

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

**A Model of Evangelism for a Bilingual Worship Community**

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to  
the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings 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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The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to develop a model of evangelism for the Lahu-English bilingual worship community at Calvary Evangelical Free Church in Rochester, Minnesota. This study claims that the Lahu-English bilingual worship community has not emphasized evangelism—to share the gospel beyond this group—due to the decline of Christian influence in general and the cultural and language barriers that first and second-generation Lahu Christians encounter. Most ethnic worship communities tend to congregate and remain in their sphere of social and worship gatherings as a haven and belonging. While this is not intrinsically wrong, it ignores the command to reach more people for Christ. There are three objectives for this project. The first objective is to train this worship community on the content of the gospel. Namely, the participants are trained to articulate and summarize the main points of the gospel. The second objective is to provide a strategy for implementing evangelism. This strategy should be incorporated into their everyday lives. The final objective of this project is regarding the sustainability of this model. Sharing the gospel with others is not a project but rather an ongoing, lifelong process. This action research project will employ the qualitative and quantitative research philosophy and acquire data through pre- and post-questionnaire, discussions, interviews, and follow-ups. This project aims to call all Christians, including immigrants and ethnic churches, to engage and share the gospel wherever God has placed them in His sovereignty.

Keywords: evangelism, bi-lingual worship community, Lahu Christians, ethnic worship communities, gospel

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## Abbreviations

CEFC	<i>Calvary Evangelical Free Church</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
EFCA	<i>Evangelical Free Church of America</i>
ESV	<i>English Standard Version</i>
FBC	<i>First Baptist Church</i>
IRB	<i>Institutional Review Board</i>
LEBWC	<i>Lahu-English Bilingual Worship Community</i>
TCK	<i>Third Culture Kid</i>
US	United States

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

Migration is one of the most powerful and controlling forces affecting the changing demographics, social, cultural, religious, and economics of receiving countries.<sup>1</sup> For example, according to the National Immigration Law Center, immigrant families contributed more than “\$405 billion in tax revenues to federal, state, and local governments in 2019.”<sup>2</sup> Economists agree that immigrants' influence on the United States economy is positive. Church leaders express the same view about Christian immigrants regarding religious influence. Reverend Samuel Rodriguez is the president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, serving approximately 18,000 churches.<sup>3</sup> In an interview, Albert Reyes, president of Buckner Children and Family Services, claims Hispanic immigrants will impact evangelical Christians in America with a more balanced approach and application to the gospel.<sup>4</sup> For example, there will be more emphasis on the issues of social justice and equality.<sup>5</sup> In recent years, Catholicism has had a big drop in membership, yet it remains the largest religious group in America. This is due to the migration of immigrant Catholics from Latin America. In European countries, Christian

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<sup>1</sup> Dawit Olika Terfassa, “The Impact of Migration on Evangelism in Europe,” *International Review of Mission* 103, no. 2 (2014):1-19, accessed February 5, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/irom.12061>, 2.

<sup>2</sup> “How Immigrants Have Affected the United States,” National Immigration Law Center, accessed March 19, 2022, <https://www.nilc.org/>.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Rodriguez, “The Latino Transformation of American Evangelicalism,” *Reflections*, (Fall 2008), accessed June 15, 2022, <https://reflections.yale.edu/article/who-my-neighbor-facing-immigration/latino-transformation-american-evangelicalism>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

evangelism and spiritual activities continue to decline. However, forty-nine percent of all immigrants moving to Europe are Christians.<sup>6</sup> “One may see a connection between the migrant movement and God’s plan to bring the good news to all.”<sup>7</sup>

The Lahu-English bilingual worship community (LEBWC), made up of immigrants and natives, is part of God's plan to spread the gospel to all peoples of the world. This project is about the LEBWC in Rochester, Minnesota. There are other Lahu ethnic congregations in the United States (US) in similar situations who have migrated to the US but face challenges when it comes to making contributions to the religious society of America.<sup>8</sup> The researcher has observed that ethnic congregations like these are content with keeping their activities in their Lahu circles and have had no clear intention to reach or evangelize their communities. This project aims to conduct outreach and evangelism training to one bilingual worship community considering God's plan to bring the gospel and revitalization to all locales, whether that location is domestic or a new context. The researcher anticipates that this project would be beneficial and inspire other ethnic groups to be intentional in outreach and evangelism.

