips, and engages individual church members to evangelize young families in Weatherford, VBC is the place of that design and implementation. The strategic plan is designed for VBC to implement via its members. While many of the members are older than the target age, they may have been exposed to other ideas and concepts of reaching young families from various sources. While the target group is the focus, all ages will be able to be a part of surveys and workshops, as reaching others is for everyone at VBC.

The topic itself is a delimitation. As this action research project is concerned with reaching a specific demographic in a specific location with a specific church, this is a narrow focus. While it is recognized that the intervention may work at a different church at a different location, this intervention is designed for VBC to reach young families in Weatherford, Texas. The intervention action plan is specifically tailored to mobilize VBC with its current resources, abilities, and potential growth.

Thesis Statement

If the church members are educated, equipped, and engaged to a strategic initiative, they will evangelize young families by building intentional personal relationships through community in Weatherford.

The strategy in this research project should address the need for Victory Baptist Church to reach young families. The strategy will be called the VBC young families initiative. The overall need is that the members share their faith with young families personally, not merely extending an invitation. To fill that need, knowledge, tools, and the right motivation are vital. It is hoped in addressing the problem and providing a thesis that is practical and applicable solution can be provided to the ministry context. Every church is different, yet all have the command to reach the world with the Gospel. Mobilizing VBC by this action research project may be a help to another church in a similar situation. The intervention tied to this thesis is tailor-made for VBC. Any benefit to other ministries is welcomed but not an expected consequence.

Educating, equipping, and engaging should be centered on the Word of God as it is the authority for faith and practice. The concept is to aid Victory Baptist Church in fulfilling the Great Commission in the local community toward young families. Building intentional relationships with young families through community uses the elements of activity and investment in those young families to share Christ with them. This means that in daily life, as young families are encountered, the church members will use methods and tools to build relationships to evangelize. Education, equipping with resources, and engagement will result in church members using relationships to share their faith with young families by personal investment, involvement, and church community. Teaching church members on how to share their faith and reach young families provides the knowledge needed to perform those tasks.

Providing resources will equip the members to reach out in the community. The motivation provided by promotion will engage the members to action in reaching young families. These three items mobilize VBC to reach young families. The individual church member will reach young families that they encounter in the community through an intentional personal relationship that is characterized by compassion, investment, and involvement in their lives. The end goal is to bring young families in for their spiritual growth. The church is an excellent place for young families to start their relationship with Christ, but they need a place where they can grow. The church can provide this community part of growth.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework for this action research is built upon existing literature, theological foundations, and theoretical foundations. The review of contemporary sources is to be used as an overview and to reveal any gaps in literature. The sources in this section reflect a view that the Bible is the authority for faith and practice. The literature used is recent, yet some are not as recent but are proven in the concept of evangelism. The theological foundations are founded on evangelism, the role of the family, and discipleship. The theoretical foundations are centered on the comparison and contrast of the attractional and missional models of church as each are concerned with the theological foundations.

Literature Review

Reaching the lost or a specific people group is a popular topic for many scholars and ministers. However, the literature from pastors and scholars may disagree on what method of evangelism is best. This literature review is primarily concerned with evangelism performed in the United States of America written predominantly from an evangelical view and reaching young families. In this review of literature, more conservative sources are used because of their doctrine regarding Scripture, their approach to evangelism seeks to make disciples, not attenders, and they have a reverence for the local New Testament church. Church growth has been a broad topic developed largely in the west. However, it is necessary to understand that there can be commonalities between local ministries, but there are differences that are usually not written about. The themes discussed in the following review of literature are the methods of evangelism, theology of evangelism, apologetics, the hermeneutics of evangelism, lifestyle evangelism, corporate evangelism, relational evangelism, and reaching young families by ministry. While

broad in nature, the review will take an extensive approach toward evangelism and narrow it toward reaching young families.

Theology of Evangelism

The theme of the theology of evangelism is evident in most literature as God's person, His Word, and His actions. The theology of evangelism mentioned in this review of literature is confined to the practical connection it has with ministry. Otherwise, an extensive overview of several studies of different doctrines would be required. The role of God's participation in salvation is necessary to the theology of evangelism. As Will McRaney stated, "God took the initiative in the salvation of man. We can see this clearly through the life and ministry of Christ. However, God's involvement in the salvation of mankind did not end there. The Holy Spirit is at work in the conversion of sinners into saints."⁵ As other authors have done, McRaney wrote to aid in personal evangelism yet emphasizes God's role. Stephen J. Wellum states that the Trinity is deeply involved in any of God's actions, "A crucial truth of Trinitarian theology is that in all of God's actions whether in creation, providence, or redemption, all three persons are inseparably at work yet in their own distinctive ways."⁶ The theology of evangelism as a foundation for the method of evangelism is involved in lifestyle, corporate, and conversational evangelism. The theology of evangelism is deeply connected to Trinitarian theology. Fred Sanders defined the Gospel in the scope of the Trinity as "the story of three special characters: Jesus Christ, the Father who sent him and who is constantly present in his conversation and actions, and then, rather less clearly, the Holy Spirit, who seems simultaneously to precede

⁵ Will McRaney Jr., *The Art of Personal Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 27, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁶ Stephen J. Wellum, "Editorial: The Glorious Work Of God The Holy Spirit," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 16, no. 4 (Winter 2012) 2-3.

Christ, accompany Christ, and follow Christ.”⁷ The theology of evangelism is focused primarily on Christ. Secondly, the theology of evangelism communicates the role of the evangelist (any Christian in this case) as being subordinate to God. Bock even mentions that salvation itself relies on accountability, “This accountability is what made the cross necessary: we are accountable to God, and yet by our nature we tend to go our own way and ignore God. That mismatch between our accountability and our actions is the starting point of all human need. The answer to that need begins with the cross.”⁸ Accountability to God permeates evangelism literature, as sources seek to motivate their readers to the action of sharing their faith. The role of God and the authority of God in evangelism are a basis for the evangelizer to share their faith. God is also the helper in evangelism. As David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley noted,

“God is sovereign. He knows what we need to know in order to understand more about Him. He knows what we need in our hearts when we step out in faith to tell someone about the love of the Lord. He knows how our lips need to be prepared to proclaim His story to lost men and women. He knows exactly how to take what we know about Him (our theology) and translate it into language that the average unsaved person can understand.”⁹

God Himself is involved in reaching others. Biblically, it is Jesus who reached the Apostle Paul. Another biblical proof of God’s involvement in the testimony of Cornelius. God gave him a dream that led to his coming to Christ. God did not reveal truth in that dream but did provide a way that Cornelius could hear the message of salvation from a Christian. In the great commission passage, Jesus spoke on how He would be with them and empower them. It is this passage that Erickson notes of the disciples, “they were both

⁷ Fred Sanders, *Fountain of Salvation: Trinity and Soteriology*, (Chicago: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2021), 20, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 3, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁹ David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011), 74.

authorized and enabled for the task. Moreover, they were assured that he was not sending them off on their own. Although he was to be taken from them bodily, he would nonetheless be with them spiritually to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:20).”¹⁰ God is involved in evangelism, but also has dictated that His disciples share the message. It is God that also empowers and is present to help the believer to evangelize. As Larry R. Moyer wrote, “It is a privilege, not a pain. He asks us to bring Christ to the lost; He will bring the lost to Christ. He’s not asking us to push through closed doors, but to walk through open ones. His love can motivate us even in the midst of our fear.”¹¹ God’s role, His authority, and His help are all aspects that form the base of evangelism in practice: methods, corporate, and conversational. A Christian’s life should be centered on the message of God about the person and work of Jesus. The whole life and ministry of a Christian should be evangelistic. Of this, Michael F. Bird wrote, “Our task is to make sure that our spirituality, mission, worship, preaching, ministry, social concern, prayer, and counseling are characteristically evangelicalesque.”¹²

Methods of Evangelism

Methods of evangelism focus on the way evangelism is conducted. The topics of this are the contextualization and presentation of salvation in conversation, and invitation to an evangelistic service. Literature that has been reviewed has extensively related the need for conversational evangelism, and to a further extent the communicability of the message of salvation. Gregory Koukl in his *Tactics* provides the discernment needed when presenting the

¹⁰ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 973, <https://app.logos.com>.

¹¹ Larry R. Moyer, *Show Me How to Share the Gospel*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2009), 47, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹² Bird, Michael F. *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2013), 801, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Gospel in a Gospel-intolerant culture by stating, “Our knowledge must be tempered with the kind of wisdom that makes our message clear and persuasive. This requires the tools of a diplomat, not the weapons of a warrior, tactical skill rather than brute force.”¹³ The concept is to share the Gospel in a reasonable manner and tone that defends the faith while promoting the faith to the listener. Literature associated with the methods of evangelism tie the goal of sharing the Gospel with discipleship that fits the context of the persons involved. David Platt combines those aspects in his statement, “Disciple making is not a call for others to come to us to hear the gospel but a command for us to go to others to share the gospel. A command for us to be gospel-living, gospel-speaking people at every moment and in every context where we find ourselves.”¹⁴ The call to share the Gospel with everyone means that the Gospel should be communicated to the individual. While the message of evangelism never changes, the method is subject to the factors of communication in the present.

Contemporary literature on the methods of evangelism (and consequently discipleship) focus on the aspect that the Gospel should be contextualized to fit the immediate cultural situation of the evangelist. The goal of the literature reviewed is to stay true to the Bible in this aspect. The balance is between the eternal truths of the Word of God and the different culture that is present. This also means being careful to define and elaborate on elements of the Gospel so that the individual who has no concept of Christianity can understand what it is. The contemporary literature also addresses the need for using a personal testimony to aid in the contextualization and communication of the Gospel. Paul Pettit advises his readers to use that method when he states, “Since our postmodern culture values relationships and sharing life

¹³ Gregory Koukl, *Tactics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 24.

¹⁴ David Platt, *Radical* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 2010), 94.

stories help build relationships, stories are essential. Telling your story for the purpose of being known is a bridge builder today.”¹⁵ Sharing a story is promoted in the literature as it is modeled on the testimony of the disciples and their actions in the Bible. This adds a personal dimension to evangelism as is demonstrated in the Bible. Christine Dillon wrote on this subject, “Bible storying is increasingly acknowledged as effective and advantageous. Of course, this method of sharing the gospel is not new. It’s as old as the Bible itself.”¹⁶ The literature in this review focuses on the main method of evangelism as individuals reaching other individuals. The testimony points to God’s role in the context of the Gospel and personal life. As Mark R. Teasdale wrote, “Starting points based in God’s nature and activity offer God in all God’s grandeur and invite the evangelized to receive a metanarrative large enough to transform every aspect of one’s personal narrative.”¹⁷ As indicated, individuals differ from each other, so a bridge of communication must be created. This bridge of communication in a certain sense is cross-cultural. Bruce Riley Ashford writes that the mission of sharing the Gospel, “means that we have to identify the ways in which our societies and cultures have been corrupted and misdirected by sin, so that we can work to redirect them toward Christ.”¹⁸ While not every Christian finds himself in a completely foreign atmosphere, Christians will feel as though they are due to the secularization of society. Presenting the Gospel should have a Scriptural basis, personal testimony, and be tailored to fit the immediate context. It must be remembered that everyone is guilty but can find salvation in Jesus. Everyone can relate to guilt, shame, or fear. This can be

¹⁵ Paul Pettit, *Foundations of Spiritual Formation* (n.p.: Kregel Publications, 2018), 219, <https://app.logos.com>.

¹⁶ Christine Dillon, *Telling the Gospel Through Story* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 1.

¹⁷ Mark R. Teasdale, *Evangelism for Non-Evangelists: Sharing the Gospel Authentically*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 42, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁸ Bruce Riley Ashford, *Every Square Inch: An Introduction to Cultural Engagement for Christians*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. 2015), 128, <https://app.logos.com>

utilized as a common denominator when sharing the faith. As Jayson Georges wrote, “Sin distorts the human family by causing guilt, shame, and fear. Consequently, the cultures of the world chase after innocence, honor, and power apart from God. But the God of the Bible desires to bless all peoples with the fullness of salvation in Christ.”¹⁹

Asking questions, the right questions, can also aid in sharing the Gospel. Randy Newman advocates the use of questions based on the Bible by stating, “I’m encouraging the use of questions more than the use of answers. The apostle Paul found validity in adding reasoning, explaining, and proving to his arsenal of evangelistic weapons. So should we.”²⁰ Questions allow opportunity for thought. Widely held concepts, lifestyles, and perception of individuals can be ascertained from asking questions. In turn, the questions used by a Christian in a potentially evangelical conversation can determine how a Christian should communicate. This is noted by Greg Ogden, “Good questions are used by the Holy Spirit to crack open a heart that can lead to a full-fledged quest. I am convinced that if our witness consisted of becoming caring listeners who attend to the needs of those around us, there would be no end of the opportunities to share Christ.”²¹ The methods involving evangelism encompass the aspects of discernment, contextualization, and testimony. Literature highlighting methods of evangelism usually references items that aid in ways to either validate or encourage a Gospel conversation.

It is important that a Christian does not seek to sell Jesus, like a product. When a Christian seeks to share the faith without trying to sell Jesus, it can result in a clear and considerate message. The believer should express compassion and testimony. The importance of

¹⁹ Jayson Georges, *The 3D Gospel* (Nashville, TN: Timē Press, 2014), 73.

²⁰ Randy Newman, *Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2017), 40.

²¹ Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 157, ProQuest Ebook Central.

not selling Jesus is relayed by Chatraw and Allen, who wrote, “We will often startle others when, rather than taking our cues from our culture, we subvert the typical spin techniques that have become so commonplace.”²² Related to this is evangelism via the internet. There are many ways to share the Gospel through social media. While it is important to utilize more traditional methods in conversation and relationships, the power of the internet cannot be underestimated. James Emery White wrote on this subject, “we must realize that evangelism is not going to be something that takes place only in the context of a weekend service, much less within the context of a personal relationship. Evangelism’s most common context may be online.”²³ This is an effective tool, yet it must not overshadow the message of the Gospel. All methods of evangelism should present a clear Gospel message without overshadowing the message by the method. There is no all-encompassing method for evangelism. Moon and Simon note, “We cooperate with God’s work to direct people toward the Savior. There is no silver bullet or simple formula. When our words, deeds, and lifestyle all reflect the same message of a deep, abiding commitment to Jesus Christ, this witness of Jesus is very hard for others to dismiss.”²⁴ Evangelism is personal for every believer.

Apologetics

Literature that combines discernment, contextualization, and testimony acknowledges the need for defending the faith as Western culture criticizes Christianity. This is a result of the broad secularization of society. Apologetics is a further validation or a defense of Christianity by use of Scripture and extra-biblical sources. The importance of such defense and validation is

²² Josh Chatraw, and Mark D. Allen, *Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness*. (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2018), 212, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²³ James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2017), 88, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁴ W. Jay Moon, and W. Bud Simon, *Effective Intercultural Evangelism: Good News in a Diverse World*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 144, ProQuest Ebook Central.

discussed by Doug Powell, “The Christian life is a balance of the intellect, emotions, and experience. God is the object on which they should all be focused, in which reason is grounded, and that which gives the world coherency and meaning.”²⁵ Apologetics should reflect an attitude of reverence for the Bible and provide other evidence that Christianity is true. Science is often used to deny the Bible, yet it can prove the Bible when the Scriptures are appropriately interpreted and science is properly handled. Vern Sheridan Poythress wrote, “We have to avoid reading into the Bible false meanings. And we have to inspect the work of scientists to see whether their conclusions are sound in particular cases of dispute.”²⁶ Reviewed literature amplifies the necessity of understanding science as it relates to biblical Christianity. Bruce Riley Ashford mentions the importance of understanding the role of science in contemporary Christianity, “Viewed from a Christian perspective, science is the discipline of studying the good world that God has given us. For this reason, we should build into our churches the habit of encouraging those who are gifted to pursue work in the sciences”²⁷ Evangelizers should prioritize understanding arguments and sciences both for and against Christianity to be able to communicate the Gospel to those who think that faith and practical life are separate. Scripture should be the authority, sciences are not. Salvation in Christ is dependent on facts, which need to be established in the mind of someone who is to become a believer. This is demonstrated in the Bible as the early church did defend the faith to evangelize others. As Tawa J. Anderson stated that in the Bible there are, “powerful scriptural reasons to engage in apologetic ministry, to share the gospel with those who do not believe. Put simply, God commands it, the Bible demonstrates

²⁵ Powell, Doug, and Holman Reference Editorial Staff, Holman Reference. *Ultimate Guide to Defend Your Faith*, (London: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 7, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁶ Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Inerrancy and Worldview: Answering Modern Challenges to the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 34, <https://app.logos.com>.

²⁷ Bruce Riley Ashford, *Every Square Inch: An Introduction to Cultural Engagement for Christians*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. 2015), 85, <https://app.logos.com>

it, and Christians ought to be doing it.”²⁸ The resurrection is an important theme in apologetic literature. William Lane Craig summarizes the extensive argument for the resurrection by stating, “three great, independently established facts-the empty tomb, the resurrection appearances, and the origin of the Christian faith-all point to the same marvelous conclusion: that God raised Jesus from the dead.”²⁹ This is vital to all apologetic and evangelistic literature as faith (or the call to faith) is dependent on whether or not the Bible is true. Individuals themselves provide an apologetic for the truth of the Bible. The morality argument for God is a popular apologetic method in the reviewed literature. Vern Sheridan Poythress simply states this argument as “The Bible provides a clear answer. God is the source of morality. He is absolutely good and He created us in his image, so that we have a sense of right and wrong derived from him.”³⁰ In promoting the faith, a defense of the faith is necessary. Apologetics fills this role. Understanding the sciences, proving the accuracy of the resurrection claims, and the morality argument are common ways that defend the faith that can lead to sharing the Gospel. When engaging in apologetics, it is vital to be compassionate as well. Paul Gould stated, “We are to engage unbelievers in the way we would want to be engaged if we were in their shoes: with gentleness and respect. We can do this without compromising on truth.”³¹

Hermeneutic of Evangelism (Biblical Theology)

With the method of evangelism including discernment, contextualization, and testimony defended in a reasonable manner, a key point is knowing the message of evangelism. In the

²⁸ Tawa J. Anderson, *Why Believe: Christian Apologetics for a Skeptical Age*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2021), 32, ProQuest Ebook Central.

²⁹ William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 3rd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 399.

³⁰ Vern Sheridan Poythress, *Inerrancy and Worldview: Answering Modern Challenges to the Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2012), 32, <https://app.logos.com>.

³¹ Paul Gould, Travis Dickinson, and Keith Loftin, *Stand Firm: Apologetics and the Brilliance of the Gospel*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 14, ProQuest Ebook Central.

literature reviewed, the role of knowing the Bible is the main source of evangelism. The Bible is God's communication to mankind. In a sense, the purpose of the Bible is evangelistic so that man may know God and have a relationship with Him. Sin separates mankind from God, the Messiah was to redeem mankind by His person and work. The whole of Scripture records this narrative. This concept led Duvall and Hays to state on the theme of Biblical Theology that "the Triune God desires a personal relationship with his people and so makes his presence known to establish and cultivate this relationship."³² The personal relationship with God is found in the person and work of Jesus. This is revealed by the whole Bible. On this Bruno, Compton, and McFadden wrote, "In the case of the authors of the NT the story always finds its culmination in the person and work of Jesus, the promised Messiah."³³ Both Testaments are part of the Gospel. As Köstenberger stated on the relevance of the Old Testament in Biblical theology, "the Old Testament story plays a vital part in presenting the purpose and nature of God's missional activity in the world. For this reason, New Testament writers draw heavily upon the Old Testament for understanding and proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ."³⁴ While the message of salvation is usually comprised of the same Scriptural doctrines in evangelical literature, the hermeneutic (or study) of that message may be different. The hermeneutic of evangelism may vary with the context of the situation. However, contemporary literature favors a more biblical theology approach that emphasizes the theme of redemption in the entire Bible. This avoids a disjointed presentation of the Gospel that can result in a misunderstanding of salvation by faith in Jesus the Messiah. Tying the biblical theology method centered on the

³² J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays, *God's Relational Presence: The Cohesive Center of Biblical Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 274, ProQuest Ebook Central.

³³ Chris Bruno, Jared Compton, and Kevin McFadden, *Biblical Theology According to the Apostles: How the Earliest Christians Told the Story of Israel*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 183, ProQuest Ebook Central.

³⁴ Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth: A Biblical Theology of Mission*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 9, ProQuest Ebook Central.

historical redemptive theme can guide any conversation that has the Bible in it toward a salvation message. In David Limbaugh's *The Emmaus Code*, he states on the unity of the Bible, "The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are united by a common thread centered on God's promise to redeem mankind, and this thread continues through the New Testament, where that promise is fulfilled and questions are answered."³⁵ Literature on this topic states that the Gospel is not just the message of salvation, it is the story of the Bible centered on Jesus' Person and work. This applies to evangelism in that it can create continuity for the message of the Bible in the eyes of the unfamiliar individual. Scot McKnight stated the message of the whole Bible in a concise manner, "There's our gospel: it's the saving Story of Israel now lived out by Jesus, who lived, died, was buried, was raised, and was exalted to God's right hand, and who is now roaring out the message that someday the kingdom will come in all its glorious fury."³⁶ This can lead also to discipleship in the local church, as biblical theology focuses on redemption throughout the Bible. Mark J. Boda ties the Old Testament and the New Testament together by stating on community, "the redemptive purposes of Yahweh to create a community through which he would impact the nations and ultimately all of creation."³⁷ The Gospel is not over with the resurrection but is an eternal story that an individual becomes a part of at the moment of their salvation. The literature reviewed also mentions the value of biblical theology in teaching those who are saved but are unfamiliar with the Old Testament. Matthew W. Bates displays this by stating, "we have already examined Jesus's preexistence, birth into the line of David, death for sins, burial, resurrection on the third day, and appearances—as well as the way many of these

³⁵ David Limbaugh, *The Emmaus Code*. (Washington DC: Regnery Publishing, 2015), 9.

³⁶ Scot McKnight, *The King Jesus Gospel: The Original Good News Revisited*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2019), 176, <https://app.logos.com>.