Chapter one explicates the following in detail: 1) Ministry Context, 2) Problem Presented, 3) Purpose Statement, 4) Basic Assumptions, 5) Definitions, 6) Limitations, 7) Delimitations, and 8) Thesis Statement.

### **Ministry Context**

The ministry context for this DMIN action research project is the Lahu-English bilingual worship community at Calvary Evangelical Free Church, located in Rochester, Minnesota. Calvary Evangelical Free Church (CEFC) is associated with the Evangelical Free Church of

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<sup>6</sup> Dawit Olike Terfassa, “The Impact of Migration on Evangelism in Europe,” 6.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Lahu Congregation in Visalia, California, <http://gracevisalia.org/ministries/lahu>.

America (EFCA). There are approximately 1,600 EFCA congregations across the United States.<sup>9</sup> The Lahu-English bilingual worship community exists in these associations of churches.

Before 2021, The LEBWC was merely using the facility at CEFC. It was a "church within a church." There was no integration, partnership, or intentional fellowship between the two groups. In 2021, the leadership board of CEFC invited the LEBWC to be considered one of CEFC's official worship communities. The LEBWC is now officially under CEFC's leadership and direction but still holds significant autonomy regarding ministries conducted in their worship community.<sup>10</sup>

The LEBWC is led by a part-time paid pastor who earned his master's degree at Liberty University in Theological Arts. This pastor is the investigator of this research project. He is a second-generation immigrant from Thailand who has resided in Rochester, Minnesota, for nearly twenty-three years.

### Cultural Setting & Demographics

Rochester is the third-largest city in Olmsted County, Minnesota. It is the home of the Mayo Clinic and IBM corporation. Mayo Clinic employs approximately 34,000 people, and IBM employs 3,000 people.<sup>11</sup> Rochester has been named "one of the best places to live" in the country. It is also a highly educated city. The average household income is \$96,015.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> "Districts," Evangelical Free Church of America, accessed June 15, 2022, <https://www.efca.org/districts>.

<sup>10</sup> "Worship Communities," Calvary Evangelical Free Church, accessed June 15, 2022, <https://www.calvaryefree.church/worshipping-communities/>.

<sup>11</sup> "Rochester, Minnesota Population 2022," World Population Review, accessed March 20, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/rochester-mn-population>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

As of 2020, the population was approximately 120,823 and is growing at the rate of 1.54 percent annually.<sup>13</sup> There are approximately 79.43% White, 8.16% Black, 7.28% Asian, 3.40% two or more races, and 1.15% other races. "The median age is 35.7 years for males and 36.9 years for females."<sup>14</sup> The primary language is English, which is spoken by 82.23 percent of Rochester residents, while 17.77 percent speak other languages.

The LEBWC does not reflect these demographics. The household average income mirrors some second-generation families; however, most first-generation families do not. The same can be stated for education status, some hold associate's and bachelor's degrees, and a couple hold master's degrees. The first-generation immigrants did not have the option to study since their families depended on them to work and provide. Despite this reality, the LEBWC comprises people who are more than grateful, considering how God has brought them from their homeland.

### History of the Lahu People

The Lahu people are considered a hill tribe group originating from the Tibetan plateau of China.<sup>15</sup> The word La means "tiger," and hu can be translated as "to roast."<sup>16</sup> The Lahu people are traditionally known as "tiger roasting" people for their ability to hunt tigers.<sup>17</sup> Around the 1880s, the Lahu began to migrate southward to surrounding countries like Myanmar and Laos.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Rochester, Minnesota Population 2022," World Population Review.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "The Lahu Hill Tribe: History and Culture," Green Trails, accessed March 19, 2022, <https://www.green-trails.com/>.

<sup>16</sup> "Lahu Ethnic Group," Facts and Details, accessed June 15, 2022, <https://factsanddetails.com/asian/cat66/sub417/item2737.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "The Lahu Hill Tribe: History and Culture," Green Trails, accessed March 19, 2022, <https://www.green-trails.com/>.

Although a large population remains in China, the Lahu people today have been scattered throughout the world in places like Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Laos.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, there are Lahu people in the United States, primarily in Visalia, California.<sup>20</sup> According to the researcher, there are Lahu people also living in Australia. It is estimated that there are approximately 655,000 Lahu people in the world.<sup>21</sup> This population is divided into different branches: Lahu black, Lahu red, Lahu white, Lahu yellow, and Lahu shehle.<sup>22</sup> Due to the small population and their inability to integrate into the larger society, the Lahu people are often marginalized.<sup>23</sup>

The Lahu people practice animism—the notion that everything has a spiritual force behind them, while the supreme power or force is known as *G'ui sha*, which means god.<sup>24</sup> Witch doctors and teachers of the animism religion are known as *Paw hku*, which means Great Priest. When someone is sick or possessed by spiritual forces, they can request to see a witch doctor who will diagnose the problem and offer a resolution plan. The way to bring appeasement to the spiritual forces is usually accomplished through a sacrifice of an animal or a specific ritual prescribed by the witch doctor.<sup>25</sup> According to the researcher's understanding from many years of interaction with the Lahu people, they lived under physical marginalization from their neighbors and spiritual intimidation from the spiritual forces—known as *ne*. At about the turn of

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<sup>19</sup> “Lahu,” Britannica, accessed June 15, 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Lahu>.

<sup>20</sup> “Lahu Shi,” Joshua Project, accessed June 15, 2022, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/16018/la](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/16018/la).

<sup>21</sup> “Lahu Ethnic Group,” Facts and Details.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> “Lahu,” Britannica.

<sup>24</sup> “Lahu in China,” Joshua Project, accessed March 19, 2022, [https://joshuaproject.net/people\\_groups/12949/CH](https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/12949/CH).

<sup>25</sup> “Lahu Ethnic Group,” Facts and Details.

the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the spread of Christianity came to the isolated and remote mountains of the Lahu people.<sup>26</sup>

In 1891, Daniel McGilvary, an American Presbyterian missionary, baptized the first Lahu Christians in North Thailand.<sup>27</sup> In 1901, William Young, an American Baptist missionary, preached the gospel to the Lahu people in northern Burma, now known as Myanmar.<sup>28</sup> Between 1905 and 1906, six thousand Lahu people were baptized after hearing the gospel that Christ could set them free from being enslaved to spiritual powers.<sup>29</sup> The new Lahu Christians cleansed their communities of temples once consecrated to other deities and established churches to conduct worship services.<sup>30</sup> According to the researcher's interaction with his father, who practiced animism before converting to Christianity, many were skeptical of this new and strange worldview and refused to accept it. Furthermore, some thought it was unimaginable to leave the traditions passed down from their ancestors, and many were afraid that the punitive spirits of animism would retaliate and pursue them. Others were more pragmatic in their approach and asked for proof that Jesus was more powerful than the evil spirits.<sup>31</sup>

The Joshua Project states that today, there are more Christians than animists among the Lahu people.<sup>32</sup> According to the researcher's interactions with Lahu pastors in Minnesota and California, although Christianity's numerical growth has been encouraging, there continue to be

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<sup>26</sup> "Lahu," Britannica.

<sup>27</sup> Anthony Walker, "The First Lahu (Muhsur) Christians: A Community in Northern Thailand," *Acta Orientalia Vilnensia* 11 (2018): 7, accessed June 15, 2022, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327077129\\_The\\_first\\_Lahu\\_Muhsur\\_Christians\\_A\\_community\\_in\\_North\\_ern\\_Thailand/citation/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/327077129_The_first_Lahu_Muhsur_Christians_A_community_in_North_ern_Thailand/citation/download).