³⁷ Mark J. Boda, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 83, <https://app.logos.com>.

stages connect to the Old Testament.”³⁸ Evangelism, coupled with Biblical theology, provides a foundation for an individual to share their faith by their personal story with the perspective of the eternal story of the Gospel. It is as Christopher Flanders, and Werner Mischke wrote, “The gospel is revealed as good news because the acts in the Scripture story honor its Hero, and its hearers discover themselves and a new community within that unparalleled story.”³⁹ In a sense, evangelism is the connecting of this unparalleled narrative with the individual. This allows a Christian to connect the Bible in one story to share with others. D. A. Carson wrote about knowing the whole Bible, “Work hard at understanding how the New Testament handles the Old Testament, and you will learn how to preach the Old Testament, because these New Testament passages show the trajectories that God himself has put in place. And they point forward and bring us to Jesus.”⁴⁰ The whole of Scripture is connected to Christ.

Lifestyle Evangelism

Living like a Christian is a vital part of proclaiming the Gospel. The literature reviewed reminds readers that words and deeds should match as deeds can undermine Gospel witness. Some people reject Christianity based on the actions of Christians rather than the doctrines of Christ. While lifestyle evangelism is an important aspect, as many authors note, the lifestyle of a Christian should lead to verbal sharing of the Gospel. This is best stated by Paul Borthwick as, “Practice and proclamation are the two hands of the gospel. Christians sometimes try to live a

³⁸ Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2019), 67, <https://app.logos.com>.

³⁹ Christopher Flanders, and Werner Mischke, eds. *Honor, Shame, and the Gospel: Reframing Our Message and Ministry*, (Littleton: William Carey Publishing, 2020), 110, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴⁰ D. A. Carson, ed. *The Scriptures Testify about Me: Jesus and the Gospel in the Old Testament*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 113-114, ProQuest Ebook Central.

one-handed lifestyle, but a complete Christian lifestyle requires both hands.”⁴¹ In this section of the literature reviewed, lifestyle evangelism is not isolated from verbal evangelism but is distinguished as to its essential nature. Lifestyle and verbal evangelism cannot be separated in action, as noted by Quinn and Strickland, “the manner of living that accords with the good news that Jesus is king, now and forever. Both telling of Christ with our mouths and giving Christ with our hands and feet characterize this life on mission. It isn’t “either/or,” it’s “both/and.”⁴²

Rainer and Geiger use unity among Christians as an example of Christianity to unbelievers by stating, “Jesus prayed that His followers would be as unified as He and the Father are. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are completely one. They are inseparable. Jesus prayed that believers would be that intimate, that united, that aligned. Unity reflects the glory and character of God because God is unified.”⁴³ The life a Christian leads should reflect the God they serve. This means a different life than that of the unsaved. Platt reminds his readers of this, “The gospel of Christ is not a call to cultural compromise in the face of fear. It is a call to countercultural crucifixion—death to self in the face of earthly opposition for the sake of eternal reward.”⁴⁴ The idea is to not live in a weird manner but in a holy manner. No Christian will be perfect, as the literature reviewed does indicate, yet there must be a difference that honors the Word of God as the authority for faith and practice. Sharing Jesus and living Jesus should not be separate. As Michael Lawrence stated, “the church is not so much entrusted with a message but is called to incarnate a person. We aren’t primarily about proclaiming Jesus’ work on the cross to

⁴¹ Paul Borthwick, *Great Commission, Great Compassion: Following Jesus and Loving the World*. (InterVarsity Press, 2015), 26, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴² Benjamin T. Quinn, and Walter R. Strickland II, *Every Waking Hour: An Introduction to Work and Vocation for Christians*, (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2016), 55, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴³ Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger, *Simple Church* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2011), 167.

⁴⁴ David Platt, *Counter Culture* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2015), 22.

the world. Rather we're about making the words, deeds, and life of Jesus visible in every corner of our city."⁴⁵ If the lifestyle of a Christian is only Christian to a certain point, then the Christian is not proclaiming the Gospel. The danger is that a lifestyle of Christianity may look more like a political statement seeking relevance rather than living like Christ. Alan Noble covers the danger of this line of thought by stating, "The challenge facing us today is not so much the temptation to be relevant to the point that we lose the gospel, but the tendency to unknowingly accept a secular understanding of our faith while believing that we are boldly declaring the gospel."⁴⁶ Many Christians may think that because they adhere to Bible culture, they are proclaiming the Gospel. However, it is vital that a Christian should look to the Word of God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and their local church on how to live in a spiritually hostile culture. In the literature reviewed, lifestyle evangelism is balanced with confrontational conversational evangelism. Both are necessary in the eyes of the sources to reach the lost. The caution is that the Christian should be distinguishable from the world. As Christopher J. H. Wright wrote, "But if there is no real difference . . . that is, if Christians are in most practical ways no different from the people and the culture around them, then we become nothing less than part of the problem itself—contributing to the division and degeneration of society."⁴⁷ Believers should be different from the world, not perfect, but more concerned with serving Christ, not self. This allows the individual Christian to verbally share the Gospel with a life lived according to the Gospel. The Christian should have a life that matches their proclamation of the Gospel. As Wendel Sun wrote, "the new-covenant church lives as the renewed humanity, showing and proclaiming the glorious

⁴⁵ Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 205, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁴⁶ Alan Noble, *Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 173, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴⁷ Christopher J. H. Wright, *Here Are Your Gods: Faithful Discipleship in Idolatrous Times*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 138, ProQuest Ebook Central.

gospel in anticipation of the return of her king, who will consummate the new creation and dwell forever with his people from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation.”⁴⁸ The Christian’s life is about the Gospel found in Jesus.

Corporate Evangelism

Church members should be united in the task of reaching the lost in their community. The church in the literature reviewed is a missional institution founded for the purpose of worship and evangelism. James Emery White stated about the importance of the church, “the church’s central role as the means by which this world is to be engaged and transformed, the church is the very body of Christ, one that every member of his body is meant to embrace.”⁴⁹ This is reaching the unsaved with the Gospel. Corporate evangelism as a term will be used to refer to organized evangelism that is conducted by a local church. Evangelism is the task of the local Church. Everything a church does should be in some way related to evangelism. As Ernest L. Easley and Jordan Easley wrote, “Churches have many ways to promote evangelism: vibrant worship gatherings, practical Bible teaching, and a warm welcome to those attending worship starting in the parking lots, to name a few. Everything the church does should be bent toward evangelism.”⁵⁰ The local church is vital to evangelism and provides individuals and families with benefits and growth. Paul Chappell listed some benefits of the local church,

The church provided opportunities for individual discipleship. It provided encouragement, spiritually based relationships, and consistent instruction. It provided opportunities to hear the preaching of God’s Word, accountability in growth, and clear teaching on practical, biblical steps of growth.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Scott N. Callaham, and Will Brooks, eds. *World Mission: Theology, Strategy, and Current Issues*, (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2019), 71, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁴⁹ James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones: Understanding and Reaching the Religiously Unaffiliated*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2014), 172, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁵⁰ Ernest L. Easley, and Jordan Easley, *Resuscitating Evangelism*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), 94, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Evangelism is a vital part of the institution of the church. Michael J. Gorman summarizes the Apostle's view of the church, "Paul expects the church to embody the gospel, to become the gospel, its very identity is inherently missional."⁵² Reaching the local community is a primary concern for the churches in the reviewed literature, and it is advocated that evangelism should be promoted by its leaders. In a sobering thought, Dave Early and David Wheeler write, "Therefore, without a mammoth change in the culture of the contemporary church that prioritizes fervent evangelism, Christ-centered discipleship, and biblical truth over personal comfort and individual preferences, the church will continue to decline, and Christianity will lose its influence and identity."⁵³ The Gospel should impact the community surrounding the church. Churches reach out in multiple ways, usually fitting their community in evangelism. Contextualization has a role in the corporate evangelism of the church. However, it must be different from the community in a reasonable and holy manner. As Erickson indicates, "While finding creative ways to utilize its culture as a vehicle for communication of the gospel, the church must always recognize that there will be inevitable points of incompatibility between biblically revealed Christianity and the culture, whether Greek, modern, postmodern, or any other."⁵⁴ The words and deeds of the church should match as well. However, the church should primarily boldly proclaim the Gospel, not primarily be charity oriented. Jared C. Wilson calls for his readers to point to Christ in any church situation, "A church that is mobilized with a gospel of "do good" might make for good

⁵¹ Paul Chappell, *Out of Commission*, (Lancaster, California: Striving Together Publications, 2014), 148.

⁵² Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015), 17, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁵³ Dave Early, and David Wheeler. *Everyday Evangelism: Sharing the Christian Faith* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 9, <https://app.logos.com>

⁵⁴ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015), 988, <https://app.logos.com>

PR, but the gospel of “do good” cannot really scandalize (in the Galatians 5:11 sense) a lost and broken world, because most people know how to do good without the help of Christianity. They don’t need the church to act like good people, really; they need the church to point to Jesus as the only truly good person.”⁵⁵ This is the mission of the church, to reach people in their community and is extended to the world. Often churches will apply the mission more to foreign missionaries than applying the mission to their local context. This can create apathy towards the Gospel need that lies right before the face of the congregation. The literature reviewed does not call for an abandonment of foreign mission endeavors but rather a balance of both foreign and local as it applies to the mission. As David M. Gustafson relates,

promotion of the gospel publically [sic] and globally and proclamation personally and locally are both important. Such a distinction should not diminish the value of evangelism but expand the local church’s commitment to practices that promote gospel proclamation locally, regionally, and globally, especially by praying for and supporting the work of missions and missionaries with material and financial means.⁵⁶

As the mission is central to the local church, evangelism becomes a responsibility for the membership of the church to share the Gospel. Every outreach event must be tied to the mission; as stated by Harmon, “the form of such outreach can and should take many different forms, the overarching goal should be the same: proclaiming the good news of what Jesus the servant of the Lord has done through his life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension.”⁵⁷ Church members are responsible for sharing their faith in their everyday lives. While mass campaigns and specific efforts by the whole local church body can be a positive priority, it does have a potential to

⁵⁵ Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 84, <https://app.logos.com>

⁵⁶ David M. Gustafson, *Gospel Witness: Evangelism in Word and Deed*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019), 227, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁵⁷ Matthew S. Harmon, *The Servant of the Lord and His Servant People: Tracing a Biblical Theme Through the Canon*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 226, ProQuest Ebook Central.

diminish personal efforts. Gene Edwards relates what makes personal evangelism so difficult compared to mass campaigns, “Unlike mass evangelism, which calls for only the evangelist to be Spirit-filled, personal evangelism is so demanding on the individual Christian, that it is a real test of spiritual tinsel. This may be the greatest single reason for a lack of return to Personal Evangelism.”⁵⁸ Corporate evangelism is vital, yet it must be used to empower the individual Christian to be ready to share their faith outside of a scheduled time or event. The church members should reach out to their neighbors. As Laurene Bowers stated, “the congregation has to become aware of the issues that its neighbors are struggling with— the conversation among the “spiritual but not religious” crowd, their joys and concerns.”⁵⁹ This is the promotion of a relational, personal evangelism. As Brian Dembowczyk explained, “There’s nothing wrong with programmed evangelism opportunities— unless that is the only way we’re trying to fulfill the Great Commission. If we want to obey Jesus’ command and complete the mission He gave us, then we have to make living on mission a part of our daily lives.”⁶⁰

Relational Evangelism

Like lifestyle evangelism, relational evangelism is evangelizing by building relationships in daily life. This way of evangelism does require both conversational and lifestyle evangelism. Building a relationship may take time, yet it is essential to communicate care to the lost. Ryan Denton categorizes relational and lifestyle evangelism in this similar vein, “relational or lifestyle evangelism attempts to intentionally develop relationships with the lost for the purpose of

⁵⁸ Gene Edwards, *How to Have a Soul Winning Church* (Chicago: Barakaldo Books, 2020), 49, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁵⁹ Laurene Bowers, *Invitational Ministry: Move Your Church from Membership to Discipleship*, (Saint Louis: Chalice Press, 2014), 142, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶⁰ Brian Dembowczyk, *Gospel-Centered Kids Ministry: How the Gospel Will Transform Your Kids, Your Church, Your Community, and the World*, (Morgantown: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 60, ProQuest Ebook Central.

sharing the gospel at a later and more appropriate time.”⁶¹ As mentioned, the caution that the literature reviewed is that a Christian should not wait too long to share their faith in their relationships with unbelievers. As D. Scott Hildreth agreed, “Many Christians mistakenly assume in the early days of a relationship they need to earn the right to speak about Christ. So they remain relatively silent about their faith. Experience proves, however, that the longer you wait to introduce him into a new relationship, the less likely you’ll ever be to do it.”⁶² This means that in new relationships resulting from work or recreation, sharing one’s faith should be a priority as it can lead to later evangelistic opportunities. Relational evangelism is lifestyle and conversational evangelism in front of those close to the evangelist. In sharing the faith, sources indicate that every person is different and requires understanding to contextualize the Gospel for that individual. Kyle Beshears speaks of compassion in sharing the Gospel with those who are apathetic when he states, “Only after the Spirit has worked on our own hearts can we be used to invite other hearts into the kingdom. Even then, the tough work has only begun. We must toil with grace, which requires patience, humility, and trust.”⁶³ Relational evangelism requires compassion, caring about those who are around the believer every day. It can take time to share the Gospel in this manner. As Jonathan K. Dodson stated, “If we are sharing the gospel in bits and pieces, getting to know a person and their hopes and fears, talking about faith in one conversation, sin in another, and then Christ three conversations after that, all of this is going to take time.”⁶⁴ The believer must demonstrate compassion rather than simply fulfilling the events

⁶¹ Ryan Denton, *Ten Modern Evangelism Myths: A Biblical Corrective*, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2021), 26, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶² D. Scott Hildreth, and Steven A McKinion, *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out: Evangelism the Way You Were Born to Do It*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), 82, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶³ Kyle Beshears, *Apathism: How We Share When They Don't Care* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2021), 115.

and items of the day. Matt Mikalatos demonstrates the kind of communication that needs to take place before having a Gospel conversation in a relational setting, “To communicate clearly and well requires vulnerability, and to communicate the good news requires both vulnerability and compassion.”⁶⁵ Relationships with people in everyday life can lead to sharing the Gospel on a personal level. In the literature reviewed, relational evangelism is integral in reaching a community.

Reaching Young families by Ministry

Relationships are key to reaching anyone, yet reaching young families requires a community of growth. Evangelism does not just end in salvation; it continues in discipleship. The local church is a community that is essential for spiritual growth. While not designed solely for seeing people come to Christ, a church service or program can be used to evangelize, especially concerning young families. Ministries that evangelize and involve young families are important ways that young families can be evangelized. While young families can be reached by the personal efforts of an individual Christian, the literature reviewed also indicates that they can be reached by using ministries in the local church. Thom S. Rainer overviews the amazing opportunities by data on young families, “keep in mind that these younger families are part of the Millennial generation, those born between 1980 and 2000. They are the largest generation in America at 78 million strong.”⁶⁶ Ministries that invest in these young families, will reach them.

It is not just the structure of the ministry but the people involved. In discussing how families are reached through children’s ministries, Justyn Smith relates the importance of the

⁶⁴ Jonathan K. Dodson, *The Unbelievable Gospel: Say Something Worth Believing*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 48, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶⁵ Matt Mikalatos, *Good News for a Change: How to Talk to Anyone about Jesus*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 2018), 180, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁶⁶ Thom S Rainer, *Scrappy Church: God's Not Done Yet*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 30, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/reader.action?docID=5973524>.

investment of the volunteers by stating, “when an entire family is reached and other examples of fruit from their ministry. Let them know that they had a part in the lives that were changed.”⁶⁷

Children’s ministries aid in reaching young families and provide an opportunity for a church member to impact that family for Christ. Children’s ministries are usually the example used by the literature reviewed on how to use a ministry to reach young families. Other ministries that provide investment for young families would be small groups for young families. Rainer states that the value of church for younger families comes from investment,

your younger families will gladly do whatever is necessary to get their kids to soccer practice. That’s really important for them. And for many of them, it is more important than attending church. Sure, we can find fault with them. We can express anger and frustration. Or we can offer them something more meaningful to do, something that makes a difference.⁶⁸

Use of church ministries can reach young families and consequently will aid in their spiritual growth. Evangelizing young families by church ministries allows the church member to invest in a family within a community setting that cultivates spiritual growth. A church member might not be a part of a young family, yet they can serve young families in church ministries or invite young families to events structured for them (children’s ministries and marriage conferences). Ministering to young families cannot be confined to church-related activities. While inviting young families to church or having special ministries or days for them is helpful, that should not be the conclusion of reaching young families. This is where the joining of conversational, lifestyle, and relational evangelism meet ministering to young families: loving them. Ashford unites the types of evangelism in his criticism, which highly applies to reaching young families, “They participate in social ministries and seek to redirect culture toward Christ. However,

⁶⁷ Justyn Smith, Bruce Barry, and Dale Hudson, *If Disney Ran Your Children’s Ministry* (np: www.kidminmouse.com, 2016), 1099.

⁶⁸ Thom S Rainer, *Scrappy Church: God’s Not Done Yet*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 30, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/reader.action?docID=5973524>.

sometimes they focus so much on the social and cultural aspects of our obedience that they seem to be choosing actions over words.”⁶⁹ Involvement in the community or joining the church and social ministries can be a powerful tool in reaching young families. In the literature reviewed, reaching young families is contingent on providing something they need: like an event, a sense of community, friends, or a person that invests in their children. This can be done personally or corporately through the church. The local church should not be isolated from the community but involved in it. As Mark Entzminger stated, “When the church is family-and-community-minded you’ll be amazed at how many doors will open that allow for relationships and sharing the gospel.”⁷⁰ The goal for churches is to equip the family to disciple the children. As Jay Strother wrote, “Family-equipping churches retain some age-organized ministries but restructure their ministries to connect people across the generations and to partner with parents at every level of ministry so that parents are acknowledged, equipped, and held accountable for the discipleship of their children.”⁷¹ The reason for reaching young families is not so that a church can be relevant to a particular generation, but that a church can aid a family in their spiritual development in truth and fellowship. Reaching young families is also important for the sustainability of a local church. As DeVries and Safstrom relate, “Church leaders know that if they can’t reach young families, their church is one generation from extinction. But even more importantly, we know that today’s families, often minutes from our churches, are struggling like never before.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Bruce Riley Ashford, *Every Square Inch: An Introduction to Cultural Engagement for Christians*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press. 2015), 85, <https://app.logos.com>

⁷⁰ Dick Gruber, ed. *6 Children's Ministry Essentials: A Quick-Access Guide*, (Ashland: Gospel Publishing House, 2017), 53, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁷¹ Timothy Paul Jones, ed. *Perspectives on Family Ministry: 3 Views*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 120, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁷² Mark DeVries and Annette Safstrom, *Sustainable Children's Ministry: From Last-Minute Scrambling to Long-Term Solutions*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2018), 143, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Young families hold the future of Christianity. The goal of family ministries is to aid in the overall promotion and growth of the family. Churches have an important role as they aid parents in establishing a biblical home that honors God. Denise Muir Kjesbo and Lou Y. Cha, on this subject wrote, “Healthy, Christ-centered families have the power to teach, form, and enculturate individuals to become mature, contributing citizens of God’s kingdom and human societies. Unhealthy families have the power to deform, distort, and destroy the minds, hearts, souls, and lives of individuals and even generations.”⁷³ Reaching young families by ministry is not just a tool to bring them to church, it is a tool that can change the future.

Conclusion

The methods of evangelism, theology of evangelism, apologetics, the hermeneutics of evangelism, lifestyle evangelism, corporate evangelism, relational evangelism, and reaching young families by use of ministry all are combined in the literature reviewed. These themes are broad in nature and have many subthemes, yet they can be limited by the preceding thoughts to create a consistent theme of practical evangelism based on the Bible. From everyday conversation to investment in an intentional relationship and to using ministries, the church member can reach out to young families. Evangelism that reaches young families is multifaceted, as the literature indicates. Reaching the individuals within a younger family requires basic knowledge of conversational evangelism based on proper hermeneutic and theology, yet it requires a testimony, relationship, and investment to evangelize. The literature reviewed emphasized the personal aspect of reaching individuals, which is the responsibility of the individual Christian and the church. The gap in the literature is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to every church’s outreach needs. While precedent literature gives a multitude of tools

⁷³ Denise Muir Kjesbo and Lou Y. Cha, “Family Ministry: Past, Present, Future,” *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 17, no. 3 (2020): 488-505, accessed July 25, 2022, doi: 10.1177/0739891320943603.

to be used, it does not provide which blend of tools is effective for VBC in this case. Literature also does rightly emphasize the personal aspect of evangelism as well as the responsibility involved. However, specific areas require understanding in a local context. In a challenge to his readers to understand a local predicament in evangelization, Dino Senesi wrote, “Demographics, spiritual history, moral history, subcultures, and geography are only a few layers of influence in any particular place. Adding to the cultural complexity is the reality that each of these layers is constantly evolving at different rates.”⁷⁴ The reviewed literature does not specifically state the exact way that VBC should be reaching young families. The local context has been largely left out of reviewed literature, and where it is mentioned, it is not describing VBC in Weatherford, Texas.

Theological Foundations

The theological foundations for reaching young families are rooted in evangelism, the role of the family, and discipleship. It is the combination of those items that provide the theological foundation for this action research project. In this section, the theological foundations described are centered on not one key passage but the whole of Scripture with respect to a grammatical-historical interpretation. The evangelism theological foundation will overview and be similar in nature to a study on biblical theology centered on the Gospel and the responsibility of evangelism for every believer. The role of the family in scripture will be defined in terms of importance and familial discipleship. Finally, discipleship will cover the scriptural view of a continuing walk with Christ in life as well as sources of spirituality for the Christian. All subjects in this section are developed from a biblical theological view that the Bible is authoritative for faith and practice and that it is centered on redemption in Christ.

⁷⁴ Dino Senesi, *Sending Well*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 21, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Evangelism

Evangelism can be simply defined as the sharing of the Gospel. Many authors, pastors, and theologians have studied and expounded the concept of evangelism for millennia. The Bible not only carries the message of salvation, but it also gives instruction on how to share it. This section will discuss not only what the Bible says about the object of evangelism but also what the Bible says about how believers are to evangelize.

The Bible has redemption as its major theme. In biblical theology, the whole Bible is taken into consideration. Klink and Lockett describe the Biblical Theology as a history of redemption by stating, “The subject matter is the “special history” of God, frequently including Jesus Christ at its center. It encompasses the progressive history of God’s actions across both Testaments.”⁷⁵ This indicates that the whole of Scripture is centered on redemption found in Jesus. Sharing this message with others is part of this main theme. Evangelism, or sharing the good news of redemption in Christ, is connected to that main theme of biblical theology. The Old Testament had instructions for sharing the plan of redemption for the Jews to the gentiles, such as the commands to make monuments that represent God as redeeming Israel. The commands of the law regarding how the Israelites were to treat strangers and the commands to be different were designed to show God’s plan of redemption culminated in the Messiah. In the New Testament, Christ commanded his followers to share what He had done for mankind. The Apostles performed the command to go and tell and further challenged the next generation to continue. Bock states on the church, “Scripture teaches that the Church models its gospel message and commitment to showing God’s love for people by the way it engages in service and

⁷⁵ Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 186-189, <https://app.logos.com>

care in the world.”⁷⁶ In both Testaments, the message of redemption was to be shared. For the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was to be distinct and a place for others to learn of the future Messiah. For the New Testament, the church was to go and tell the story of the Messiah to the nations. While Israel and the church are different institutions at different times, they were and are vehicles for communicating the redemptive truth. This truth is wrapped up in the past, present, and future of the Person and work of Jesus Christ. As Matthew Barrett explained about the joining of the Testaments in Christ, “Jesus sees himself as the rightful heir to Israel’s Scripture, the continuation of Israel’s story, and the long-anticipated fulfillment of Israel’s covenant treatise.”⁷⁷ Bates best summarizes the redemptive truth of Jesus by stating, “Jesus the king preexisted with the Father, took on human flesh, fulfilling God’s promises to David, died for sins in accordance with the Scriptures, was buried, was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, appeared to many, is seated at the right hand of God as Lord, and will come again as judge.”⁷⁸ The entire Bible records God giving truth to men, who were responsible for passing that truth along. The Israelites taught and gave the record of divine revelation to their children. The Jews shared God’s messages with their families. Some of the Prophets were sent or testified to gentile nations and kings so that they may know the God of Israel (such as Jonah and Daniel). The first Christians were children of Israel. They were entrusted to share the Gospel starting at Jerusalem and continuing outward. This is how Christianity has spread and survived for two millennia. Jesus gave the Great Commission to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. This was a command given to the disciples to evangelize the world. On these verses, John F. Walvoord and

⁷⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 9, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁷⁷ Matthew Barrett, *Canon, Covenant and Christology: Rethinking Jesus and the Scriptures of Israel*, (Westmont: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 96, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁷⁸ Matthew W. Bates, *Salvation by Allegiance Alone* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2019), 51, <https://app.logos.com>.

Roy B. Zuck wrote, “Jesus’ commission, applicable to all His followers, involved one command, “Make disciples,” which is accompanied by three participles in the Greek: “going,” baptizing, and teaching.”⁷⁹ All of Jesus’s followers include believers today as every generation is responsible to share truth with their generation. Reviewed literature is clear to state that it is the responsibility of Christians to propagate the faith. Not only is a believer responsible for sharing the faith, but he is also responsible for reaching to other people from different backgrounds. On the Great Commission passage, Henrietta Mears wrote that Jesus stated “all nations,” meaning, “Christian faith is not a national or racial religion, and it has no natural boundaries. It is meant to reach around the globe.”⁸⁰

From the beginning, as God has poured out knowledge and pointed to redemption, those who have the truth share the truth. In evangelism to the lost, starting at the very beginning can be vital. As Babcock and Spencer wrote, “The biblical story is no longer as well-known as it used to be, so when sharing the story Jesus with others we often have to begin at the very beginning. The presence of God therefore figures prominently in evangelism of the biblically illiterate because the gospel is really the story of how God made it possible to dwell among his people.”⁸¹ Every person will live forever, with God (Heaven) or separated from God (Hell). It is, as Rebecca McLaughlin wrote that humanity has two choices, “The choice we have is this: to face hell by ourselves or to hide ourselves in Christ.”⁸² Evangelism has eternal consequences, this makes it an

⁷⁹ John F. Walvoord, and Roy B. Zuck, eds. *The Bible Knowledge Commentary Gospels*. (Cork: David C. Cook, 2018), 27k, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁸⁰ Henrietta C. Mears, *What the Bible Is All about KJV* (Carol Stream, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2015), 439.

⁸¹ Bryan C. Babcock, and James Spencer, *Trajectories: A Gospel-Centered Introduction to Old Testament Theology*, (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018), 150, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁸² Rebecca McLaughlin, *Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World’s Largest Religion* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), 12, <https://app.logos.com>.

important theological foundation for any practical ministerial project. The message accepted results in eternal life, rejected it results in eternal separation from God in Hell. Those who are born again are called to share the gospel with their neighbor; this is the mandate that Christ gave His followers. Wheeler and Whaley stated on this, “Make no mistake about it, from Genesis to Revelation, God has actively pursued fallen men and women first to be redeemed and then to join Him on mission as Great Commission Worshipers to proclaim eternal hope to a lost world. This mandate has never changed!”⁸³ There are no exceptions for any Christian to share the Gospel with the lost and dying world. Every Christian is an ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). The individual Christian may not be a full-time occupational minister but is a full-time evangelist. God has given each Christian a spiritual gift to evangelize the lost and edify the body. The Bible also states how Christians are to evangelize. Not that the Scriptures state a rigid method for evangelization, but a method of how or where the Gospel is shared. In the New Testament, the first Christians shared the message of salvation where they were. Jesus gave the first disciples a plan in Acts 1:8 to be witnesses at Jerusalem, then Judea, then Samaria, and from there to the end of the earth. The point is that they were to continue the mission outward. On this text, Grant R. Osborne explains the expansive outline, “The last part of this verse is virtually a table of contents describing the material in Acts the route of the mission— to Jerusalem (1:9–8:3), Judea (8:2– 3), Samaria (8:4– 25), and “ends of the earth” (the Gentile mission in the rest of Acts).”⁸⁴ This serves as a pattern for the mission to evangelize for believers today. Ultimately the plan is that the believer is to share the Gospel wherever they find themselves. The plan in Acts 1:8 states that the disciples would be witnesses. Paul the Apostle referred to the Corinthian

⁸³ David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011), 8, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁸⁴ Grant R. Osborne, *Acts Verse by Verse*, (Ashland: Lexham Press, 2019), 27, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Christians as “ambassadors” (2 Corinthians 5:20). Of this passage, David E. Garland notes, “God sent Christ as his agent to make reconciliation possible. God uses ambassadors like Paul to continue that agenda — to call people to be reconciled to God, to make known that God does not count their sins against them, and to proclaim that God loves them and yearns for them to repent.”⁸⁵ The concept of witnesses and ambassadors testifies to the need that the Gospel should be conveyed as personal. The believer should be a witness to what Christ has done in their life and consequently shares and represents Christ to the rest of the world. Paul the Apostle used his testimony to share his faith (Acts 22 and 26). This is what the Christian is called to do to share their testimony considering the grand narrative of redemption in Scripture.

Role of the Family

The role of the family in the Bible is a vital foundation to reaching young families. Even before the Fall, the family was instituted by God by His creation of Adam and Eve. The marital union is the cornerstone of the family unit. Prior to the fall of man, the family was instituted by God. It was to be the way humanity propagated itself on the earth. After the fall of man, the family still existed as a core institution of God’s revelation to man of Himself. The family was God’s first institution, as Scipione and Adams stated, “The Bible designates the family as the basic authority unit in God’s plan, granting to it vast, though not absolute, power. While in many aspects it is an independent institution, it is not totally independent; rather, it is interdependent with the state and the church. All three must work together for good or ill (Neh. 9:32, 34, 38).”⁸⁶ In the Old Testament, the authority of the father is further expounded in law and example. God chose a family in which the Messiah would be born. This was the family of Abraham, Isaac, and

⁸⁵ David E Garland, *2 Corinthians: the Christian Standard Commentary*, (B&H Publishing Group, 2021), 6h, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁸⁶ George C. Scipione and Jay E. Adams, *The Battle for the Biblical Family* (Pittsburgh: Crown & Covenant Publications, 2018), 41, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Jacob. The Patriarchs were supposed to lead their families. The covenants made with those individuals applied to their separation from everyone else, and that they were passed on to their descendants. In the law of the Old Testament, the father was the authority in the home. They were also supposed to teach their children about life, specifically about God. Boda further analyzes the role of monuments and teaching the role of the parents to the children, “This short recitation of God’s redemptive act on Israel’s behalf is here provided as the theological foundation for a parent’s answer to a child’s question concerning the purpose of the laws in the life of the Israelites.”⁸⁷ The laws that were to be passed down communicated the existence of God and mankind’s accountability to Him. Parents were to instruct their children based on the present revelation of God’s Word at the time of their existence. A passage that discusses this is the great Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, which requires the Israelite parents to teach their children. As Benjamin K. Forrest and Chet Roden note on the passage,

“First, it will indeed impress, inculcate, and teach diligently these covenant truths to a family’s children. But second, the fact that parents do this everywhere and all the time will help the children to realize that these covenant pronouncements have relevancy to all of life! This kind of teaching of God’s Word will go a long way toward guarding against the ever-dangerous tendency of viewing life as divided into two unrelated spheres, the religious and the ordinary, or the holy and the secular.”⁸⁸

The Israelites were to have the Word of God present in every part of their lives, especially in the family life. In the New Testament, the family is treated as a place of spiritual unity. Marriage is sacred in the New Testament, as Jesus taught, and is further described as being no less sacred even if one spouse is not a believer. Men who were to be Pastors and deacons should justly rule over their own house before taking on ministerial responsibility. Jerry Pipes and Victor Lee write

⁸⁷ Mark J. Boda, *The Heartbeat of Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), 12, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁸⁸ Benjamin K. Forrest and Chet Roden, *Biblical Leadership: Theology for the Everyday Leader*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2017), 49, <https://app.logos.com>

about the spiritual responsibility of the parents, “Healthy families pass the baton of faith in Christ on to the next generation. It is not the church’s sole responsibility—or anyone else’s—to win your children to Christ and mentor them spiritually; it is yours. This thought strikes fear in the hearts of many. God’s Word makes it clear that parents are God’s plan for the process of passing the baton of faith.”⁸⁹ Passing on faith can be done at the local church, however, it is the Parents’ responsibility to teach their children. As Pipes and Lee further state to parents, “The church can help your children, and it can help you raise your children. It cannot replace you as a spiritual mentor.”⁹⁰ As Jesus has not returned yet (Acts 1:11), Christianity needs to be passed on not just in evangelism but in the Christian home. The family is a foundational part of humanity in Scripture. For the New Testament Christians, the gospel was passed to the next generations. Early churches met in houses where a family would live. Christianity wasn’t just for the men but for the women and children, as evidenced by Christ’s interaction with both. The early church was also filled with women and Children. Timothy, Paul’s son in the ministry, was raised and influenced by devout Christian women (2 Timothy 1:5). This was to be the foundation for Timothy’s ministry as Raymond F. Collins wrote, “Before Timothy had genuine faith, his grandmother and mother did. That same genuine faith is presumed to remain with Timothy. He had received it from his mother (see Acts 16:1) and his grandmother; he is to pass it on to the people of Ephesus so that their faith might be genuine (see 1 Tim. 1:5; Rom. 1:5).”⁹¹ The family home is called to be a place of discipleship. As in Timothy’s case, discipleship had a role in affecting other people with the Gospel. Discipleship in the home can make a difference outside

⁸⁹ Jerry Pipes and Victor Lee, *Family to Family: Families Making a Difference* (Nashville, TN: Jerry F. Pipes, 2018), 41, <https://app.logos.com>.

⁹⁰ Ibid. 51.

⁹¹ Raymond F. Collins, *I & II Timothy and Titus (2002): A Commentary*, (Louisville: Presbyterian Publishing Corporation, 2013), 192, ProQuest Ebook Central.

of the home. It is the parents' responsibility to disciple their children or to oversee their spiritual education. As Rachel Coe stated, "God assigned parents the primary responsibility for teaching and guiding children in the truth of God's Word. It is God's plan for families to begin the process of laying the foundations in children's lives. Families, however, can be supported in this remarkable role by the kids ministry leader."⁹² The home should be the primary place of discipleship.

Discipleship

While the word is not found in Scripture, discipleship is a principle found throughout the Bible. As previously mentioned, under the role of the family, the Old Testament believers were instructed to pass down their faith to their children, which also extended to strangers (foreigners or Gentiles). In the New Testament, Jesus commanded to go and tell, yet He also said to teach what He taught. Spiritual development requires the Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and a community. Discipleship is tied to God's Word, His involvement, and His institution. In the Old Testament, the community for spiritual growth was Israel. In the New Testament, the community is the local church. Both were the vehicle of communicating the narrative of the Gospel and the development of those who believe. Discipleship, or making disciples, is a responsibility for every believer. Wilson elaborates after exploring Jesus' method of discipleship, "Systems may aid the discipleship process, but discipleship is not a system. Discipleship is following Jesus. It requires help that is much more personal and relational."⁹³ Discipleship is tied to the responsibility of the believer to share the Gospel. Making disciples is what every church and Christian should be

⁹² Emeott, Bill. *What about Kids Ministry? : Practical Answers to Questions about Kids Ministry*. (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2018), 96, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁹³ Jared C. Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto against the Status Quo*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 144, <https://app.logos.com>

involved in. The Gospels and the epistles were written to help disciples make disciples. Rodney Reeves, in his commentary, wrote that making disciples was evident in the way Matthew wrote his gospel,

Instead, he acted like we would need to know the Gospel according to Matthew 1:1– 28:18 before we could obey the last two verses. Indeed, embedded in the Great Commission is the explanation as to how we are to “make disciples of all nations,” contained in two explanatory participles: baptizing and teaching. Not just teaching for the sake of instruction but “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (28:20). There it is again. The way of the kingdom, the way disciples are made, the way we follow Jesus is to obey him.⁹⁴

It is important to note that the disciples were not all recruited by Jesus. In John 1:40-41, Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Later in the same chapter, Philip brought Nathanael to see Jesus. What would constitute the first church was founded on men bringing others to meet the Messiah. Discipleship involves bringing others to Jesus and growing together in Jesus. Disciples will make more disciples. As Trevin Wax stated, “The initial element of making a disciple (conversion) becomes a major part of defining discipleship because it is what a disciple seeks on behalf of others. A nonreproducing disciple is an oxymoron. By definition, disciples reproduce through evangelism.”⁹⁵ Growth is not numerical, although it can be a healthy indicator. True growth from discipleship results in the membership using their abilities to magnify and share Christ for His glory. The church should be a place of growth for young families and others in attendance. Growth involves the exercising of spiritual gifts and obedience to God’s Word. While a formal type of discipleship may provide a foundation for this, there is a need for continuing growth that can take place in the church. Therefore, it is important to have unity in the church, especially

⁹⁴ Rodney Reeves, *Matthew*, (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2017), 568, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/reader.action?docID=5607824>

⁹⁵ Trevin Wax, *Eschatological Discipleship: Leading Christians to Understand their Historical and Cultural Context* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Academic, 2018), 193.

when it comes to spiritual growth. Paul addressed the need for unity and boldness in many of his epistles. Thomas Schreiner on Paul's view of the church wrote that,

Hence, the church will grow up into its head only through the proclamation of the truth of the gospel (Eph. 4:15). This verse is not simply saying that we should speak the truth in love—as right as that thought is—but that the truth of the gospel should be heralded with love. The unity of the body, then, coincides with the growth of the body. And the body grows when it is rooted in the truth of the gospel.⁹⁶

Discipleship involves the Christian learning how to share their faith and the continual process of evangelism. The Gospel is the foundation, and the management of that truth reflects growth.

Discipleship is not an internal spiritual matter, but an inward growth that is manifested in external actions. This is as J. T. English wrote, “True discipleship can only be measured by a disciple’s ability to connect all of reality to the Triune God. When we think about discipleship, we are thinking about our ability to be reoriented to God, and we begin to see that God is the goal of discipleship.”⁹⁷ When a believer is connecting all of reality to God, he will share his faith. God is sovereign yet requires the participation of believers in the mission of sharing the message of salvation. The same is correct for discipleship. While God ultimately shapes the individual in their circumstances by His Spirit and His Word, He needs His disciples to cultivate growth for each other. The church is the ideal place for believers to help each other grow.

Discipleship in a local church should engage the head, heart, and hands. Randy Pope describes what happens when all three are not in balance,

Most churches tend to emphasize one strand, often at the expense of the other two. Heads-only churches all too easily devolve into dead orthodoxy. Hearts-only churches can major on emotionalism without

⁹⁶ Thomas R. Schreiner, “Paul: A Reformed Reading,” in *Four Views on the Apostle Paul*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry and Michael F. Bird, Zondervan Counterpoints Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 47, <https://app.logos.com>

⁹⁷ J. T. English, *Deep Discipleship: How the Church Can Make Whole Disciples of Jesus* (Morgantown: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), 18, ProQuest Ebook Central.

adequate declaration of truth. And hands-only churches may succumb to a bland liberalism that offers bread without offering the Bread of Life.⁹⁸

Discipleship requires involvement from believers. As Marianus Pale Hera wrote, “The privilege of becoming children of God is a matter of divine prerogative. Discipleship is granted from above because one can come to Jesus only if the Father draws him (6:44, 65). Yet, discipleship requires human responsibility.”⁹⁹ Disciples will aid in the spiritual development of others. Ultimately discipleship results in a life lived toward the mission. This is explained by Dean Flemming on analyzing the Gospel of Mark, “Mission for Jesus’ disciples, and, by implication, the church, is an extension of the mission of Jesus. The “good news” the church tells embraces the whole narrative of Jesus’ life, ministry, death and resurrection (Mk 1:1).”¹⁰⁰ Disciples of Christ share the Gospel of Christ. Those who are discipled should disciple others as noted by David Watson and Paul Watson, “Mentors help new believers learn Scripture and walk the narrow path demanded by Scripture. Maturing believers need to be mentors to grow in their own discipleship.”¹⁰¹ The local church is the place of discipleship as well as the home. While Christians can be discipled at home or anywhere physically, discipleship is related to the local church. As Gary L. McIntosh explained, “There is a relationship between making disciples and the corporate group. The group is to go, the group is to baptize, and the group is to teach. Maturity into full discipleship takes place in Christ’s body, the local church.”¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Randy Pope, *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship Back to the Local Church*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013), 82, ProQuest Ebook Central.

⁹⁹ Marianus Pale Hera, *Christology and Discipleship in John 17*, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 172, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁰⁰ Dean Flemming, *Recovering the Full Mission of God: A Biblical Perspective on Being, Doing and Telling*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2013), 91, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁰¹ David Watson, and Paul Watson, *Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Incorporated, 2014), 205, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Conclusion

Evangelism, the role of the family, and discipleship are foundational to reaching young families. Reaching the lost is a priority, the biblical concept of family is God-designed, and discipleship is the responsibility of every Christian in a local church. Reaching young families is bound to those three items. Lost young families need to be reached, discipled, and reaching out to others around them. It is the young families, who may have busy lives and who could have a large impact in evangelizing a community. Young families are vital in passing truth from generation to generation and are important for a community of believers to propagate and minister to a community. It is not the duty of the local New Testament church to disciple children but can help the parents fulfill their spiritual role in the home. Discipleship should be part of what a church can assist with in young families. While a young family is participating in their local church, their children will be involved and spiritually growing. It must be said the church should not take the place of the home but add to it. Carson on the Great Commission stated, “Christianity must spread by an internal necessity or it has already decayed, for one of Jesus’ commands is to teach all he commands. Failure to disciple, baptize, and teach the peoples of the world is already itself one of the failures of our own discipleship.”¹⁰³ Reaching young families should be a priority for VBC to keep to the Great Commission. It could be stated that the Great Commission is not fulfilled when a person is reached but when a reached person is observing Christ’s commands. Evangelism brings an individual into the family of God. Understanding the role of the family according to Scripture allows for a spiritual home.

¹⁰² Gary L. McIntosh, *Growing God's Church: How People Are Actually Coming to Faith Today*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 73, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁰³ D. A. Carson, *Matthew*, (Grand Rapids: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2017), 737, <https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/lib/liberty/reader.action?docID=6166865>.

Discipleship is the continued growth of individuals and families in their faith to glorify God in their local church and everyday lives. The theological foundations are the motivations that drive the need for VBC to reach young families in the community. Evangelism, the role of the family, and Discipleship are important Scriptural truths and responsibilities. Acting on those Scriptural foundations is a motivating factor for this study.

Theoretical Foundations

In this action research project, the theoretical foundations based on the theological foundations will aid in understanding what has already been researched on this topic. These theoretical foundations will include the models of the attractional church and the missional church. Those models are concerned with evangelism, the role of the family, and discipleship. Both models will be contrasted in how they relate to reaching young families. While the models are broad in parameters, they are different. The attractional church model is concerned with perception and to an extent marketing the church so that non-Christians will come hear the Gospel. The missional church model is concerned with fulfilling the mission of the church and engaging non-Christians in everyday life as opposed to using the church as primarily an evangelistic tool. Both seek to evangelize and disciple but vary in their methods to bring about a transformational congregation. As Craig Ott stated, “There is no methodological shortcut to multiplying transformational churches. It will always entail the hard spiritual work of evangelism and discipleship done in ways that can be naturally reproduced and that lead to genuine transformation.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Craig Ott, *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation among All People* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 75, ProQuest Ebook Central.

The Attractional Model

The attractional church model has at its heart, the purpose of attracting people to come hear the Gospel. This is a highly pragmatic model of the local church, which does whatever it takes to attract people into the church. Andy Stanley overviews the mentality behind the environment of the attractional model,

When guests walk onto your campus for the first time, they will know something significant is going on. They will see the consistency. They will feel safe. For some, they will know immediately that yours is an organization they want to be a part of and that they want their children to take part in. Environment matters. So, take a fresh look at your ministry environments. Make them the best they can possibly be.¹⁰⁵

This is not just a model that appeals to what people want, but a model that people want to be a part of. This relates to young families, in that the attractional model will create an atmosphere that appeals to young families. This would include conferences for marriages and young families as well as extensive children's ministry programs. The attractional model would say that to gain young families, everything at church should be done to appeal to young families. This is the most common way that young families are brought to church, as the church has something for them. The danger of the attractional model is as Wilson states, "Attractional is certainly attractive. These kinds of messages, over time, communicate to seeker and believer alike that Christianity is about themselves, making the faith more about self-improvement or life enhancement—which are things we all want deep down. But are they the real message of Jesus?"¹⁰⁶ The weakness of the attractional model is longevity. As trends change, the church may not be able to keep up with

¹⁰⁵ Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 192, <https://app.logos.com>

¹⁰⁶ Jared Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 27, <https://app.logos.com>

them. Attracting young families will change throughout the years, while a church may not be able to change as rapidly.