<sup>28</sup> "Lahu in China," Joshua Project.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Anthony Walker, "The First Lahu (Muhsur) Christians: A Community in Northern Thailand," 23.

<sup>32</sup> "Lahu in China," Joshua Project.



limited resources for discipleship. Portions of the Lahu Bible were translated in 1924.<sup>33</sup> The Lahu Christians received their first complete Bible translation in 1989.<sup>34</sup>

Albeit not all Lahu immigrants were Christians, it is some of these Lahu Christians that immigrated to the United States. Their ingrained backgrounds, experiences, and stories came with them as they sought a new place to find a better life for themselves and their families. On top of this, they were forced to adapt their practice of Christianity in a foreign land.

### Establishing Worship in a New Setting

In 1991, the researcher's parents, who had recently immigrated from Thailand, established a Lahu-speaking worship service in a Caucasian church after seeing the Lahu people without a place of worship. The new immigrants could not integrate into the all-English worship community due to language and cultural barriers. Beyond an annual potluck, consisting of food and broken conversations between the English-speaking and Lahu congregations, there was hardly any type of fellowship. There was a warm embrace and welcome from the English-speaking church. Still, biblical *koinonia*, which means fellowship or common, was difficult to practice amongst each other due to the barriers.<sup>35</sup> The only common factor seemed to be that the two congregations worshipped the same God.

The Lahu congregation consisted of approximately twenty to thirty immigrant families. All the elements of the worship service were conducted in the Lahu language, including singing, prayer, celebrating the ordinances, and sermon. Even though the pastor of the newly established Lahu service was a former evangelist in Thailand –who traveled to different villages to boldly

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<sup>33</sup> “Lahu in China,” Joshua Project.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1887).

proclaim the gospel of Christ and witnessed instances of Jesus setting people free from the bondage of Satan—outreach and evangelism had ceased to exist due to the barriers mentioned above. It was essentially a Lahu church from Thailand transplanted on American soil that did not know how to communicate and interact with the new context.

The Lahu Christians were joyful and content that they were able to practice their cultural traditions in this setting. The immigrant families enjoyed the religious activities in their language. Moreover, the benefits of an immigrant gathering met their expectations for social life. The Lahu people celebrate their cultural heritage every New Year with music, dancing, games, and rituals. They would dress in traditional attire and remind themselves of their traditions. On Thanksgiving Day, people would bring produce and a variety of their harvest and offer them to the Lord in gratitude. The cultural practices continued in limited fashions. The Lahu service was their "home" in a new homeland. The Lahu-speaking worship service would remain relatively unchanged through the years until 2019.

#### A New Paradigm and Vision

By 2019, more than one-third of the Lahu people had moved away to California or North Carolina. The number of Lahu people had also gradually shifted from primarily first-generation Lahu immigrants to more second and third generation in Rochester. Moreover, some of the second and third-generation children intermarried with various races, which reduced the Lahu population, influence, and impact of the first-generation immigrants. Today, more Lahu people are utilizing the English language than Lahu in this community of believers. The Lahu cultural practices are slowly diminishing. Most second and third-generation immigrants have lost affinity with their ancestors and relatives in Thailand and Laos. Like all cultures that assimilated into the western melting pot, this is a pivotal moment for the Lahu people living in Minnesota.

The first-generation Lahu people are hesitant to discuss the possibility of fully assimilating. Most second-generation Lahu people are mindful of their parent's desires to maintain the Lahu language and culture if possible. Like other cultures that have fully embraced the American language and culture, a minority of the Lahu people would welcome this change. However, this would outcast the first-generation Christians who have limited English and cultural assimilation. There needs to be a transitional phase.

In the fall of 2019, the researcher of this DMIN research project became the Pastor of the LEBWC at Calvary Evangelical Free Church.<sup>36</sup> The core group of the Lahu-speaking worship community renamed the group to the LEBWC with a new vision to reach the next generation in this community and meet the needs of non-Lahu speakers. And yet, it continues to be more Lahu because of the cultural attachments such as traditions, cultural practices, language, food, and leadership influence.