The Missional Model

The missional model can be described as a church that is concerned with the mission of the church in relation to pleasing God in its method, with God's Word as the authority. On this model, Joseph Sliger wrote, "the mission of the church finds its basis in the doctrine of God—rather than within the doctrine of salvation or the church—God's mission births ecclesiology."

¹⁰⁷ In a sense the missional church is guided by God's Word to please Him. William A. Harmon defines this model as, "Missional Churches are Bible-based churches that allow the Word of God to shape them into the people God has called them to be."¹⁰⁸ The missional church reaches out with the Gospel and provides spiritual growth within based on God's Word. The primary concern of the missional church is the evangelistic mission. Nathan A. Finn and Keith S. Whitfield wrote defining that mission as, "The church is sent into the world by their Savior with an evangelistic calling: to proclaim that the God of all creation has mercifully made himself known through Jesus Christ and that there is forgiveness of sins and transforming grace available to all who enter his kingdom through repentance and faith."¹⁰⁹ This relates to young families in that if a church seeks to reach out to young families, the members need to go seek out young families and share the message of salvation with them. This can include internal and external events that allow the members to confront young families with the gospel. Often, members of a

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Matthew Sliger, "Attractional Church: The Impact of the Inner Life Of a Local Church On Corporate Mission in North America" (PhD diss., Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2017), 10.

¹⁰⁸ William A. Harmon, "Establishing, Presenting and Increasing Awareness of the Foundational Elements of Missional Church Life in King of Glory Lutheran Church in Williamsburg, Virginia" (DMIN diss., Regent University, 2020), 34.

¹⁰⁹ Nathan A. Finn, and Keith S. Whitfield, eds. *Spirituality for the Sent: Casting a New Vision for the Missional Church*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2017), 28, ProQuest Ebook Central.

missional church combine lifestyle, relational, and verbal evangelism to accomplish the mission. James W. Thompson notes that in Paul writings church members of various locations, “have no organized program of missions, they demonstrate a concern for evangelism as they communicate their faith to family and friends.”¹¹⁰ This applied to reaching young families, looks like the church members reaching out to young families that they know or are around in daily life. The weakness is that if the members are not motivated to share their faith, then people will not be reached. Under this model, the church service is more worship or edification orientated rather than evangelistic for the most part. This can lead to walk-in visitors

Comparison and Contrast

Both models seek to evangelize the lost, teach the saved, and equip the disciples. At the heart of each is scriptural basis, although this may be a difference based on interpretation. Nevertheless, both models seek to glorify God. Both models seek to aid individuals to the knowledge of God. However, both models are extremely different. The attractional church invites people to come in, while the missional church invites the Christians to go out. The attractional church has the worship service as the main evangelistic activity, while the missional church has its members going out prepared with the Gospel as its evangelistic activity. This inward, outward dynamic is the main difference. Scott Andrews observes, “missional behaviour that compels the whole church to reach a lost world as opposed to the inward model of attractional church that ‘hinders the power of multiplication’.”¹¹¹ The attractional church invites

¹¹⁰ James W. Thompson, *The Church According to Paul: Rediscovering the Community Conformed to Christ*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 247, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹¹¹ Scott Andrews, “The Use of the Term ‘dna’ as a Missiological Metaphor in Contemporary Church Narratives,” *Hervormde teologiese studies* 72, no. 2 (2016), <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/1849700253/fulltextPDF/34B200A3E8354C8BPQ/1?accountid=12085>.

people to come in, while the missional church invites the Christians to go out. Another major difference is the motivational approach. The attractional church is highly pragmatic, while the missional is concerned with upholding a right method as well as a good result. Stanley even states of his own attractional model, “We don’t want to become guardians of a previous generation’s approach to ministry even if we are the previous generation that created it. We know that eventually all our new and innovative ideas will become institutionalized.”¹¹² The attractional church will throw away any model or method in favor of one that works. What is usable today may not work tomorrow, and some ideas may be too far ahead. The missional church will keep any method or model that is right according to Scripture and not a complete product of the world or human wisdom. Wilson notes, “as we seek to do the good work of missionary contextualization, we have to make sure that we have not crossed lines into cultural accommodation, that we haven’t inadvertently adopted some of the values and appetites of our cultural contexts that stand in opposition to the Bible.”¹¹³ Another difference that is present is the idea of spiritual formation. The Attractional church would want to define what is a spiritually formed believer, which is a good question. Stanley’s model uses five faith catalysts, which he describes, “As you might expect, you won’t find this list anywhere in the Scriptures. Remember, this list is the result of what we’ve observed. We’ve made no effort to make the list complete or balanced.”¹¹⁴ However, these catalysts provide a direction for believers in Stanley’s model, with the idea that a teacher and the scriptures need to be present. For the missional model, Christopher

¹¹² Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 284, MyWSB.

¹¹³ Jared Wilson, *The Prodigal Church: A Gentle Manifesto Against the Status Quo* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 48, MyWSB.

¹¹⁴ Andy Stanley, *Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2016), 107, MyWSB.

Beard will provide the concept of spiritual formation. Beard notes, “Therefore, the missional concept of discipleship envisions spiritual formation and identity transformation originating before someone comes to faith in Christ, rather than after.”¹¹⁵ Though this sounds like demanding an unsaved person act like they are saved, it is not. Beard precedes this with the notion that “discipleship does not begin at the point of conversion, but rather at the point when a Christ-follower builds a relationship with another.”¹¹⁶ The differences between the two models are not in doctrine necessarily, but in the way it is communicated and used. Both see the importance of reaching the lost. Both also acknowledge that an individual can be saved at church. As Patrick W. T. Johnson notes that while preaching, “the gospel is proclaimed and the community is formed in its new identity as the people of God. By rehearsing the salvific mission of God in the world, the congregation is formed for its mission in the world.”¹¹⁷ Each model can bring people to Christ. The main differences are that attractional church is highly pragmatic, while the missional is concerned with upholding a right method as well as a good result. Both do concern themselves with recognizing the mission of sharing the Gospel.

Limitations of the Models

The limit with both models is that many times, both are present to some extent within a local church. The models are imperfect as they do not consider the local culture of a church or if there are many churches in the community already attempting both models. The attractional churches are only attractional for a certain amount of time. While the missional churches may

¹¹⁵ Christopher Beard, “Missional Discipleship: Discerning Spiritual-Formation Practices and Goals Within the Missional Movement,” *Missiology* 43, no. 2 (December 11, 2014), https://journals-sagepub-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/full/10.1177/0091829614563059?utm_source=summon&utm_medium=discovery-provider.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Patrick W. T. Johnson, *The Mission of Preaching: Equipping the Community for Faithful Witness*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 126, ProQuest Ebook Central.

last longer, if the church members or staff becomes apathetic, it does not continue working toward the mission. Both, according to the literature, need to be present for a church to be effective. The missional model is favored, but it does require the attractional to some extent. The theoretical foundations of the attractional and missional models do cover a wide array of evangelizing the lost and reaching people in the community. Both seek to add people to the church, especially young families. Another limit is that both models fail to accurately describe outlying types or blended types. With the advent of a pandemic shutting down most in person church services, all models encountered an unprecedented problem. Many went to online services, using social media and other means to reach others. All models of church had different ways of dealing with problems associated. Evangelism and discipleship for some was not a priority as much as just having a service available. Now that most are back to in person services, all of the technology used has added an extra dimension to reaching out by use of websites and social media. Both attractional and missional churches have incorporated this new dimension to their needs. However, most of the reaching out with this new dimension is done by staff or by appointed page managers. Sometimes websites do not reflect the tone of the ministry that they represent. This can lead to people visiting a church because of what is perceived online but can also lead to visitors not returning as perception and reality conflict. What model is correct or what blend of model that is right is not addressed by literature. Earley and Dempsey stated, “The test of whether a particular model is working, however, should be reflected in growing disciples, emerging leaders, and new churches planted for the kingdom and glory of God!”¹¹⁸ Ultimately the model that is correct is what honors God’s Word and what edifies the members in this local context.

¹¹⁸ Dave Earley, and Rod Dempsey, *Disciple Making Is ... : How to Live the Great Commission with Passion and Confidence*, (B&H Publishing Group, 2013), 59, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Conclusion

Each model values evangelism and discipleship, yet to a degree is dependent on church staff to do most of the evangelism and discipleship. However, as discussed in the theological foundations, the responsibility of evangelism and discipleship falls to the entire church. The two models demonstrate a need for clarity of mission and care for where people are in their lives. Both models may be unified to a certain extent, but they need to be applied in a local context. For VBC, the mobilization of the membership to reach young families in the community by sharing their faith wherever they may be, or by inviting them to VBC will balance the concept of a missional and attractional model. This mobilization requires education, equipping, and engagement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

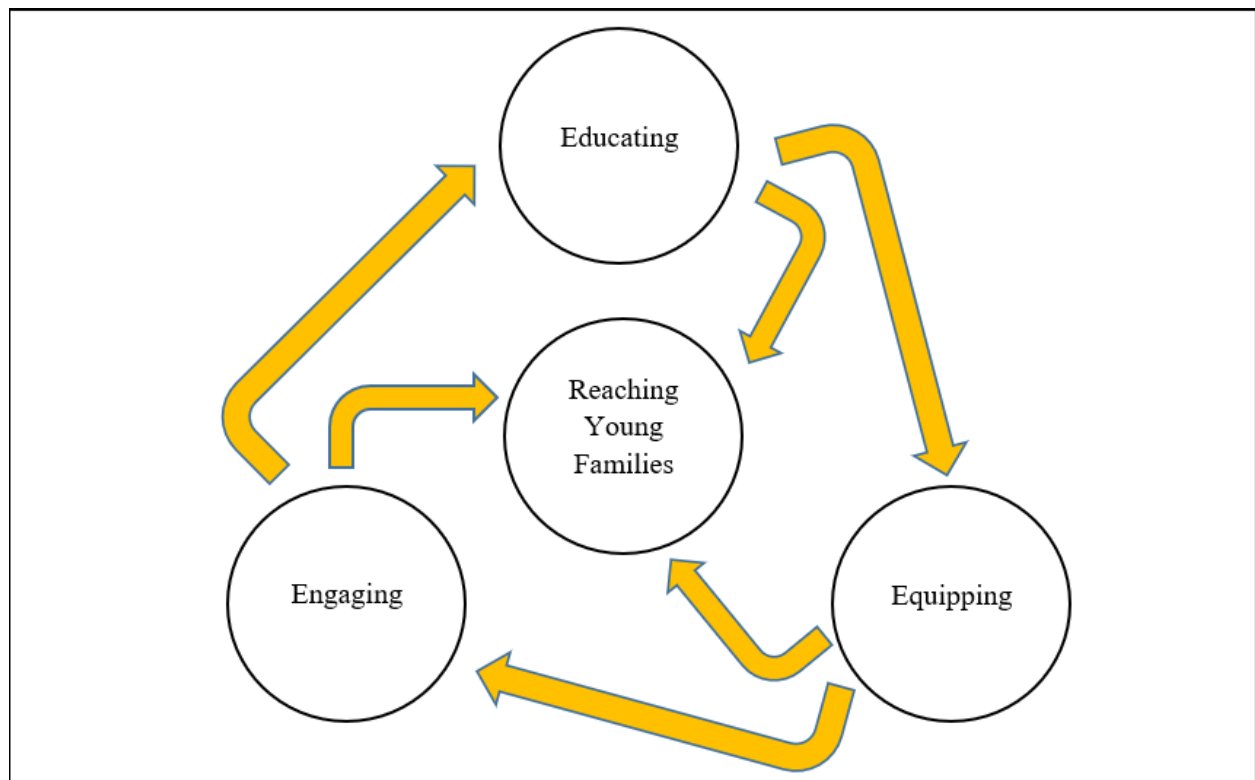
This chapter will present the order of intended events in this action research project. The method in this intervention will center on educating, equipping, and engaging the members of VBC to reach young families in the community. During the intervention, the researcher will use surveys, questionnaires, and record data for analyzation and triangulation. The method will be centered on two workshops designed to mobilize VBC members to reach young families in the community. The intervention design section covers the timeline and elements of the VBC young family initiative. This is a concept of what is supposed to happen. The implementation of the intervention section will convey a narrative form of how the intervention occurred and what changes were made in the process.

Intervention Design

The intervention design is based on a threefold method built on educating, equipping, and engaging the church membership to reach young families (see figure 1). This is designed to address the problem through information, mobilization, and motivation. The intervention is designed to use the current resources available at VBC. The intervention is designed with an assumption that if the individual member is trained, equipped, and engaged, they will reach young families with the gospel. Assuming that if the intervention is applied, those that are reached will reach others. This means that the cycle will restart. If results are not immediately seen, the priority on reaching others will still be a healthy pursuit for the membership. This design actuates VBC to reach young families in Weatherford. The workshop phase will train members to share their faith, and invite others to church by using testimony, literature, and special events at VBC to reach young families. Overall, the workshops will include studies on

Weatherford, how to share personal faith via testimony, how to use biblical theology in sharing faith, and how to use special events to invite young families to VBC using special events or items that meet needs of young families. The two workshops are designed to address the elements of educating, equipping, and engaging. Each element will be shown that it is related to reaching young families as illustrated by figure 1.

Figure 1. (Diagram showing relationship of Educating, Equipping, and Engaging to Reaching young families)



Each aspect of the intervention is designed to be an ongoing process that is pointed to reaching young families. These aspects do relate to each other and cannot be isolated completely from each other.

Items that are needed for this research project are visitor card data, outreach attendance data, initial survey, consent forms, a questionnaire for the young families Sunday school class, and a final survey. Each of these items are in the appendix and will be referenced specifically throughout this section. It is assumed that those items will provide a lens through which to view data to grasp the problem and effect of the intervention. Further supplies that are needed particularly for the workshops are: coffee, donuts, blank paper, and pens.

Participants in this study are the church members of VBC. This covers the initial survey, the two workshops, and the final survey. Other participants are specifically the young families Sunday school class for the questionnaire. The workshops are open to all VBC members as the intervention is focused on educating, equipping, and engaging members to reach young families. It is not known how many will attend the workshops. It is assumed that if the workshops are held on Saturdays, attendance may not be large. Those who attend might be more of the leadership in the church or the more involved members.

The timeline of events is centered on data collection, the workshops, and final data collection. The process is designed to take place in the Summer of 2022. See table 1 for the tentative timeline.

Table 1. (Phases, Timeframes, and Objectives).

Phases	Timeframe	Objective
Data collection	4-6 weeks	Acquiring visitor data, outreach attendance data, sending and receiving initial surveys; and sending and receiving the questionnaires.

Workshops -Educating -Equipping -Engaging	2-3 weeks total	Workshop 1 focused on Educating and first part of Equipping; Workshop 2 focused on second part of Equipping and Engaging.
Final data collection	1-2 weeks	Visitor card data over project period, outreach attendance, and final survey data.

This intervention design is purposed to address the problem that the membership of VBC does not conversationally share their faith with younger families in the community. The first objective in the intervention design is to analyze the data involved in who VBC is reaching. Components in this analyzation are visitor data, perception data, and opinion data. The visitor data shows the actuality of who is visiting VBC. Each visitor card will be categorized based on primarily age and family demographic. This study will analyze the cards from a year before the initial survey. This can show a trend of who has been visiting VBC in the past year. This will reveal the actuality of who is coming to VBC. The reasoning behind the limitation prior to the initial survey is that it is more of a control observation in that there is no way that VBC members would be inviting young families because of the intervention process as a whole. Visitor data collected for the final analysis includes any visitor card collected during the whole process from the initial survey to the final survey. Another data point would be to look at attendance numbers

for previous monthly church wide outreach to see if the amount is bolstered by the intervention workshops.

The first step is to inform those in leadership that are involved directly. Primarily, the Pastor should be informed as to the plan of the project. As the current Pastor is concerned with reaching the community, the project will proceed with his permission. During the project, he will be informed as to the schedule and overall results. Another person that should be informed is the teacher for the young families Sunday school class. It is this class that will be the subject of the questionnaire. Informing leadership will take place before the initial survey goes out. Ancillary to this is to speak to the secretary for access to visitor cards. As visitor cards are sensitive information, the cards themselves should not leave the church offices. In addition to gaining permission from the pastor is the reservation of the fellowship hall for the two workshops. Also, permission from the outreach director is required for access to the outreach attendance.

The initial survey will provide insight into what some of the members think about VBC reaching others and young families. Prior to the first survey an announcement email will be sent out (see Appendix A). This details when and where the survey is available and details regarding turning the consent form and survey separately. This survey is open to any VBC church member that is 18 and older. This large of a pool is selected for two reasons. First, the large pool provides viewpoint for a variety of church members. Second, the large pool provides more participants that are eligible to participate. It is assumed that since VBC has not done a survey, that most of the church members may not participate. However, because of the large pool of eligibility, the surveys that are filled out can be taken to represent the whole. As the initial survey is anonymous and open to all VBC members 18 and up, the viewpoints are expected to be various. A consent form and survey will be provided simultaneously with the first survey (See Appendices B and

C). The consent forms will be separated from the surveys to protect anonymity at turn in. The survey is made of statements designed to be answered in a Likert scale format by agreement scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The statements revolve around how the individual perceives the state of outreach and reaching young families at VBC. The data from the surveys will be compared with the visitor cards. Particularly the section of the survey concerned with reaching others. The surveys may agree or disagree with the visitor data. If there is a disagreement between the data, it can be assumed that there is a disconnect between members perception and the reality that is happening. If the data agrees, then the acknowledgement of VBC's problem exists in the mind of those surveyed. This is to reveal if there is awareness of the problem. The survey collection period will be two weeks. This can be extended for greater participation but should take place before the first workshop.

The questionnaires (see Appendix D) addressed to the young families' Sunday school class add a third dimension to the data analysis, opinion of the target group. With the questionnaire the same consent form (Appendix B) will be sent as well. Again, the consent forms and filled out questionnaires will be separated when they are turned in to protect anonymity. The questionnaires will reveal how young families feel about their demographic being reached. This is to compare with the visitor data and survey data to note the relationship between thoughts, feelings, and actions. Each data point provides clarity to the problem in its actuality, perception, and opinion. The questionnaire will be a two-week duration as well, so that families can take it home and fill it out. This foundation leads to the workshop aspect of the intervention.

The second objective of the intervention is to utilize two workshops focusing on the educating, equipping, and engaging of VBC to reach young families. This is the primary action of the intervention. The workshops will primarily focus on reaching others while at the same

time specifically reaching young families. The first workshop is designed to address the educational and testimony part of the equipping aspect. This will involve demographic studies, sharing the Gospel (biblical theology standpoint), and the use of testimony as a tool to share the Gospel. The second workshop is to focus more on the equipment and the engagement of the members. The workshops will be held in VBC's fellowship hall from 10:30 AM to about 12:00 PM. The fellowship hall is a large room complete with a kitchen. There are approximately eight round tables with seating for about 45-50 individuals. There is also room for more, but this is the usual set up. The workshops are designed to be more informal with instruction, assignment activity, and questions. Donuts and coffee will be provided as well at cost to the researcher. The purpose of the workshops is to provide an informal atmosphere to educate, equip, and engage VBC members to reach out to others and young families in the community. Each workshop will have instruction, a project, and open time for questions and thoughts. The instruction part of the sessions will cover material from chapter 2 in this project in a concise manner. This included the precedent literature themes of methods of evangelism, theology of evangelism, apologetics, hermeneutics of evangelism, lifestyle evangelism, corporate evangelism, relational evangelism, and reaching young families by ministry. The workshops will primarily adhere to the theological themes of evangelism, the role of the family, and discipleship. In each workshop there will be projects. These are designed to aid the participant in sharing the Gospel with others and young families in the community. These are for the participants, so any project completed will be taken home. The opportunity for questions and comments is purposed to introduce the concept of learning from others' thoughts, questions, and ways that they can share the Gospel. Notes will be taken about the workshop by the researcher involving the subject matter, attendance, and questions or thoughts shared at the end. Any other events during the workshops will be recorded

in the researcher's notes. For both workshops, any notes or projects are to be kept by the individual taking them. This is to aid in the retention of the workshop participants and so that they can utilize their projects. The workshops are designed to educate, equip, and engage the participants to reach young families in the community context of Weatherford. The intention is that the workshops will create a change that will result in increased family visitor data, increased outreach attendance, and increased confidence of sharing faith and inviting young families to church.

In the first Workshop the educational aspect of the intervention will answer the questions of knowing where we are, who we are, and what we need to do. Where we are addresses the community demographic. The demographic studies will involve data retrieved from the census studies done by the government for the past couple of years in Weatherford and in Parker County, Texas. This shows the rise in population in the community of VBC. Important facts will be the age groups in both the city and county. As the source is the census, it will only show a change that has occurred from 2020 to 2021 and some past changes in the last 10 years. The demographic studies aid in demonstrating the need to reach young families in the community. It is assumed that the census data will show a rise in population and imply a further rise in for 2022. Knowing who we are addresses understanding of Biblical theology in sharing the Gospel. This is the crucial part of the educating aspect of the intervention. It will cover the previous themes in Chapter 2. This reveals that Christians should be ambassadors, witnesses, and teachers of the Gospel. Each of those action titles are in Scripture to describe the way believers are to share Christ. The educational aspect keeps with the concept that the grand narrative of Scripture is the Gospel centered on redemption in Christ. The Individual's narrative is joined to this grand narrative at salvation. Knowing what we need to do addresses the method in which VBC

members share the Gospel. This is not just for corporate outreach, but for the everyday life of the individual members. Method highlights that individual Christians have a purpose to reach those around them. The idea is to train and prepare for an opportunity to share the Gospel, and not just use the monthly corporate outreach as the only opportunity. This transitions from the educational to the equipment at members disposal. The testimony is the first tool covered that a VBC member has. The testimony includes the Biblical concepts of teaching, being an ambassador, and witnessing what God has done in the individual's life. At the end of the first workshop, there will be a project for writing down testimony. The parameters will be that the testimony must first start with, "I was _____ until I placed my faith in Jesus by _____". The wide parameters are that only two sentences can be about the individual of the Testimony, the rest must be about Jesus, involve Scripture, and be focused on the message of salvation. On the back of the paper, attendees can write tools that they help them share the Gospel for the next workshop. After this the workshop will be opened for questions or discussion. Further elaboration may be required on the point of Biblical theology in relationship to sharing the Gospel. It is assumed that most questions or comments will revolve around the testimony portion of the workshop and its parameters. The testimony project is the foundation for the next workshop.

Attendance for the workshop will be noted numerically. During the time between the workshops, other supplies for the second workshop will need to be obtained. This includes whatever print or media is being used at VBC. Items such as tracts, booklets, and invites that are available to members of VBC. When these are introduced, it will be made clear that the tools in evangelism or inviting to church are less important than the actual testimony of the believer.

The second workshop will cover more tools for sharing the faith other than testimony. This will include literature, social media, and church events. This workshop will focus on tools that the individual members of VBC have access to. First this includes overviewing literature such as tracts, invites, Gospel booklets, and guides to share the Gospel. Second, understanding when and how to use each of those tools is vital to how VBC can best use and invest in more resources. Social media is another tool that will be highlighted. This is a very powerful and dangerous tool. Those present will need to understand that using social media to share the Gospel or to invite others to church events requires much wisdom in the way that either is presented. The testimony tool can be used in accordance with social media, or using the social media to invite others, specifically young families, to special events hosted by VBC. Another important tool is utilizing church events to invite young families to. VBC in recent months has had many special events geared toward young families and their needs. Utilizing the church as a place of worship, rest, and fellowship can aid in inviting young families to VBC. Another aspect of this is using the Sunday school program as another event to invite young families to. This is a small group that meets on Sundays that can minister greatly toward that demographic in the community. The final part of the second workshop will overview engagement. This involves praying for opportunities in everyday life, asking God to help, reading the Scripture for guidance in sharing faith, and making goals to use the tools and the knowledge. Those items will aid the church member in keeping motivated to use their knowledge and tools in their lives. Praying to God for opportunities to share the Gospel will center the focus of the individual toward God and remind them that God is involved when they share. Asking God to help in sharing the faith allows God to use and guide the individual in evangelism. The task of sharing the Gospel must involve God, and the realization that He is highly involved in working in individual's lives. Reading the

Scriptures to learn how to share faith helps the member to understand that the Bible can demonstrate the method of evangelism in the believer's life. This can mean reading in the New Testament to see how Christians shared their faith, or how salvation is described doctrinally. The Old Testament can provide wisdom in how the nature of God is described or God worked in individual's lives. The Bible is the source of sharing the Gospel and must be read to share it. Finally, setting goals in sharing the Gospel can provide direction and regularity that keeps the believer active in sharing the faith. The goals should not be involved with seeing a certain amount of people getting saved. This is not entirely wrong, but does tend to be results based, which leads to selling Jesus as a product. A goal should not be oriented to seeing results, but in presenting the Gospel. God is responsible for the results along with the individual who is hearing the Gospel. A goal should be action oriented with the focus on what is being done. Goals set will provide a measurable action that will encourage the member to be engaged with reaching others and young families in the community. For instance, good goals might be presenting the Gospel to someone at least once a week, inviting someone once a week, using literature on a regular basis, or even placing the testimony on social media.

The final objective is to see if the workshops or intervention processes have any effect. This involves surveys and data analyzation. After the workshops, the final intervention step is to use a survey again and look at visitor data from the past months during the intervention process. Questions in this survey will be related to those of the initial survey (see appendix E). This survey will see if the perception has changed. The final survey will also ask the attendees if they feel like they were able to help other VBC members in reaching others and young families. The visitor data is to be taken from the start of the process as the initial surveys questioned the outreach capabilities toward young families may have impacted members to reach out more.

Another data collection point will be attendance for the monthly church wide outreach meetings during and right after the intervention. The change that would be observable would be largely positive surveys, a higher percentage of young families in the visitor card data, and an increase in outreach attendance. It is assumed that if there is change in all three data points, then the intervention process functioned as designed. If there is any change in one or two data points, the intervention process may not be as effective as projected. If there is no data change, then the intervention process did not solve the problem, but did address it. It is assumed that at minimum, the VBC young family initiative will help VBC members to be more aware and active in reaching the community.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

This section of the VBC young family initiative will provide a narrative of how the research study was executed. The purpose of the study is to keep to the previous section of this chapter. The overall process can be categorized by permission, initial survey, visitor card data, questionnaire, outreach attendance data, first workshop, second workshop, final survey, visitor card data, and outreach attendance data. Most items have multiple facets, which will be detailed in this section. The results of the research will be covered in detail in chapter 4. This section will include overall notes about the data and process. The data triangulation is the visitor card data, initial survey data, and the questionnaire data. This analyzes perception of the large pool of members, the sentiment of the young family's class, and the actuality portrayed by the visitor card data. The attendance for the workshop and further outreach attendance data provides a clearer picture to isolate the activity of VBC reaching others, specifically young families. It was assumed if the intervention did not directly lead to VBC reaching young families that minimally

the workshops would be a tool to promote the need for outreach from members of VBC. This section provides a step-by-step account of the VBC young families initiative. What was not accounted for in the intervention design was the events at VBC during the initiative. While not planned on, the events that promoted reaching the community and young families was welcome. This aided the promotion of the workshops and the need for VBC to reach out.

Before the initial survey took place the Pastor and the young families Sunday school teacher needed to be informed as to the parameters of the project. The Pastor gave permission for this project to take place at VBC. The Pastor, who was voted in January of 2022, has been enthusiastically preaching on the need for VBC to impact the community. As the heart of the intervention is evangelistic, it is in line with part of VBC's purpose. Evangelism is one of the new mission words in effect at VBC. During the entire process, the Pastor has been informed as to what the intervention entails and is curious as to the findings of the project. Not only has he given permission but has also lent his support via announcements and helping with scheduling the workshops. The young families Sunday school teacher is informed of the project and gave permission for the questionnaires. Both men in leadership have cooperated and have expressed interest in the findings of the process. The church secretary did cooperate in getting the visitor cards. The cards did not leave the church office for security purposes.

The initial survey announcement was sent out via church email announcement. This went out the Friday (May 27, 2022) before the Sunday the Surveys go out (May 29,2022). The collection for the consent forms and surveys was due by June 8th. The surveys would be available at the welcome desk at the entrance to the church and the turning in location of the separate forms would be at designated trays behind the welcome desk. The announcement was met with a few questions as VBC has not done any surveys in its history. The questions were informational

in nature requiring the same information present on the consent forms and surveys. None of the initial verbal response was negative before the survey was made available.

Initial surveys with consent forms were made available. Initially there were 9 participants. The deadline was extended a further two weeks to increase participation. The next group that turned surveys in was 6. The total number of participants in the initial survey was 15. This is a lower number than assumed but can indicate a view of outreach and young families held by the congregation. The surveys and consent forms were separated so that anonymity was maintained. The initial surveys were in the format of a Likert scale. Data was analyzed based on each statement of the Likert scale. On the scale a 5 indicates strong agreement, 4 indicates agreement, 3 indicates undecided, 2 indicates disagreement, and 1 indicates strong disagreement. The statements cover the themes of personal evangelism efforts, personal attendance, or willingness to attend outreach type events, and belief of efficacy of VBC to reach others and young families in the community. The statements over personal evangelism efforts are structured to guide the individual participant's mind to evaluate themselves. Those statements are not designed to manipulate the participant into agreeing with the problem of this research project. Personal evangelism statements reveal what the participant perceives about themselves in relation to reaching others and church outreach (corporate) involvement. The statements regarding outreach attendance and willingness to attend outreach workshops are designed so that the participant can indicate current involvement in corporate outreach and future desire to learn more about outreach and reaching young families. The statements referring to VBC's efforts in outreach and reaching young families in particular serve to allow the participant to indicate what they think about corporate efforts. The surveys are designed for the individual to share what they perceive anonymously between themselves, evangelism, and VBC. The survey notes the

relationship between the personal and corporate aspects of outreach and evangelism. The overall result was that most of the participants do feel confident in sharing their faith, most do not attend outreach related events at VBC, and most believe that VBC is reaching young families. When analyzed with the visitor data prior to the initial survey from the past year, the survey data does conflict with visitor data. This would mean that there is a conflict between perception and reality. As stated in forthcoming paragraphs the visitor data indicates that VBC visitors that are categorized as young families are rare.

The visitor data over the past year prior to the research project is made of 66 visitor cards. As the exact numbers and data will be discussed in the next chapter, this section provides an overall view. Of those 66, 8 are marked within the age group of 20-35. Of these, only 2 listed immediate children. This indicates that the reality is that VBC is not reaching young families in the community. Even if the age bracket for young families is moved to include 20–45-year-olds, there are 23 cards with 6 indicating families and 13 listing that children are in the home. The large bracket still indicates that VBC is not reaching young families in the community. One limitation to this data point is that it only reveals information for those who filled out visitor cards. For this study the visitor cards are assumed to represent actuality, or an indicator of actuality. The data revealed a reality that the researcher was made aware of, while those surveyed and those who answered the questionnaire were not aware of. This relates that VBC is not largely aware of the problem. Perception and feeling conflict with reality. This adds another layer to the problem at Victory Baptist church is that most of the membership does not conversationally share their faith with younger families in the community. Based on this data collection process, VBC is not reaching young families. The goal of the workshops was to address this problem.

Questionnaires were given to the young families Sunday school class along with the consent forms one week after the initial survey started. The collection of the questionnaires lasted two weeks and had 5 participants. This is most of the class. The overall feedback was that VBC is somewhat reaching young families and that it could be better. Most believed that having events related to ministering to young families would help VBC reach more young families. All agree that children's (18 years old and lower) ministries aid in young families coming to VBC. The tone of the questionnaires was that VBC is capable to reach young families but needs some improvement in this specific outreach demographic. The theme that VBC can reach young families with current outreach efforts is prevalent in the questionnaires. However, the majority acknowledge that small groups, evangelism preaching, and outreach events focused on families would make VBC more effective. The questionnaires reveal that the young family participants feel like VBC has helped their families yet needs to do more to reach other young families in the community. While acknowledging that VBC does need to reach young families, the questionnaires for the most part indicate that the participants believe that VBC is/has reached out to young families in the community. This to a degree conflicts with the visitor data from the past year.

To view the effectiveness of the workshops, another data dimension was added, church-wide outreach attendance. This is taken over the period of eight months before the initial survey and is missing the December record as outreach was canceled for that month. It reveals that the average attendance during those months was about 12. This reveals that most of the membership is either not able, does not care, or does not know that church wide outreach exists. This is tied to the problem that VBC is not reaching young families specifically. While outreach attendance is not tied directly, it does reveal the amount of people who are concerned or invested in corporate

outreach. This also establishes a further look in the problem. The majority of VBC is not participating in scheduled corporate outreach endeavors. This does not totally indicate a lack of participation as individuals do not need a regularly scheduled time to share the Gospel or reach out to a young family. However, it can indicate that outreach is a lower priority for most members of VBC. The workshops were designed to promote outreach attendance, and to aid members in promoting outreach attendance among other church members.

Prior to the first workshop, an announcement was about 3 weeks in advance in the Church services. The day before the workshop a remind text from the church was sent out as to the location and time of the workshop. The first workshop took place on July 9th at 10:30AM. This took place in the VBC fellowship hall. Coffee and donuts were provided. The total attendance for this workshop was 12, a few attendees had expressed that other VBC members intended to attend but were not able to due to a variety of events. This first session introduced the aspects of educating, equipping, and engaging in relation to reaching others and young families in the community. The first session did cover the educating and the first part of equipping. The educating steps of “where we are”, “who we are,” and “what we need to do” were covered in detail. The first element in the workshop was the data of the community. Specifically, this was the demographic data of Weatherford and Parker County that shows the increase of population over the past couple of years (covered in detail in the next chapter). In summary the census data showed an increase in the period of 2020-2021 of 10% in Weatherford, and a 5% increase in Parker County¹¹⁹. The next step of educating that was covered was the concept of who an individual Christian is in the lens of Biblical theology. Thus, the Gospel was defined as the person and work of Jesus as the whole story of the Bible. The grand narrative of Scripture

¹¹⁹ “QuickFacts Weatherford City, Texas,”
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/dashboard/weatherfordcitytexas/PST045221>.

centers on Jesus. Attached to this explanation was that when a person places their trust in Jesus, their individual story is brought into the grand story of the Gospel. This is redemption, God buying back the individual based on Jesus' Person and Work. Scripture covered in the transition between educating and equipping was 2 Corinthians 5:17-21, Acts 1:8, and Matthew 28:18-20. Those passages indicate that the believer works as a teacher, ambassador, and a witness to the grand narrative of Scripture that his life becomes a part of at salvation. The theme that God uses His followers to share His Gospel was developed in a similar Biblical theology method. For example, in John 1:40-41, Andrew brought Peter to Jesus. Later in the same chapter, Philip brought Nathanael to see Jesus. What would constitute the first church was founded on men bringing others to meet the Messiah. It was at this point that the first tool (equipping), the testimony, was covered. It was noted that the Apostle Paul used his testimony (Acts 22 and 26) to share his faith repeatedly. The testimony part of the first workshop constituted the researcher sharing his testimony in conjunction with the Gospel and Scripture. A blank paper and pen was provided to each in attendance so that they could write their testimony down. The rules of the exercise were, "I was _____ until I placed my faith in Jesus by _____". Before questions were taken, the last exercise in preparation for the next workshop was that on the back of the testimony sheet, those in attendance could write what they thought some other outreach tools could be. Finally, questions and comments were taken. Many asked questions that initiated answers and discussions. The first of these was to elaborate on the testimony exercise. The answer was that the exercise in writing the testimony should quickly go from the life of the Christian to Christ. When sharing the message of salvation with the testimony, use the first person to demonstrate how the individual got saved. The next question was the relationship between using the law and sharing the Gospel.

This was answered by stating that if one is using their testimony, they should state that all are guilty and need Jesus. The only difference between a Christian and a non-believer, is that the Christian knows Jesus. The question was rephrased to balance condemning sin and condoning sin. The answer stated by the researcher and others in the workshop was that the Christian should not avoid condemning sin but should point to the fact that everyone is a sinner and needs Jesus. One discussion revolved around keeping on track when sharing the Gospel by using the tracts that are used by VBC to share the Gospel (see appendix F). This also sparked a discussion on using tracts that involve testimonies of our members as well. Another discussion was that the Christian should listen to the non-believer in any conversation and not treat them as anything other than an individual. The last discussion mentioned the role of the Holy Spirit and His work in evangelism. This was brought up in view of sharing a testimony and involving Scripture with it. After the first workshop, several attendees mentioned the helpfulness of having a workshop. The lower-than-expected attendance may also be taken to mean that many VBC members are content with outreach efforts toward the community and young families despite the visitor card data. The first workshop lasted approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes in total.

The second workshop took place on July 16th at 10:30AM in the fellowship hall at VBC with coffee and donuts. This was preceded by a remind text from VBC the same as the first workshop. The total attendance was 13, with 2 leaving before the question and comments time. The increase of attendance was slight yet did indicate that attendees did have previous scheduling conflicts. This workshop covered the equipping and engaging aspects of reaching others and young families. The Scriptural foundation for this workshop was based in Philippians 2:13-16, Romans 10:13-17, and 1 Corinthians 3:5-8. The second workshop began with a review of the first workshop and focusing on the testimony project. This transitioned to the equipping

aspect, starting with God's greatest tool for evangelism: the individual Christian. This was the combination of understanding that God has given each individual Christian the lifestyle, experiences, circumstances, and relationships for the purpose of sharing the Gospel. It was stated that the most important equipment for reaching others and young families is the Christian himself. This was designed to be lens that every outreach tool was to be viewed through. The method (tools) should not be as important as the message. The believer's manner of life, relationships, compassion, and verbal testimony are God's best tool to share the Gospel with others. The first tangible tool that was covered was literature. This involves tracts, booklets, and invites. A brief overview of current and past resources at VBC was given. This was to mention many of the items that workshop attendees may not be aware of. As mentioned at the end of the first workshop, it was mentioned that literature can be used to keep on track when sharing the Gospel with someone, or in the event a conversation may not take place. The power of God's Word in any Gospel literature was referenced, drawing from Romans 10:13-17. The next tool that was overviewed was social media. This was mentioned from the standpoint that it is a powerful tool, but a dangerous one. The ways that it could be used were highlighted such as: sharing a Gospel video, a testimony, or highlighting a special event at church. Each item that can be used on social media has a far teaching affect. Caution with social media was relayed as social media can devolve into debate and arguing. The major danger of social media that was covered was that Christians often argue with each other in front of the lost, which does not help the cause of Christ. Another tool that workshop attendees learned about was church events. Using the special events that VBC has throughout the year can help someone come to church, where they will hear the Gospel. The example that was used in the workshop is VBC's Family nights on the porch in July. This is a biblical family foundation series that the Pastor is going through on

Wednesday nights followed by fellowship and fun outside. This was demonstrated to be an event that can minister to families, particularly young families, in the community. Regular church events were mentioned as well including children's ministries, youth ministries, and Sunday school classes for all ages. Regularly scheduled events are tools to reach the community. The variety of services and classes should appeal to a wide array of people. Before moving to the engagement aspect, a brief overview of reaching young families was covered. This was to draw on everything in the workshops to the task of reaching young families. It was concluded that reaching young families is a necessity for VBC considering the population statistics. Events are a large part in reaching young families as they need a place for their children and themselves to grow spiritually and in fellowship with others. Another tool to reach young families is that VBC has a private Christian school, VBA. This appeals to many young families seeking to remove their children from public school. The last part of the instructional segment of the workshop was the engagement aspect of reaching others and young families. This included a study of understanding that setting goals is key to keeping motivated to reach the lost. It was mentioned that goals should not be concerned with reaching a specific number of people accepting Christ as their Lord and Savior but should be concerned with the effort of sharing the Gospel. Practical goals that were mentioned were: reaching out to a neighbor over the period of a month, leaving or handing out a set amount of Gospel literature, sharing your testimony with someone you know who is not saved, posting a Gospel video or testimony on social media, inviting someone you know to a special event or regular Sunday, or inviting the young family across the street to Church. This transitioned to the projects of this workshop. The first project was to list out tools that the individual had that could be used in reaching others and young families in the community. Of the list, they were to circle one or two items and write the many ways they could

use that tool. The second project was to write some measurable goals down like what was stated in the workshop. After this, the questions and comments time began. The first question asked the viability of a kit that had a multitude of outreach tools that a church member could keep in their vehicles as sort of a reinforcement of goals via utility availability. The comments tied this to the concept that Jesus called his Disciples “fishers of men”. In a way the various tools provide a multitude of ways to “fish for men”. Several comments contained personal experiences with different kinds of tracts. Storybook types, Romans road method, and color-coded Bibles were mentioned. Another stream of comments addressed the need to combine testimony with church events. Events that have personally helped the individual can be referred to to show that the church has met a personal need. A question that surfaced after this was asking for an example of a Gospel video. The researcher personally referred to the Story¹²⁰ app as one of the best tools of this kind. The final comment was the role of prayer in keeping motivated to share the Gospel. This workshop lasted 1 hour and 15 minutes. The last item in the session was to hand out the final survey.

The final survey was handed out to those in attendance to the last workshop. This was to reveal if those in attendance to the workshop were affected by it and how they currently feel about reaching others and young families. The first plan was to release the final survey in a similar fashion to the initial survey, yet to gain a more in depth look at the participants of the workshops and the workshops’ efficacy, this group was chosen for the final survey. The final survey was smaller than the initial, but more targeted in relation to capability of the individual in evangelism toward young families. Other statements included referred to the ability of VBC in reaching the community and how the individual felt towards being helped, equipped, and

¹²⁰ “The Story,” <https://thestoryfilm.com/>.

engaged in evangelism toward others and young families. The fewer questions were arranged in a Likert scale format. There was a total of 10 participants, as 2 attendees left the final workshop before it was over due to a scheduling conflict. The consensus of the final survey was that the workshops were helpful and that the members felt that they could help other VBC member in reaching others and young families. Only 2 were undecided about whether the workshops helped the individual. Overall, the workshop attendees believed that VBC can reach the community, and that the workshops were a help to them individually. The final survey data collection was purposed to compare to the visitor data and outreach attendance data in the next sections to provide triangulation between data points.

Visitor data compiled from May to around the end of July 2022 provided a picture of who has been visiting since the start of the study. The implementation may not have affected who has been visiting, as much of the church activity in July was centered on ministering to families, specifically young families. In the duration of the intervention there has been several events that can bring young families to VBC such as vacation Bible school, the VBC Independence Day cookout, and the family nights on the porch. These events were not expected in the design of the project, yet they are helpful in reaching young families in the community. The initial survey may have sparked some action, as any research project that requires survey and observation begins to affect what happens as people become aware of the project. There was a total of 8 visitor cards from this time. This was to be expected to be a lower number as the first data collection for visitor cards spans a timeframe of about a year. Half of the visitor cards were families or listed immediate children. Most of the age groups were 36–45-year-olds. This is a percentage increase, yet it could have been the result of a church-wide push to invite families to church. The intervention was accompanied with many church activities such as our vacation bible school day

camp, Independence Day cookout, and family nights on the porch. The intervention did bring attention to inviting young families to VBC. The participants in the surveys, questionnaires, and workshops were encouraged to do so. The visitor data from during and after the intervention indicates an increase in percentage of visitors that are families with children.

The final outreach attendance data for May, June, and July of 2022 was averaged at around 15 attendees. This indicates an overall increase. Throughout the Summer, VBC has been challenged to reach out to the community through the preaching alongside the intervention steps of the surveys, questionnaires, and workshops. While workshop attendance was lower than expected, it did bring awareness that VBC needs to reach the community, specifically young families. Having the workshops primarily benefitted the attendees and secondarily promoted outreach in the eyes of the church. The workshops were announced and scheduled, those who could not make it or did not attend, could see that outreach has become important.