### Church Programs

In contrast to former years, the worship service is now conducted in Lahu and English to approximately seventy to ninety people. The elements include worship through singing, giving, teaching, and celebrating the ordinances of communion and baptism. The sermon is delivered in both English and Lahu. Typically, there are two English worship songs and two Lahu worship songs. Occasionally, a song will be done in both languages. There is also a small group Bible study in English bi-weekly. Approximately twelve people attend this Bible study. Finally, during the sermon, the children are dismissed to children's education to learn the Word of God at their level. From time to time, the Sunday school teachers will teach the children the Lahu alphabet.

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<sup>36</sup> "Lahu at Calvary," <https://www.calvaryefree.church/worshipping-communities/>.

Some of the children are involved in the broader ministries of Calvary Evangelical Free Church, such as the youth group and Awana.

This congregation, especially the first-generation, is also involved in donating funds overseas to their home country. Even though the primary funds go to missions and local churches, they have the heart to meet the physical needs of the people struggling in their homeland. Monetary gifts have been donated to purchase church building supplies, organize Christmas programs, and fund leadership training events. Amongst the second-generation group, they are less eager to support the church financially since they have no recollection, no fond memories of their homeland, nor do they have any personal connections.

One of the positive ministries that have come out of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is the Facebook live worship services that are being watched by other Lahu people from California, North Carolina, Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar. This live stream has permitted people to tune in and hear the Word of God through preaching and worship music. The LEBWC impacts many more Lahu people worldwide, inspiring and putting wind in the Lahu ministry's sails. The response from the viewers has been positive affirmation and encouragement to do more and broaden specific ministries amongst the Lahu people.<sup>37</sup> During the early and intense times of COVID-19, there were approximately one hundred views every Sunday. The number of views has declined some in recent days as more people are returning to church. These views are primarily from those not part of the LEBWC.

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<sup>37</sup> As stated above, Lahu people, primarily Christians and some non-Christians, from California, North Carolina, Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar, tune in and watch the live streams or service videos. Some positive feedback has been about the methodology and content of preaching and worship music. They expressed appreciation for the quality and new approach to music. Many appreciate that the sermon and worship songs are in Lahu and English. Others have expressed that the methodology of the Lahu-English worship community is inspiring and reaching the next generation of Lahu Christians. One pastor from Myanmar asked if there would be opportunities for the researcher, who is the Pastor, to teach online Bible studies for their groups.

To the average eye, there seems to be no problem or lack of anything. After all, an immigrant group has found solace and refuge in one of the greatest nations in the world in history. They have a community of people to meet their physical, relational, and spiritual desires. They can maintain the traditions and practices of the Lahu culture in a new foreign land and simultaneously enjoy new features that the American culture offers. In many ways, the LEBWC is a reminder of their home country. However, without diminishing the values of what this worship community brings, the LEBWC lacks evangelistic training, motivation, and zeal.

### **Problem Presented**

The problem is that the LEBWC is not proactively sharing the gospel. This issue is two-fold. First, it is the lack of strategy to evangelize the surrounding community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This problem is not isolated only to the Lahu-English bilingual worship community. It is a problem in American Christianity. More than ever, Christianity is losing its influence in families and society. Most Christians are not openly sharing their faith with others or evangelizing. According to the Barna Group, it is rare for Christians to share their faith or even have spiritual conversations with people.<sup>38</sup> To be more precise, a growing number of Christians believe evangelism is the local church's responsibility, not the individual's.<sup>39</sup> The Great Commission, found in Matthew 28, has become more optional than a command. In this regard, the Lahu congregation is not an anomaly.