The implementation of the VBC young family initiative approached a more recent problem in VBC's history. The initial data revealed that VBC is not reaching young families in the community, yet the survey and questionnaires largely did not recognize this problem. While a few did, the data indicates that most VBC members were not aware of the problem. The Workshop attendance and final survey data revealed that participants felt that the workshops did help, but that VBC is able to reach the community at present. Visitor data and outreach attendance data during the intervention process revealed a percentage increase of families visiting VBC and an increase of outreach attendance. The unaccounted special events at VBC may have affected the data collection. It is assumed that at the least, the VBC young family initiative would bring awareness to the problem. At the most, the VBC young family initiative adequately mobilized VBC or part of VBC to reach young families. The data collection process

revealed that VBC is not reaching young families. Adding to this it was further revealed that most of the membership was not aware of this problem. The surveys and questionnaires that revealed the unawareness, did bring attention to the problem in an indirect manner. The workshops were attended by a lower number than expected but promoted. Outreach attendance before the intervention was sparsely attended, while during and after there was a marked rise in attendance. The final survey affirmed that the workshop did help those who attended. It was during all of this that several events took place at VBC that aid in reaching young families and promoting fellowship. The result of the VBC young family initiative is that it did not fully accomplish its goals yet did bring the awareness of reaching young families and the community to the attention of part of the congregation. The problem was addressed, but not completely solved. The next chapter contains the exact numbers and results of the VBC young family initiative.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The results of the VBC young family initiative will be covered in detail in this chapter. The data points of visitor card data, outreach attendance data, initial survey data, final survey data, and questionnaires will provide an in-depth view of what transpired before, during, and after the implementation of the VBC young family initiative. This chapter follows the order of events that took place in chapter 3 in its presentation of data preceded by an overview of the data tools that were used. The two main sections of this chapter is involves preliminary data and post-workshop data. The resulting data from both time periods will be illustrated through charts and graphs in this chapter to demonstrate any changes resulting from the intervention. This provides a metric with which to determine the efficacy of the VBC young family initiative. The changes expected were a higher percentage of young families visiting VBC, a higher attendance in outreach, and a higher level of confidence demonstrated by surveys. The surveys and questionnaires will reveal what members of VBC think and feel before the intervention. The hard data collection provides analysis of results, alongside to measuring percentages of increase or decrease. The important processes of the data collection were the hard data collection, questionnaire collection, and survey collection. Also demonstrated in this section is the outreach attendance before and during the VBC young family initiative. Ultimately the result of the VBC young family initiative was that it did not solve the problem completely but did bring awareness and addressed the problem. This section will show that there was a slight increase in some of the data points, yet those can be due to several of the events at VBC targeting young families and the young family initiative together.

The data acquired before, during, and after the VBC young family initiative used surveys, attendance records, and questionnaires. All participants in surveys and questionnaires were

anonymous, and strict procedures were followed to maintain anonymity. Both surveys and questionnaires were attached to consent forms, which were separated before data analysis. The initial and final surveys are in a Likert scale format. This type of survey was used to allow participants to state level of agreement with statements. This frees the participant from having to answer questions directly and protects the research from manipulating results in asking questions. The questionnaires were fill-in-the-blank questions that pertained to how the participants saw VBC reaching young families. The questions were not guiding but were designed to understand the point of view of the participant. The data collection involving attendance focused on demographic age groups and numbers. Names were not recorded in the data collection process, but age groups and households listing children were recorded numerically. The focus of the data is to see a percentage change in the visitor card category, outreach attendance category, and confidence level of participants resulting from the workshops.

Preliminary data

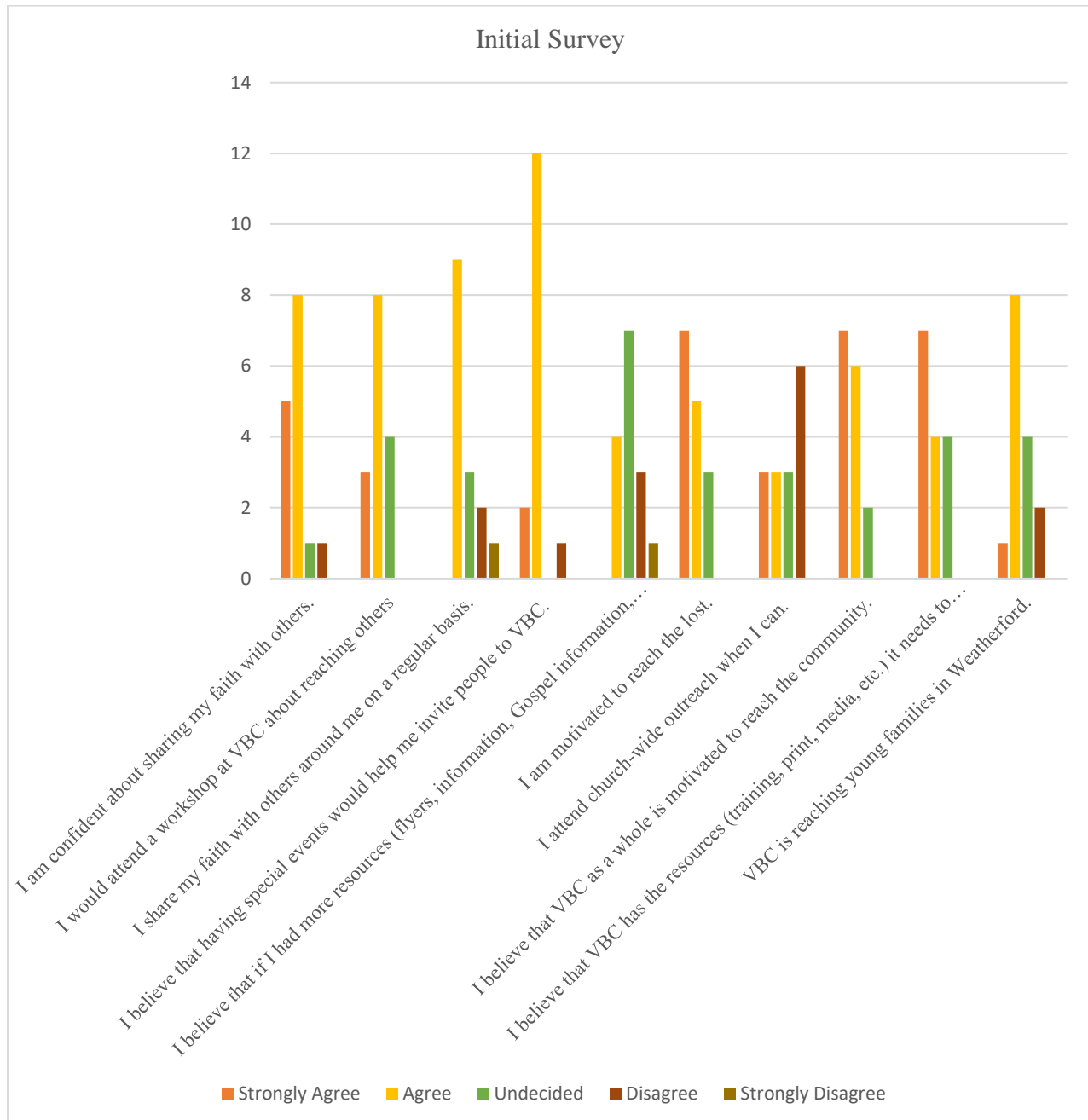
The beginning of the VBC young family initiative involved the initial survey, visitor card data collection, questionnaires, and outreach attendance. After those data studies, workshop attendance will be overviewed. The purpose of this initial data collection was to analyze the problem and to provide metrics to measure change for the post-workshop data collection. The initial survey and questionnaires established what was the perception and the feelings of VBC members towards VBC's ability to reach young families and others in the community. Visitor card data established the reality of the problem by looking at who is visiting VBC and how many of those recorded visits were young families. In addition, outreach attendance data provides a lens with which to view overall participation of the membership in corporate outreach. This

metric added a dimension to the problem, revealing the level of participation in reaching young families and others in the community. Workshop attendance also provides a view of the level of participation in the initiative to further analyze the post-workshop data points.

The first data point is that of the initial survey. This was announced via email and was available first for a period of 2 weeks. As participation was not high in the initial 2 weeks, 2 more weeks were added to the data collection. By that time there was a total of 15 participants who were at least 18 years old and members of VBC. This survey was taken to see what the perception of the membership was toward individual evangelistic efforts, VBC's evangelistic efforts, motivation for outreach, and if VBC is reaching young families. While participation in this survey was less than expected, it is assumed that the data represents the perception of the majority of VBC. This assumption originates from the tendency of those involved at VBC will want to give their input, particularly those involved in outreach. The assumption that there would have been more participants was based on the advent of announcements on the survey, and that members would want to voice their perceptions if anonymous. While the amount of participation was not as high as assumed, the data provides an overall perception.

In the analyzation of the initial survey, the points of strongly agree and agree are combined. In the illustrations of the survey, those points will be separate. The initial survey data (see graph 1) reveals that the perception of 60% (9 out of 15) of the participants agreed or strongly agree that VBC is reaching young families in Weatherford. This raises a main issue with the visitor card data (illustrated later in this section) as VBC is not reaching young families in the community as demonstrated later in this chapter. The perception of most participants is that there is no problem as recognized by the researcher. This issue did affect the outcome of the study and will be demonstrated throughout the results of the initiative.

Graph 1. (Initial Survey data).



There is a disconnect between what is happening and what is perceived. Initial surveys addressed the participants perspectives on current educating, equipping, and engaging efforts at VBC. The nature of these statements applied to the individual participant and the corporate aspect of outreach by VBC. The most (totaling 13 of 15) agreed to and strongly agreed to

statements were, “I am confident about sharing my faith with others,” and “I believe that having special events would help me invite people to VBC.” This indicates that participants feel that they can share their faith, yet also feel that more special events would aid in inviting others to church. The least agreed with statement (6 out of 15) was, “I attend church-wide outreach when I can.” This was later confirmed by the outreach attendance data being lower. The most undecided statement for the participants was, “I believe that if I had more resources (flyers, information, Gospel information, etc.) that I would be able to communicate my faith and my church to others.” Overall, the participants answered positively to the questions. Most of the statements were answered with strongly agree or agree. The perception of the participants was that they can share their faith, they believe that more VBC events can aid in outreach, they are undecided about having more resources, and that they mostly do not attend church-wide outreach or are undecided about attending church wide outreach. It seems that the participants believe that they can reach others, but not to the point of attending church wide outreach. The initial survey revealed a willingness to attend an outreach workshop, yet the participants were mostly in agreement (7 at strongly agree, 4 at agree, and 4 at undecided) with the statement that VBC has training, print and media to reach others. The conflict is that if VBC has the training, print, and media to reach the community, why attend a workshop? While this can indicate support for trying something new, it seems redundant to attend a workshop or workshops if VBC already is reaching young families and if VBC at present has the training and resources. The participants mostly felt that they were confident about sharing their faith, did share their faith, and are motivated to reach the lost, but for the most part disagree or are undecided about corporate outreach attendance. This slippage could have been caused by be the tendency to answer based on how the participants will want to be perceived even if anonymity is maintained.

The initial survey revealed that the participants perceive that themselves and VBC are reaching others and young families. This was an unexpected result as the problem in the VBC young family initiative is exactly the opposite. The visitor card data revealed the problem, yet the initial survey uncovers another problem as the participants were unaware of the problem that VBC is not reaching young families. This initial survey demonstrated an inconsistency. This inconsistency was that most participants are willing to attend an outreach workshop, yet most do not attend church-wide outreach or are undecided about that. This can demonstrate that the participants feel that corporate outreach is not a priority for them or that they think that it is not effective. The willingness to attend the workshop also did not match up with participants feeling mostly that they have the motivation, confidence, and do share their faith. While this may indicate curiosity, it denotes that the participants are wanting more discourse regarding outreach, more events at VBC, but not necessarily more tools for outreach. Again, this can be an indicator of the tendency to record what the participants want to believe about themselves. The results of the initial survey were not expected. It was assumed that the surveys would demonstrate agreement with what the visitor card data had revealed. As stated, this led to a revelation that the researcher was aware of that the participants were not.

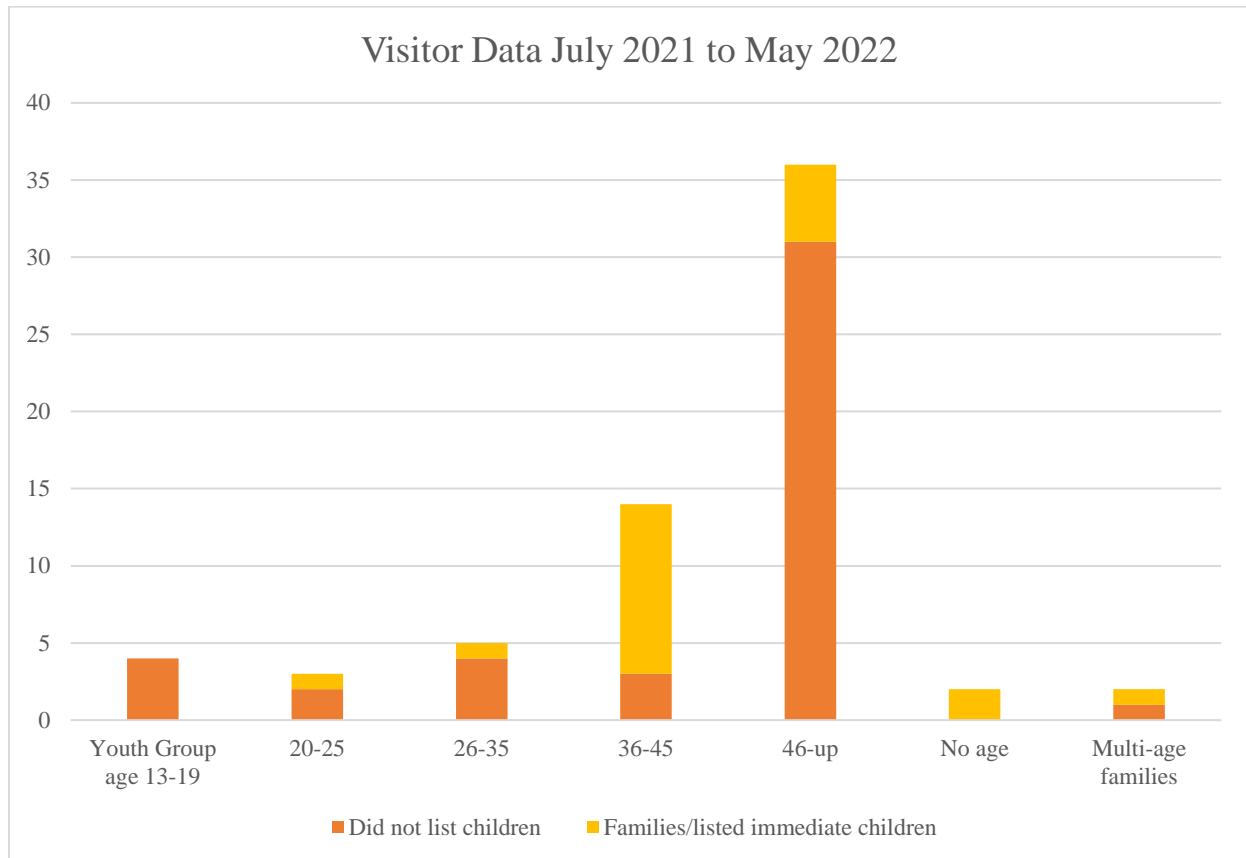
The second data point is the visitor card collection data from July 2021 to May 2022 (see graph 2). This timeline is prior to any study or workshop of the VBC young family initiative. This creates a view of data that was unobserved to produce a record of what was happening without VBC members being aware of research. The initial survey and announcement could affect the data as any known observation in such research can. At VBC, visitor cards are filled out usually by first time guests of VBC. Not all guests are willing to share information. This can lead to a slippage of data as some visitors who would fit into the category for young families

may not fill out a card, or if they do, they might not list their children. Most guests who do fill out a visitor card are interested in the church. As filling out information will be met with some response. Using the visitor card data does eliminate visitors who may be visiting from out of town or passing through. For this study the visitor cards demonstrate who is visiting VBC. It is assumed that there are more visitors yet filling out a card can indicate a level of interest. This creates a data point that can be tracked and categorized.

In this section of data analysis, the visitor cards are prior to the initial survey and reveals that VBC is not reaching young families in the community. Of 66 visitor cards, 45 were individuals and 21 were families. The cards were separated into those categories based on if immediate children were listed. Most visitors were individuals, not families. This demonstrates that VBC is not reaching families in the community. This means that VBC is certainly not reaching young families. According to the visitor card data, 36 visitors during the period are aged 46 and up, creating most of the card data. While it is possible for this demographic to be a young family, the data demonstrates that of those 36, 5 noted immediate children.

The age groups that are young families range from 20 to 35. This group (only 8 visitor cards) represents about 12% of all visitor cards. In those two categories, there is only 2 families (listed immediate children) present. Of all 66 cards, only 21 listed immediate children. This makes up about 31% of all visitor cards, which on the surface is not an extremely low number. However only 3% of all visitor cards can be categorized as young families (aged 20-35 listing immediate children). The conclusion from this data is that VBC is not reaching young families in Weatherford or is reaching a very small amount of them.

Graph 2. (Visitor Data from July 2021 to May 2022).



The graph illustrates the age groups of the visitor cards and the number of listed individuals and listed families per age group. This data is foundational in demonstrating the problem at VBC. This is considered the reality data alongside with outreach attendance, while the survey and questionnaire represent perception and feeling respectively.

The questionnaires provided what was being felt by the young families Sunday school class. In all there were 5 participants from the class. The processes that were identified in the questionnaires were current outreach to young families by VBC, how VBC has personally ministered to the participants' families, thoughts about how VBC can reach young families, feelings about the motivation of VBC to reach young families, and the role of events and children's ministries in reaching young families. Only 1 questionnaire out of 5 was overall

negative toward most processes such as VBC is not reaching young families in the community. The other 4 questionnaires were overall positive yet indicated that more could and should be done. While the visitor data does indicate that VBC is not reaching young families, the questionnaires indicated that VBC is somewhat doing so. This again could be the result of the tendency to answer based on how the participants will want to be perceived even if anonymity is maintained. While most questions were answered positively, the answers did contain insight that would improve current efforts. Some of these insights were gained by the participants stating that more activities, training, and events would aid VBC in reaching young families in the community. While the positive answers affirm current efforts, the feelings of “more could be done,” indicate discontent with the current efforts. In the questionnaires, the positive points were tied to the potential reach of VBC toward young families. Questionnaires referred to VBA, the children’s church, Sunday school classes, nursery, youth group, vacation Bible school day camp, and special events as items that aid young families at VBC. While those items were mentioned as having potential, the questionnaires indicated that those were semi-stagnant. There was a variety of answers to “What do you think that VBC can do to aid church members in reaching young families?” The answers ranged from “more activities” to “use more technology” to “hold committee functions on youth”. Most mentioned having small groups focused on reaching young families. The questionnaires revealed that while most young families at VBC do feel like the church is reaching young families and ministering to them, a lot more could be done. On the question of, “Do you feel that the membership of VBC as a whole is motivated to reach young families?” The answers varied from a “no” to “yes, somewhat” to “when we focus on family gatherings”. The overall belief of the participants in the questionnaire was that the heart of VBC wants to reach young families, but does not due to a lack of focus, community, or is too busy.

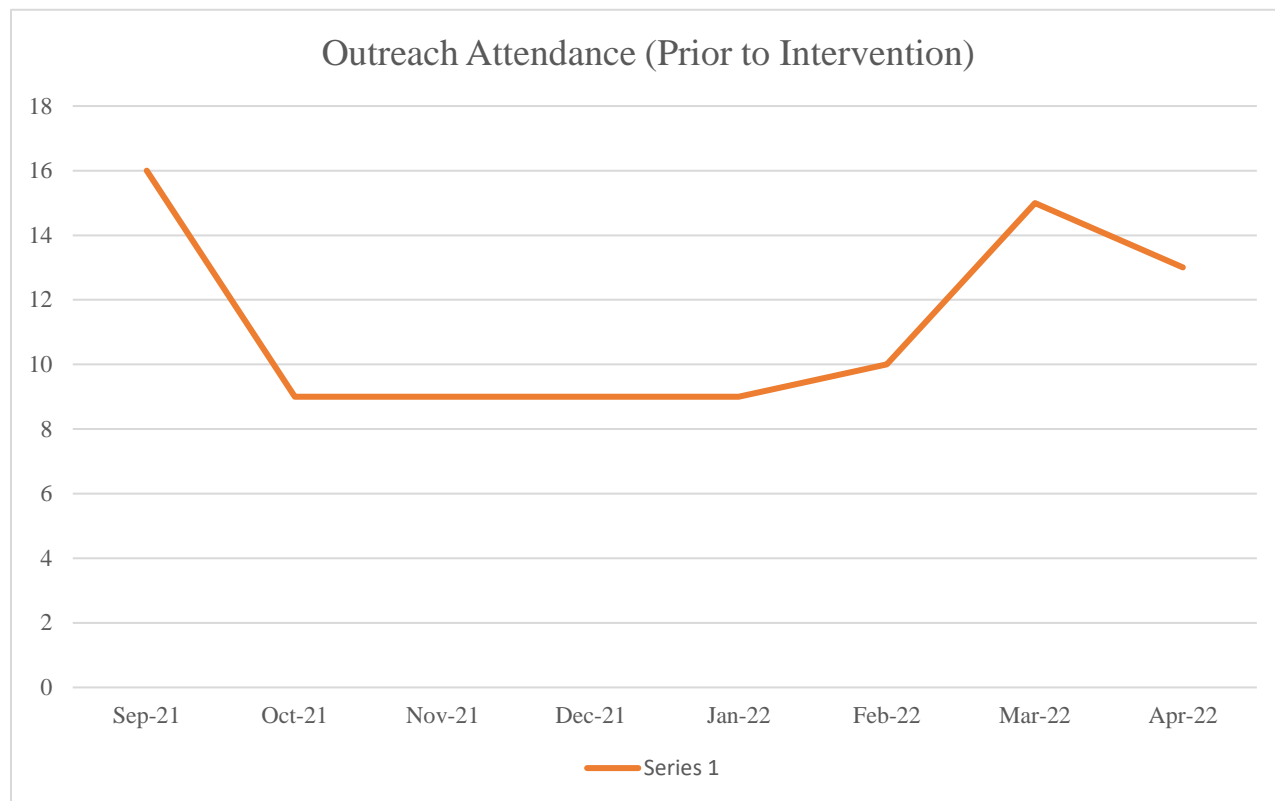
While the belief that the church is motivated to reach young families is prevalent in most of the answers, there is no action based on the felt motivation. This reveals that the problem is not much of a problem to members of VBC, but only when it is mentioned. The questionnaires seem to echo the need for more educating, equipping, and engaging the members of VBC to reach young families.

Prior to the workshops, the main issue that developed was the overall perception and feeling that VBC is reaching young families. This is vital as the problem does not exist for most of the membership. The problem is present in the visitor card data, presenting a lack of awareness to what is going on. While the young families who filled out the questionnaires expressed that VBC could do more to reach their demographic, current efforts are fine. The lack of awareness of the problem led to a lack of participation in the workshops.

Another data point is the outreach attendance prior to the intervention. This reveals the overall participation in corporate evangelism. As previously mentioned, the December church wide outreach was canceled, so on the graph it is represented as 9 for control as November and January were 9 during that time (see graph 3). This data point was recorded to analyze if participation in the workshops would lead to an increase of attendance for church wide outreach. While this was not the main objective of the initiative, it does apply as reaching young families as a church would require increased attendance in corporate outreach. The data demonstrates that church wide outreach attendance is rarely close to 20. The linear graph shows that attendance dropped for most of the winter, likely due to holidays or other events. Overall, this data point is shown as it reveals that corporate outreach is not a largely attended event but does have a faithful core of attendees. This data point became a close indicator of the attendance of the outreach workshops. With the advent of a change in leadership, outreach attendance was rising from

January to March, with a slight drop in April. The average at this time was 12 attendees. The attendance records for May, June, and July will be presented in a continuance of graph 3.

Graph 3. (Outreach attendance prior to intervention).



The outreach attendance record is represented from September 2021 to April 2022.

Church wide outreach offers a few ways for VBC members to reach the community. At the time of these records outreach consisted of follow-ups, new move-ins, and door-to-door canvassing. As previously stated, the workshops should have affected the outreach attendance data if not achieving a solution to the problem. It was intended that those who were nervous or had reservations about attending church wide outreach would attend the workshops. However, as the initial survey revealed, most VBC members already feel confident and can share their faith and do share regularly.

The workshops were attended by 11 in the first, 13 in the second. 2 attendees left the second workshop due to schedule conflict, so the average attendance for both complete workshops was 11 including the researcher. This is like the outreach attendance data in demonstrating a core group of people who want to reach others and the community. Several other members have asked for notes taken at the workshops that were not able to attend. Setting goals was a major point of the workshops that would provide the participants with action steps that can be measured. Each attendee could have different goals, yet those goals take the knowledge from the workshops and applies it to their life. While the workshops were not attended by a large number, it did benefit the attendees especially when it came time to have questions and comments. Most if not all present had either questions or comments. It was expected that the workshops would have substantially more attendance than normal church wide outreach due to awareness of the problem. As previously mentioned, some members expressed that they were unable to attend the workshops. However, the workshops were not attended as largely as expected. It was assumed that VBC members would want more education, equipment, and engagement to reach others and young families in the community. This assumption was wrong as the initial survey indicated that most participants feel confident, have the ability, and to an extent share their faith. As the problem was largely unknown for the membership, the workshops provided no critical help for them. Finding a solution to a problem requires knowing that there is a problem. For the majority of VBC, there is no problem therefore no solution or system is necessary. Another assumption was that the research process and workshops would draw more awareness to outreach and reaching young families. The awareness was brought about by the announcements, promotions, schedules, preaching, and focus on VBC's purpose to evangelize. This assumption was somewhat correct as demonstrated in the final outreach

attendance data. Overall, attendance to the workshops and the attendance to church wide outreach does demonstrate the presence of a core of VBC members who are concerned about sharing their faith. What will be demonstrated is the changes of the data points after the workshops and even during the study. The VBC young family initiative addressed the problem yet did not solve the problem.

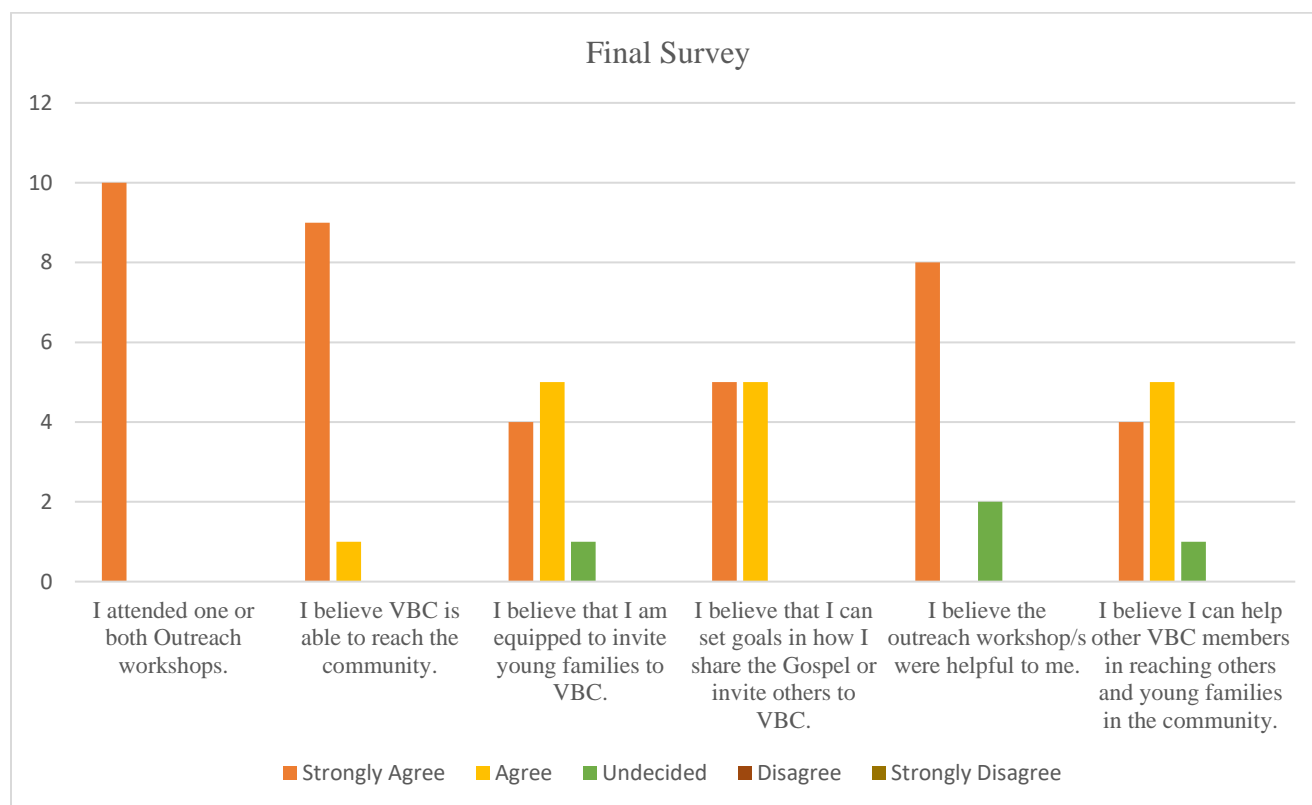
Post-Workshop Data

The following section will overview the post-workshop data collection. This involves the final survey, visitor card data from during and after the research and workshop process, and post-workshop attendance. What was expected was a change in each data point resulting from the implementation of the intervention. The VBC young family initiative was somewhat successful based on the changes found in data points. While each data point had a change, some were unexpected. It was during this time that several events were held at VBC that aided in ministering to families, particularly young families. Each data point will discuss the outcome and the reasoning of the results. This section will further evaluate the causation of the results.

The final survey data involved the participants to the second workshop. The surveys were designed to indicate how the attendees felt about having workshops and their efficacy. As VBC has not had a workshop of this sort before, it was praised verbally. The final survey data is demonstrated by graph 4. The control statement was the attendance sentence, making sure the surveys recorded were from attendees. The data indicates that most attendees believe that VBC can reach the community. This means that the participants feel like VBC has the potential to reach others. This statement does not reflect the actual current activity, but the possibility of such. The participants in this statement express that VBC has resources to reach the community. These resources are the members, literature, and events. Most participants believed that the

workshops were helpful, with only 2 being undecided on that statement. The workshops were the first of their kind to take place at VBC. Members that have previously been part of other ministries may have been exposed to a similar function. However, the VBC young family initiative workshops were designed to hybridize biblical theology, personal testimony, practical goals, and current resources present at VBC. The workshops covered a variety of ways to share the Gospel, most would have noted a tool, a way, or a motivation to reach others and young families.

Graph 4. (Final Survey data)

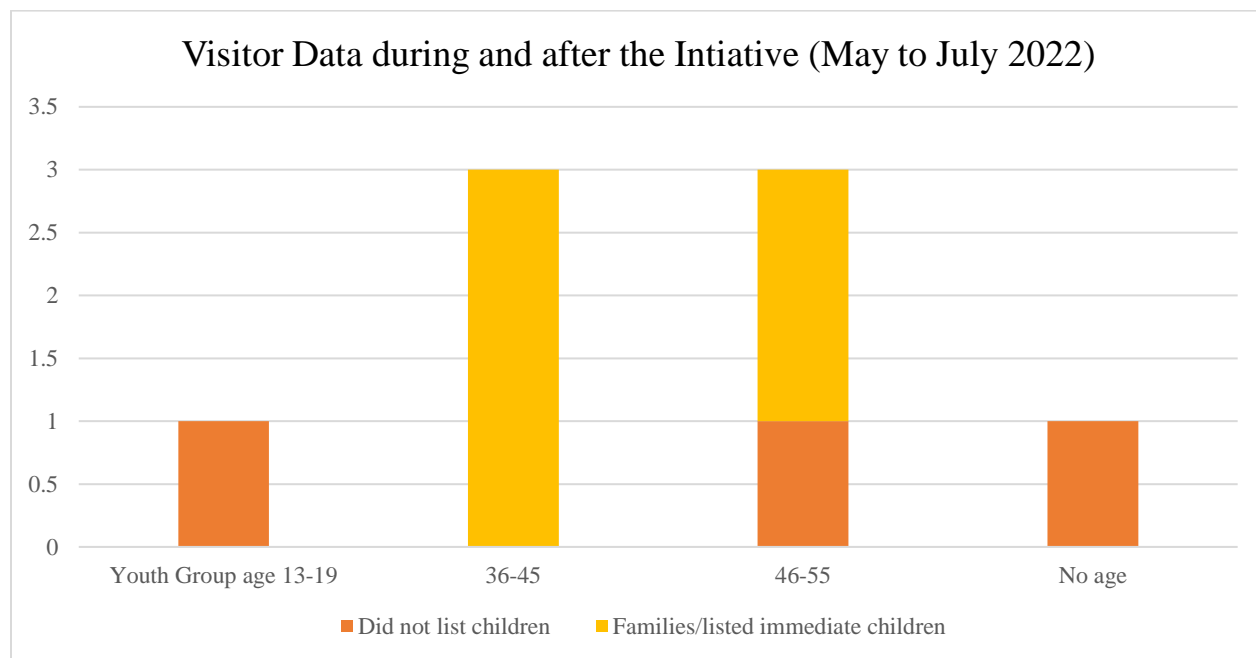


Most participants also felt that they could help other VBC members in reaching others and young families in the community with only 1 indicating that they were undecided toward that statement. That statement reveals that the members can promote reaching young families to the other members. What was learned in the workshops was not to be hidden from the rest of the

church. The participants mostly believed that were not only equipped to reach young families, but that they could aid VBC in that process. The final survey involving workshop participants demonstrates that the workshops were effective for those who attended. In keeping the workshops in mind, all participants believed that they could set goals in sharing the Gospel and inviting others to church as indicated by the 4th statement. Setting goals is how the participants will stay engaged in reaching young families and others. While everyone may have different goals, they do have different methods and tools from the workshops. Both workshops at minimum were designed to help those in attendance to feel more confident in sharing their faith, be able to set goals in their personal outreach, and promote sharing the Gospel and reach young families to other VBC members. From this data, it is established that the workshops aided in the education, equipment, and engagement of participants to reach young families in Weatherford.

The visitor data indicates that those who visited during the young family initiative were not as numerous as the previous visitor card data. The total number of visitor cards collected from during and after the VBC young family initiative is 8 (see graph 5). In this data, there are no cards categorized as aged 20-35 listing immediate children. At first glance this can indicate that the VBC young family initiative produced no change. However, the total percentage of visiting families (listing immediate children) did change. This can be attributed to the design of the implementation not defining young families is a wider parameter. If the parameter is widened to include the age group of 36-45, then there is a higher percentage of young families versus the previous visitor card data collection.

Graph 5. (Visitor data during and after the intervention)



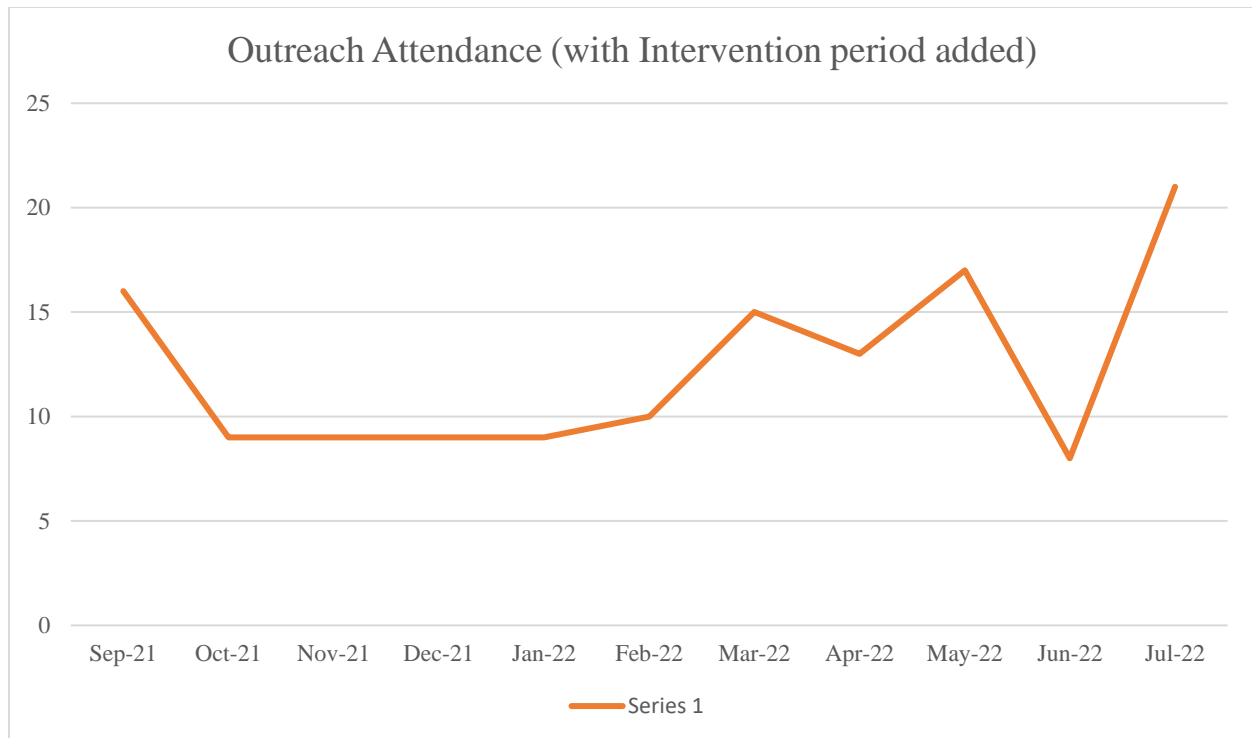
The data collected during and after the intervention is notably smaller. This is due to the collection period being a shorter length of time. Another reason for the smaller total number can be the reluctance of first-time visitors in filling out cards and the vacation season during Summer. Despite the smaller number 5 out of the 8 were families or listed immediate children, a total of about 63%. Most of these families fit the age bracket of 36-45, while the second most were in the ages between 46-55. There were no visitor cards in the age brackets of 20-35. This indicates that the intervention and surrounding events did not exactly lead to a rise in attendance by young families within the 20-35 age bracket. This was unexpected as it was assumed the rise in percentage of families visiting would be from the 20–35-year-old bracket. While unintentional, there was a rise in percentage of families (those that listed immediate children) from about 31% to 63%. While unexpected, this is a positive result over the past 2 and a half months. This can be attributed to the VBC young family initiative alongside the efforts of VBC to have more family fellowship services and the reinstitution of the vacation Bible school day

camp post-COVID. Another contributing factor is VBA as it does attract families being an accredited private school. The workshops did discuss utilizing VBA as a tool to reach young families in the community. In addition to this, the increase of children and family ministries throughout the Summer of 2022 provided events that can be utilized to invite and share the Gospel with young families. The increase in the percentage of families cannot solely be attributed to the VBC young family initiative. The VBC young family initiative was somewhat successful in addressing the problem. This can be attributed as the intervention was designed at minimum to raise awareness of reaching others and young families in the community. The results cannot be quantifiably tied to the initiative, this is the result of the implementation not being designed to establish causation due to the overlap of the initiative and special events at VBC. What is known, is that the VBC young family initiative did contribute to the results in at least bringing awareness to the need of VBC in reaching young families and the community.

The final outreach attendance data reveals a slight rise seen during the period of the intervention (see graph 5). The attendance was 17 for May 2022, 8 for June 2022, and 21 for July 2022. While May and July were comparatively high in attendance, June was low. This is a slippage in the data, identified by the researcher. The drop in attendance is due of the rescheduling of outreach from the third Saturday to the second Saturday. While attendance is not usually high, it does not increase when outreach is rescheduled. This happened to hand out our vacation Bible school day camp flyers. The day camp was planned a little later than normal as the new Pastor decided to reintroduce it post-COVID. A large portion of usual outreach attendees were making last minute preparations on the camp on our campus or were on vacation. Preparations involve literature, decoration, construction for the theme, scheduling, and registration. Those who usually would have been at outreach were part of the vast manpower

required to accomplish the preparation. As the day camp started 4 days later, there was a considerable amount left to do. The total average for the three months during and after the VBC young family initiative was about 15. This is an increase from the previous average which was about 12.

Graph 6. (Outreach Attendance September 2021 to July 2022).



Graph 6 illustrates the rise of May and July in addition to the data from the attendance records prior to the intervention and the fall in attendance in June. The overall data indicates that outreach attendance has risen steadily in 2022. The workshops took place between the attendance in June and July. The workshops were also designed to promote outreach attendance and awareness. While the final attendance for outreach in July was twice as much as the workshops, having the workshops does bring awareness to outreach activity at VBC. From January to July, the Pastor has been preaching on VBC's purpose and mission, which means evangelism. This also can contribute to the data as well. The conclusion of this overall increase is that the

workshops, with their announcements and promotions in front of the church, alongside the preaching on evangelism led to a rise in outreach attendance. Again, the VBC young family initiative cannot be solely responsible for this result. It was assumed that the initiative would increase awareness of outreach and the need to reach young families at minimum. That assumption proved to be correct.

Ultimately, the results of the VBC young family initiative did not solve the problem that most of the VBC membership does not conversationally share their faith with younger families in the community. While the data does indicate that there was an increase in outreach attendance, workshop participation and positive feedback, and a percentage increase in families visiting, the data does not indicate that the VBC young family initiative solely contributed to the results. The implementation of the VBC young family initiative was executed as designed. The data does show that the initiative did address the problem but did not completely solve it. The changes in data could have resulted from the initiative or the special events at VBC. However, it can be stated that the initiative did address the problem by bringing awareness and priority to outreach and reaching young families. The expected results were higher outreach attendance, an increase in the percentage of young families visiting, and workshop attendees being educated, equipped, and engaged to reach others and young families in the community. Each expected result technically was fulfilled except for the higher percentage of visiting young families. However, there was an increase in percentage of total families visiting.

The design of the implementation failed to account for a summer church-wide push to reach others and provide community for families. This aided the VBC young family initiative as the events served as an objective for the initiative. The main occurrence that was unaccounted for was that most of the membership was not aware of the problem. The initiative was successful in

addressing the problem and the results indicate a change, yet the change cannot be connected to the initiative directly. The VBC young family initiative did bring the importance of outreach and reaching young families to the attention not only of participants, but also to leadership and church members. As mentioned in the assumptions at the beginning of the research study, it was assumed that if a need (reaching young families) is emphasized and met, it will provide a pattern that meets other needs related to it (outreach and evangelism in general). The design of the initiative neglected to account for the unawareness of the problem by the initial survey and questionnaire participants. The problem could not totally be solved without the realization of the problem. That point in the data affected the whole initiative as if the problem was perceived by many, then more individuals would have attended the workshops which were designed as the main catalyst of the initiative.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The VBC young family initiative addressed the problem that Victory Baptist church is that most of the membership does not conversationally share their faith with younger families in the community. This closing chapter will cover the relationship between the results and the initial research. First, a brief overview and purpose of the project will establish a foundation that the implications, applications, limitations, and the further research that can benefit VBC or others. The research implications will provide an analysis of the project compared to previous research. The research project has implications for similar situations in addressing the problem. The research applications will refer to the practical steps that can be taken because of the VBC young family initiative. The information from the intervention can allow practical steps that can aid another ministry or VBC in further ventures. To properly analyze the VBC young family initiative, limitations that arose will be discussed in this chapter as well. As the initiative did not yield the expected results, this reveals that the project was limited. Finally, further research can result from the initiative. If the initiative could be improved, the results could have been different. The VBC young family initiative provides foundation for more research in its context.

Purpose and Overview of Process

This section will present the purpose and overview of the entire VBC young family initiative research project. This includes the ministry context, overview of the problem, the purpose of the initiative, its design, and the results of the initiative. This brief overview will provide a summary of the whole parts of the project. This overview will establish a summarized view of the events of the VBC young family initiative.

The context of the VBC family initiative was VBC in Weatherford, Texas. After a few rough years through COVID and the change in leadership, VBC has not been reaching young

families. This was concerning as they are the future of the church. VBC offers many ministries such as Sunday schools for a variety of ages, children's church, youth group, and a private Christian school, VBA. While there are many ministries, most of them are the same as they have been for years. The change in leadership has brought new vigor to a lot of these ministries. However, VBC still has a problem. The problem at VBC was that most of the membership does not conversationally share their faith with younger families in the community. This was demonstrated by the visitor card data over the period of 10 months prior to the intervention. Young families (aged 20-35 listing immediate children) were 3% of all visitor cards. This data served to prove the problem. It was with the problem in mind that purpose of the VBC young family initiative was to design and implement a plan that educates, equips, and engages individual church members to evangelize young families in Weatherford. The heart of this design was to provide workshops to educate, equip, and engage. The first step in the initiative was to analyze whether VBC church members would see the need of a workshop and how they perceive outreach and reaching young families. Data collection revealed that VBC is not reaching young families, yet that data also revealed that the membership was not aware of the problem. This extended to the young families Sunday school class at VBC. They answered a questionnaire regarding VBC's efficacy to reach young families. This further revealed that the young families themselves feel that VBC is reaching young families but could do more. The intervention was not designed with this issue in mind. The majority of VBC was not aware of the problem. However, the intervention proceeded as planned. The next data collection was outreach attendance, which revealed that a small amount of members are involved in corporate outreach. The workshops were designed to educate, equip, and engage VBC members to reach young families in the community with the Gospel or to invite them to VBC. Education involved

demographic studies of Weatherford, biblical theology, reaching young families, and sharing the Gospel. Equipping included the various tools at VBC members' disposal and themselves as the greatest tool for evangelism. Engagement covers the setting of goals and how members can stay motivated to share the Gospel and reach young families.