Second, language and cultural barriers have caused a chasm between immigrant Christians and those they should evangelize. The Lahu-English bilingual worship community has been meeting since 1997 but has not made much progress in making an impact and making

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<sup>38</sup> Barna Group, "Sharing Faith is Increasingly Optional to Christians," accessed June 8, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians/>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

disciples of Christ. America is becoming increasingly secular, which makes evangelism very difficult without first fostering and developing trusting relationships. It is extremely challenging to develop relationships if communication is an issue and the common bond of culture is not present. Additionally, within this chasm is the mindset of immigrant Christians. As a minority group, they feel inferior, and their attempts will have minimal impact on the surrounding community. The problem is that the Lahu-English bilingual worship community at Calvary Evangelical Free Church is not evangelizing the surrounding community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>40</sup>

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to develop a ministry model of evangelism and outreach to the surrounding community. One of the purposes of the church, which is made up of believers and many congregations, is to evangelize and make disciples. Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:17-20, English Standard Version). This is the primary aim of the church.

The immigrant or bilingual worship communities are included in the church. Therefore, Matthew 28:19-20, known as the Great Commission, is also a mandate for ethnic congregations

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<sup>40</sup> This DMIN action research is more than an academic paper for the researcher. The researcher was born in Thailand and immigrated to the United States of America at the age of 8. Since then, he has been the recipient of the blessings and prosperity of America in all aspects (e.g., material blessings, religious and spiritual resources, freedom, and education). After serving seven years as the Worship Pastor in a primarily Caucasian church, the researcher and his wife decided to serve in their ethnic Lahu congregation. The researcher has observed the lack of service and outreach to the surrounding community. This mentality would have been satisfactory in the past due to the struggles and stigma immigrants are labeled with. The researcher thinks it is time to rise above merely having an immigrant mentality and contribute to society by being light and salt to the earth. God's mandate is to make disciples, and society requires every citizen to contribute.

who are, in most situations, considered to be on the receiving side. A community does not necessarily require the most money, talent, or critical mass to evangelize effectively and make an impact. As already indicated, compared to the rest of Rochester, most Lahu people would be below the average income and education level. Christianity has always operated with a remnant of the few. God's reminder to Israel should be a reminder to ethnic or immigrant-worship communities like the LEBWC. "It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples" (Deut 7:7, ESV). If God can utilize a small people group like Israel, God can certainly use the Lahu immigrants to evangelize the world around them in small and big ways. God ordains and orchestrates people in different places and times to accomplish His plans—including this plan for the Lahu immigrant Christians.

God's message to Israel through the prophet Jeremiah should ring loud to immigrants and ethnic congregations. "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jer 29:7, ESV). There are discussions today about the contributions that immigrants bring to the host country. Immigrants contribute positively to the American economy and culture. Religious contributions need to be added to the list that immigrants bring. More than ever, the influence of Christianity is needed in America. The LEBWC must make disciples through a model of evangelism and outreach in this new context.

### **Basic Assumptions**

This project aims to train the Lahu-English bilingual worship community to effectively share Christ with non-Christians. The researcher presupposes that the LEBWC will reach and evangelize to a multicultural and multiracial audience. This is perhaps due to the make-up of the

congregation and the comfort level of those reaching out. The researcher also assumes that the second and third-generation members of the LEBWC would be more optimistic about moving beyond the status quo and building a better "bridge" and impact on the community. The more the LEBWC serves and evangelizes, the greater interest it will generate from the community to be a part of the Lahu-English congregation. This then impacts the worship service itself, forcing different conversations regarding language and cultural practices. Based on past interactions with the first-generation Lahu people, the researcher presupposes the first-generation members of the LEBWC would be hesitant to completely forsake the Lahu language, culture, and identity to be inclusive of a multicultural environment. The question then would be to wrestle with forsaking the Lahu language to create an inviting and conducive environment for all races and cultures.

Finally, since this study uses qualitative research—which analyzes and understands concepts, topics, and people’s experiences—the researcher assumes that the sample would represent the vast ethnic churches throughout America.<sup>41</sup> This does not invalidate the quantitative approach, which focuses primarily on statistical and numerical data to get precise data and measurements. There will be elements in this project that require numerical data. There are many ethnic churches scattered throughout America that are only reaching and evangelizing their people group. Their vision and strategy of evangelism must broaden like the LEBWC. One of the goals of this research project is to advance God's kingdom in ethnic churches. Rather than reinventing the wheel, ethnic churches can recreate this project using qualitative and quantitative elements in their own context.