It was assumed that if the church members are educated, equipped, and engaged, to a strategic initiative they will evangelize young families by building intentional personal relationships through community in Weatherford. The initiative was designed to see more young families visiting because of more evangelistic activity by the VBC members. The data showed that the initiative did not solve the problem but did address it. The results saw an increase in percentage of families visiting VBC, not what was categorized as young families. The results also saw an increase in participant confidence in sharing their faith and reaching out to young families. There was also an increase in outreach attendance due to the awareness that the initiative raised alongside with the push in ministry to have more family activity at VBC. Overall, the VBC young family initiative addressed the problem, yet did not solve the problem.

Research Implications

This section will cover the comparison of the research project and precedent literature. This will establish a foundation that will introduce implications of the study. As evangelism is a popular subject, especially in Western Christianity, there are many sources. However, for this study only sources that reflect a reverence for Scripture as the authority and are mostly conservative in their methods of evangelism were preferred. Precedent literature and the results of the project are similar in comparison. The implications of the research project provide clarity to what happened and analyzation of what it means.

The results of the initiative are like what was expected based on precedent literature. As a hybrid model based on using the church as a place of community and the members reaching out in their personal spheres produced a mobilization of members to impact the community. The results of the intervention do confirm the concepts of literature reviewed. This section will cover the comparison of results with the themes discussed in chapter 2. Precedent literature stated that God's authority, and His help are all aspects that form the base of evangelism in practice. In the workshops, it was discussed that when a Christian sets goals in evangelism, those goals should not be result oriented but action oriented. This is the foundation of the methods of evangelism that were overviewed in the workshops. The methods discussed involved clear use of testimony alongside Scripture used in the hermeneutic of Biblical theology. This was combined with other themes in precedent evangelism literature: method of evangelism, apologetics, relational evangelism, and lifestyle evangelism. Method of evangelism referred to the use of Scriptures and presenting the Gospel verbally. Apologetics are vital to defending one's faith, yet apologetics alone rarely reaches people without testimony or Scripture use. God also has placed people in the lives of believers for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with them. This is relational evangelism. Lifestyle evangelism is the way the believer lives out the Gospel. Being Christ-like is foundational to share the Gospel of Christ. Precedent literature also has explored the theme of reach young families by ministry. This involves meeting needs of the whole family: husbands, wives, and children. Young families need a community to help them grow and to aid them in training their children. All themes in precedent literature were combined for the educational aspect of the workshop. One item not discussed by precedent literature is how exactly VBC members can reach young families in their community with current resources. The VBC young family initiative sought to combine the themes of precedent literature and apply them to the local

context of VBC and Weatherford. Ultimately, the workshops provided benefit to those in attendance and provided awareness to those who did not attend. The use of testimony in connection with biblical theology was not a major theme of the precedent literature but is a theme in the Bible, tied directly to evangelism. This adheres to the theological themes of evangelism, discipleship, and the role of the family. In the workshops discipleship and the role of the family was included in the purpose of reaching young families and others in the community. The combination of biblical theology and personal testimony added to Christlikeness and church events for families was used in educating, equipping, and engaging VBC members to reach others and young families in the community. While most precedent literature covered aspects of those items, they did not combine them for VBC or Weatherford, Texas. What was different about the VBC young family initiative was that it utilized the resources and ministries currently available to VBC, introduced the survey system and questionnaires to VBC, and tied biblical theology to witnessing and community at VBC. The local context was the main difference between precedent literature, while a minor difference is how the workshops overviewed the points of educating, equipping, and engaging participants at VBC. The theoretical foundations of the study were the combination of the attractional and missional models of church. For VBC this meant utilizing the ministries and events as evangelistic times, and the preparation of church members to share the Gospel outside of church as a combination of both models.

The main implication of the research is that as VBC promoted and prioritized the outreach workshops as it engaged VBC members to be involved in evangelistic activities and invite young families to VBC special events. The results imply that a joint effort between the workshop and the special events produced positive results. While causation cannot be tied directly to either the VBC young family initiative or the special events, the results in an

increased percentage of families visiting, increased outreach attendance, and confidence in workshop attendees in reaching young families. The research implies that the initiative was successful in tandem with special events. This indicates that the assumption that a hybrid model between missional and attractional aspects would provide results as accurate. Another implication tied to the first is that if the special events are isolated from the initiative or vice versa, the results may not be the same. While there have been more activities during the Summer there were also activities of the same nature beforehand in the Spring. None of the data indicated a rise in the percentages of families or higher outreach attendance. The frequency of activities, family growth-oriented services, and the initiative produced the results. The overarching implication is that a combined strategy (intentional or unintentional) can bring results.

One final implication is the counterfactual of a higher participation. If there were more members present at the workshops, then the results could be more positive. The workshops largely helped those who attended, and they agreed that they could help other members reach young families in the community. However, the workshops were designed to benefit participants. A larger group of VBC members who are educated, equipped, and engaged to reach young families could see a larger result than a small group would.

Research Applications

The VBC young family initiative revealed several applications. This section will discuss the practical steps from the research that can be used for VBC and potentially for other similar ministries. These applications include understanding the demographics a ministry is reaching, a combination of church events and training for members and how VBC conducts outreach in the future. The research involved in the VBC young family initiative centered around collecting data

from before and after the initiative. Data was provided to establish what was happening, what was being perceived, and what was felt.

For VBC, the research can be applied to future outreach endeavors and the ability to track them. The survey system, visitor demographics, questionnaires, and outreach attendance had never been tracked to this extent before. The promise of anonymity helped those in surveys and questionnaires to be a little more honest. While the tendency is to answer what sounds right, anonymity allows the participants to be more truthful in their perceptions of what is happening. While not every local church is like VBC, some may be similar. For those ministries it is recommended that in any survey or questionnaire that anonymity be maintained. As mentioned, this is the first time a study like this has taken place at VBC. Any change in ministry that involves asking questions can be intimidating for prospective participants. Anonymity is a way that people can voice their perceptions without fear of being associated with their answers.

The categorizing of data can allow VBC in the future to monitor how VBC is reaching the community combined with how the members perceive and feel about corporate and personal evangelism efforts. This can aid in promoting new events or an outreach emphasis directed at a specific demographic. The research can be applied as a system to evaluate current and future methods of outreach or even outreach training for the church members. For other ministries, the VBC young family initiative research can apply in situations where young families are not being reached. While the VBC young family initiative may be designed solely for use by VBC, it can be applied to other contexts. The combination of visitor card data, survey data, and questionnaires can provide a foundation for a similar local church study. While none of the steps are revolutionary themselves, the combination of them can reveal problems and addressing those problems. Organizing visitor data and placing them in categories can allow a researcher to see

who the church is reaching. This in combination to what the church members perceive can reveal if there is a misconception by the membership (as was revealed in the VBC initiative). Added to this, questionnaires for a select group can reveal how the church is meeting their needs and how they can reach others that fit that group. Tracking attendance data for outreach efforts can also reveal the priority of membership and can demonstrate who is active in outreach.

Workshops also provide application if they can be evaluated. For VBC the outreach workshops received positive evaluation. It is possible to utilize workshops for a variety of church ministries to teach, but also to see where the members are at in their perception of the ministry in question. The application of the research and workshops for VBC may have greater results if a workshop was to take place during a Sunday evening or Wednesday evening to gain more attendance. For other ministries seeking to apply the young family initiative, it would be recommended that the workshops take place when attendance could be optimized.

Research Limitations, Problems, and Resulting Knowledge

During the VBC young family initiative, many limitations surfaced that did affect how the results were analyzed. This section will overview unexpected events or outcomes from the study in addition to what the researcher learned from them. The limitations will include problems that surfaced as well. While the VBC young family initiative did address the problem, it did not solve the problem.

The first limitation to the initiative was the level of participation. The data collection points of the surveys and questionnaires were few compared to the overall membership and attendance for VBC (usually 300-400 on Sunday morning). This limited the research as more data could have yielded more information. Also, the participation in the workshops was less than

expected as well. It was assumed that more individuals would attend to learn more about outreach at least. However, the attendance of the workshops did line up approximately with current church-wide outreach attendance. While there is a strong core of members who are concerned with outreach, the majority does not benefit totally from the workshops. The level of participation of any facet could be attributed to not realizing the problem, not caring, or schedule conflicts. As the VBC young family initiative took place in the Summer of 2022, potential participants may have been on vacation or otherwise busy. However, the initiative coincided with special events like the vacation Bible school day camp, Independence celebration, and family nights on the porch.

Another limitation of the study was that the intervention took place while several family-oriented events and family emphasis preaching took place. This is not a negative limitation, yet it does mean that the results observed by the project cannot be tied directly to the project. A higher percentage of families visiting cannot be attributed to the VBC young family initiative alone or the special events and emphasis alone. What is known is that both processes were happening, and the positive results occurred. That is why the VBC young family initiative did successfully address the problem but did not solve it. Another limitation was the researcher's definition of a young family. This was defined to be a person or people aged 20-35 and listing immediate children on a visitor card. However, a young family might be made of 30–40-year-olds listing immediate children. While a narrow scope of data collection and observation aids in the research process, in this case it limited the target group.

A few problems manifested themselves during the project. First the initial survey was to last only 2 weeks. When participation was low, this was extended 2 more weeks. This delayed the initial survey data collection but did not delay anything else. During that time the scheduling

of events that were family-focused were announced along with the workshops. This may have affected the perception of the initial survey participants as a priority on family events indicate a desire, ability, and execution in reaching families. Another problem was that the participants were largely not aware of the problem. This was unexpected, as it was assumed that the participants in the surveys and questionnaires would know that VBC is not reaching young families. This perception led to a lack of participation in the workshops. Had survey and questionnaire participants known about the problem, or if the problem was known by more members, then attendance to the workshop would have been higher. As was stated, a problem cannot be solved if it is not perceived as a problem. This was the largest factor that affected the study. While it did not change the nature of data collection and workshops, it did change the level of participation. Tied to this problem is the lack of positive results. While the results were positive, acknowledgement of the problem could have led to action. The majority of VBC members perceived that VBC was reaching young families and has everything it needs to do so, but the data disagreed. As reaching young families was not perceived as a problem, the lack of participation resulted in a lack of results.

The resulting knowledge from the VBC young family initiative is tied directly to the processes and the combination of precedent literature themes, theological foundations, and theoretical foundations. The processes of data collection revealed the knowledge that sometimes perception, feeling, and reality do not match up. Data analyzation can point to this problem. In the young family initiative, perception, feeling, and reality did not coincide. While this was covered under the problems of the study, the researcher learned that it is possible for this to happen. Data analytics in ministry can reveal problems that people are not aware of. The combination of precedent literature themes, theological foundations, and theoretical foundations

provided a foundation for the educating, equipping, and engaging model in the workshops. The researcher learned through the process that data collection, demographics, precedent literature, theological studies, and theoretical studies are all tied to the mobilization of church members.

Further Research and Recommendations

The VBC young family initiative did address the problem but did not solve it. If it did solve the problem in some way, it cannot be solely responsible for the results as special events may have contributed. The statement of, “If the church members are educated, equipped, and engaged, to a strategic initiative they will evangelize young families by building intentional personal relationships through community in Weatherford,” remains somewhat proven. This section will discuss the further research that the VBC young family initiative merits and recommendations for those involved.

The first point of further research is the aspect of repeatability. The VBC young family initiative might be more effective or less effective if repeated on a regular basis. As evangelism is a vital task to any local New Testament church, it needs to be brought up regularly. If such an initiative is effective, it might be effective again and used as a yearly emphasis to focus on local evangelism and outreach toward young families. An argument against a regularly scheduled initiative would be that it would devolve into just another program. Therefore, further research might be necessary to establish long term effectiveness of the initiative.

Another point of further research would be if any other demographics can be targeted in a similar fashion. While the VBC young families initiative targeted young families and saw some results in an older demographic (10 years older), what would have happened if the intervention was adjusted to target families with teenagers or middle-aged people or grandparents? Further

research is necessary to answer that question. The VBC young family initiative did focus on educating, equipping, and engaging the members to reach young families by evangelism principles and community in the church. A similar study would be required if an initiative was designed to reach another demographic.

Further research is required to understand the relationships between the special events, family-oriented preaching, and the initiative. While this is in line with the concept of mobilizing the full church for one purpose, causation cannot be established by the process of this project. The results were positive, but not completely what was in mind. It can be stated that the initiative did play a role in the results observed, but not conclusively. Therefore, the VBC young family initiative can said to have addressed the problem, but not solved it. While the target group was not affected as expected, a higher percentage of families did visit. The coordination of preaching, events, and the initiative fostered an atmosphere that did reach out to families in the community. This shows that a multi-faceted approach is necessary when it comes to outreach. Further research is required to understand the exact causation of the results, yet it cannot be denied that there were positive results.

The recommendations to pastor would be that a yearly Sunday night evangelism/outreach workshop be held to educate, equip, and engage church members in reaching the community with the Gospel and ministering to their needs through the church. This would aid in the overall concept that every Christian should share their faith, while VBC currently has no active training for this, a brief workshop can provide instruction, tools, and goals. Another recommendation would be to analyze visitor data to see what demographic is visiting VBC. Not that one group is more important than others, but that an imbalance of demographics may impact the future of the church. For ministry leaders such as children's church, nursery, and Sunday school teachers;

your role is vital to reaching young families. This means great care should be taken to build a relationship with young families. To young families, you can reach other young families by your testimony of life and the ministries your church provides. To any minister seeking to enact a similar initiative, understand that your context will be different from the context of this initiative.

Final Thoughts

The problem at Victory Baptist church was that most of the membership does not conversationally share their faith with younger families in the community. Based on the results of the VBC young family initiative, this is still somewhat true. The initiative held that if the church members are educated, equipped, and engaged to a strategic initiative, they will evangelize young families by building intentional personal relationships through community in Weatherford. This is also somewhat true. The VBC young family initiative did address the problem but did not totally solve it. This section will provide an ending overview of the project.

VBC is an independent fundamental Baptist church in Weatherford, Texas. Sunday morning attendance is usually somewhere between 300 and 400. It has many long-established ministries, including a private Christian school (VBA). The last couple of years has been particularly turbulent in the wake of the COVID pandemic and a change in the pastorate. The new pastor has begun focusing on family-oriented services and instituting or reinstituting events that minister to families. The VBC young family initiative was designed for this church.

Research for the project consisted of precedent literature, theological foundations, and theoretical foundations. From everyday conversation to investment in an intentional relationship and to using ministries, the church member can reach out to young families. Evangelism that reaches young families is multi-faceted as the literature indicates. Reaching the individuals

within a younger family requires basic knowledge of conversational evangelism based on proper hermeneutic and theology, yet it requires a testimony, relationship, and investment to evangelize. The literature reviewed emphasized the personal aspect of reaching individuals, which is the responsibility of the individual Christian and the church. The theological foundations of evangelism, discipleship, and the role of the family are themes found in Scripture that necessitate the reaching of young families in the community. The attractional and missional models reveal that the ministries of the church and the evangelistic efforts of the members should be combined to reach a community for Christ. The conceptual framework does not include how VBC can reach young families in Weatherford. This local context and combination of VBC's current tools is not found in literature.

Through surveys, questionnaires, visitor data, attendance data, and workshops the participants of VBC were to a degree mobilized to reach the community. While perception, feeling, and reality conflicted; the result was positive but not conclusively related to the initiative. Participation was not as high as expected, yet those who did contributed to the study in data. Workshops did educate, equip, and engage attendees to reach young families in the community. The understanding of Biblical theology combined with personal testimony and literature to produce achievable goals results in members being ready, willing, and able to share their faith and reach young families. A higher percentage of families (not necessarily young families), higher outreach attendance, and confident workshop attendees were the result of the initiative alongside family events at VBC. As causation cannot be established, The VBC young family initiative addressed the problem but did not solve it. The initiative was executed as designed and did see some positive results. It is hoped that the initiative can be repeated or applied in some other context. Young families are the future of local New Testament churches.

Young families need a place to spiritually grow, fellowship, and to minister themselves. The local church can aid young families in raising up the next generation of believers. Reaching them should be a high priority as all evangelism is of the highest priority.

APPENDIX A
RECRUITMENT FORM

Dear [Recipient]:

As a graduate student in the School of School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to aid in VBC reaching young families in Weatherford and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 18 years or older and a member of VBC. Participants, if willing, will be asked to complete a survey. It should take approximately a few minutes to complete. Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected.

To participate, please complete the survey available at the welcome center and return it by turning it into the welcome center in the lobby at VBC.

A consent document is provided as the first page of the survey. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to the welcome center as well.

Sincerely,

Andrew Ryan Scoggins

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: VBC Young Family Initiative

Principal Investigator: Andrew Ryan Scoggins, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 18 years or older, married in the last 15 years, or have children in elementary school. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to aid VBC in reaching young families in Weatherford.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. Take home and complete a survey, without writing your name on it, and return it within two weeks.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

[Option 1: Direct Benefits] The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are contribution to a method aiding VBC in reaching young families in Weatherford by education, equipping, and engaging the church membership.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be anonymous.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Victory Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time, without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please inform the researcher that you wish to discontinue your participation, and do not submit your study materials. Your responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Andrew Ryan Scoggins. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [email]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, [name], at [email].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX C

SURVEY

Instructions: please mark your level of agreement toward the statement as it relates to you.

1. I am confident about sharing my faith with others.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
2. I would attend a workshop at VBC about reaching others.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
3. I share my faith with others around me on a regular basis.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4. I believe that having special events would help me invite people to VBC.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
5. I believe that if I had more resources (flyers, information, Gospel information, etc.) that I would be able to communicate my faith and my church to others.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree

6. I am motivated to reach the lost.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
7. I attend church-wide outreach when I can.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
8. I believe that VBC as a whole is motivated to reach the community.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
9. I believe that VBC has the resources (training, print, media, etc.) it needs to reach the community.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
10. VBC is reaching young families in Weatherford.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX D
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you think VBC can reach young families with the current outreach efforts? If so, explain why.

2. Briefly state how has VBC aided your family's spiritual growth.

3. What do you think that VBC can do to aid church members in reaching young families?

4. Do you feel that the membership of VBC as a whole is motivated to reach young families?

5. Does VBC need a special family emphasis/service/event to aid in reaching young families?

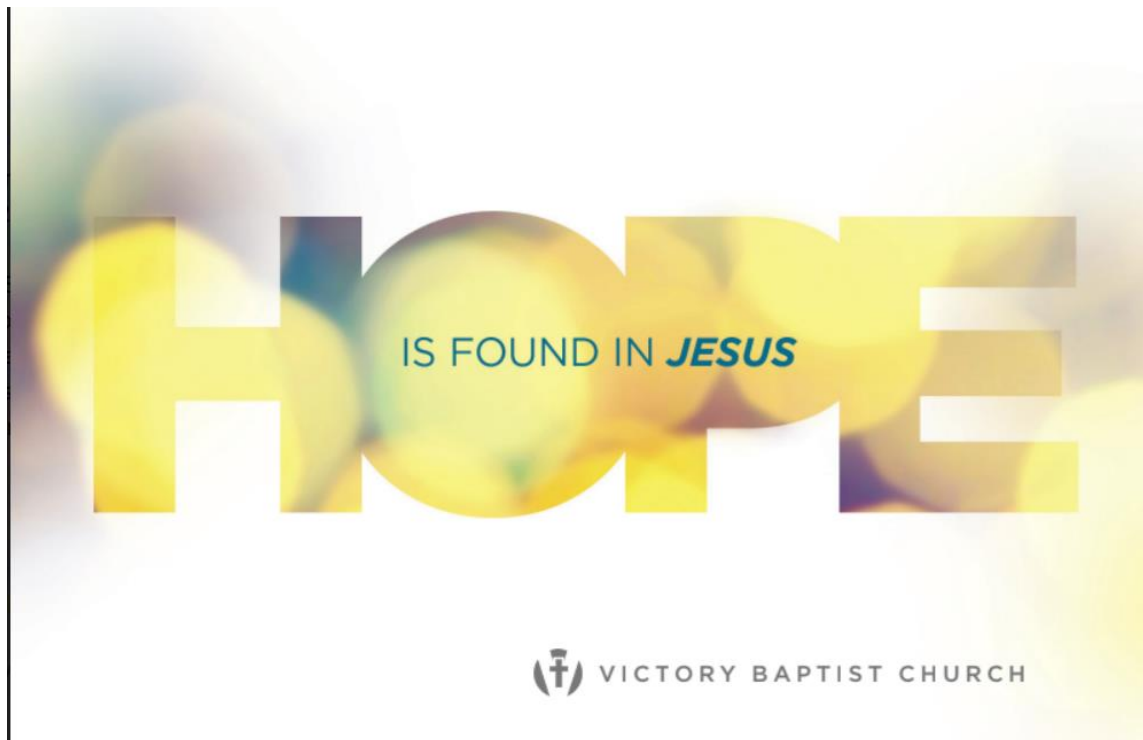
6. How does the children's ministry/nursery affect reaching young families?

APPENDIX E
SECOND SURVEY

Instructions: please mark your level of agreement toward the statement as it relates to you.

1. I attended one or both Outreach workshops.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
2. I believe VBC is able to reach the community.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
3. I believe that I am equipped to invite young families to VBC.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
4. I believe that I can set goals in how I share the Gospel or invite others to VBC.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
5. I believe the outreach workshop/s were helpful to me.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree
6. I believe I can help other VBC members in reaching others and young families in the community.	5. Strongly Agree	4. Agree	3. Undecided	2. Disagree	1. Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX F
SAMPLE TRACT/INVITE



OUR SAVIOUR

Hope is not found in a religion or a church. It is found only in Jesus Christ.

Jesus, God's Son, loves you | John 3:16

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

He died and rose again to pay for your sins | Romans 5:8

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

He desires to come into your life and save you | John 6:47

"...He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

Call out to Him! Ask Him to come into your life and save you from sin.

Victory Baptist Church
1311 East Bankhead Drive. | Weatherford, TX 76086
817.596.8728 | vbcinfo.com | Rob Catuto, Pastor

OUR SERVICES



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APPENDIX (XX)

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

(The last Appendix of the paper should be the IRB approval notification.)