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<sup>41</sup> Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 2017), 87.



## Definitions

The key terms relate to the study and field of outreach, evangelism, and culture. It may seem plain at first glance; however, these terms have a subtle nuance when applied in their proper context. Key terms include disciples, evangelism, the Great Commission, immigrant Christians, and outreach. All these terms will be beneficial at certain junctions throughout this paper.

*Disciple.* According to Charles A. Davis, a disciple is “one who moves closer to Jesus as a learner, follower, and lover, together with other disciples.”<sup>42</sup> It is also important to point out that the disciple learns not "about" God, but rather "from" God. This is an important term since the goal of outreach and evangelism is to make disciples.

*Evangelism.* Evangelism is the proclamation and announcement of the gospel.<sup>43</sup> Outreach is not evangelism. Living a godly lifestyle alone is not evangelism. It is imperative that Christians share the good news of the cross.

*The Great Commission.* The Great Commission, according to Matthew 28:19-20, instructs Christians to make disciples everywhere. The Great Commission is a model for mission and discipleship. It is not a trend or fad that unique churches do for church growth.<sup>44</sup> This means even ethnic, and minority churches are tasked to accomplish this.

*Immigrant Christians.* Immigrant Christians are people who migrated to the United States ingrained with different backgrounds, experiences, and stories. Immigrant believers help other immigrants maintain "their ethnic group identity and cohesion, build social capital, and adapt

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<sup>42</sup> Charles A. Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 32.

<sup>43</sup> John Stott and Christopher J.H. Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 61.

<sup>44</sup> Brooks St. Clair Morton, *The Great CoMission: Making Sense of Making Disciples* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc., 2013), 14.

more smoothly to life in an unfamiliar society.”<sup>45</sup> This helps people analyze and understand why certain ethnic groups remain the same throughout the years without assimilating.

*Outreach.* Outreach is engaging and supporting people in need. According to Tim Keller, the gospel leads Christians “to care for the poor” and the community.<sup>46</sup> This means that all Christians, including ethnic congregations, should practice outreach no matter their context.

### **Limitations**

There are three limitations to this project. First, the field research of this study has been limited to one ethnic Lahu-English congregation. There are other ethnic Lahu churches like the LEBWC that are not reaching and evangelizing beyond their ethnicity. These congregations are in California and North Carolina. Moreover, there are Hmong, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Karen ethnic churches that are facing similar situations in the US. Secondly, the field research of this study is limited to seventy to ninety people in attendance at the LEBWC. Though the sample is convenient, it is a small number to research when it is narrowed down to young adults and older people. Finally, the LEBWC was reorganized less than two years ago. Even though this congregation has many years of history, the newly formed leadership and ministry are relatively new.

### **COVID-19 Disruption and Impact**

The COVID-19 pandemic took the world by storm and disrupted social life, the global economy, the education system, communities, and many other domains. The pandemic also

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<sup>45</sup> Rodrigo Serrao and James Cavendish, “The Social Functions and Dysfunctions of Brazilian Immigrant Congregations in ‘terra incognita,’” *Review of Religious Research* 60, no. 3 (2018): 367-388, accessed January 29, 2022, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13644-018-0333-x>.

<sup>46</sup> Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 30.

affected churches in an unprecedented way. Many parishioners longed to fellowship and worship together. Pastors and leaders were nervous about the financial toll of not meeting together in person. Amid many uncertainties, silver linings also caused the church to be forward-thinking—one of them being live streaming. According to Thom S. Rainer, it was estimated that more than 100,000 churches began to live stream their worship services during the pandemic.<sup>47</sup> Included in these statistics is the LEBWC. When the service was first live-streamed, approximately 130 people watched every Sunday.<sup>48</sup> It has dwindled now to about ninety-five viewers from the US, Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar. This is significant in two ways. First, people hear the Word of God preached in English and Lahu. The Facebook live-streaming platform has become a tool for evangelism and reaching others with the gospel of Jesus Christ. One viewer from Myanmar stated, "My faith is strengthened from watching the Lahu-English live stream." Another viewer expressed his appreciation for the live stream because he was able to draw ideas from the service as a pastor. Second, the established live stream allowed the evangelism training to be recorded and shared. The evangelism training was viewed by approximately ninety-five people per week, meaning non-Christians were hearing the gospel, and Christians were taught how to evangelize. Rainer says, "Yes, there have been challenges, but at the same time, it seems some amazing opportunities are unfolding—at least from my perspective."<sup>49</sup>

The second impact relates to social distancing that prevented meeting in small groups. Before COVID-19, the first-generation attendees met weekly in small groups for Bible study, fellowship, and encouragement. The researcher led the Bible study. Since March 2019, the small group has not met due to the city regulations and protocol. Even though they are willing to gather

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<sup>47</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *The Post-Quarantine Church: Six Urgent Challenges and Opportunities that Will Determine the Future of Your Congregation* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2020), 26.

<sup>48</sup> Lahu-English Worship Service, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/462999080951589>.

<sup>49</sup> Thom S. Rainer, *The Post-Quarantine Church*, 27.

in large spaces, they are afraid to meet in a smaller setting. This had an impact on the evangelism training. It would have been more effective to communicate with the participants in a small group merely using the Lahu language.

The final impact that COVID-19 had was that it presented a unique opportunity to share the gospel with the people around us. God often uses "storms in life" to get people's attention. He permits the storm to soften the soil of people's hearts. According to the World Health Organization, "Loneliness, fear of infection, suffering and death for oneself and for loved ones, grief after bereavement and financial worries have also all been cited as stressors leading to anxiety and depression. Among health workers, exhaustion has been a major trigger for suicidal thinking."<sup>50</sup> Lahu people in Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar expressed similar suffering and fear. The researcher often heard some Lahu people say, "The end is here. We have not seen anything like this before." Others stated, "These are fearful times. What is God up to?" Nothing is out of God's sovereignty. God allowed the pandemic to disrupt humanity's cycle of not acknowledging Him (Rom 1:21, ESV). In his article, *The Pandemic as God's Judgment: Does the Biblical Pattern of Disaster and Disciple with a Call to Repent Apply to Covid-19?* Todd Mangum states, "When confronted with disaster, Scripture calls us to look to God for both comfort and self-censure."<sup>51</sup> This was a great opportunity to share the gospel that Jesus is the hope.

### **Delimitations**

The scope of this research will operate under two parameters of sample size and duration.

There are more second-generation believers in the LEBWC. Therefore, to be impartial, this

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<sup>50</sup> "COVID-19 pandemic triggers 25% increase in prevalence of anxiety and depression worldwide," World Health Organization, March 2, 2022, <https://www.who.int/news/item/02-03-2022-covid-19-pandemic-triggers-25-increase-in-prevalence-of-anxiety-and-depression-worldwide>.

<sup>51</sup> Todd Mangum, "The Pandemic as God's Judgment: Does the Biblical Pattern of Disaster and Disciple with a Call to Repent Apply to Covid-19?" accessed November 18, 2020, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/may-web-only/pandemic-as-gods-judgment.html>.

action research will attempt to interview the same amount of people or families in each category: first-generation, second-generation, and third-generation attendees. The second parameter relates to the duration of this action research. The researcher plans to monitor and evaluate this project for approximately eight weeks. Within this time frame, the researcher will encourage the participants to serve and evangelize to people in the community.

### **Thesis Statement**

The persecuted Christians in Jerusalem became scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1, ESV). The Gospel writer Luke says, "Now, those who were scattered went about preaching the word" (Acts 8:4, ESV). Evangelism became a part of their lives as people lived in a new land. In their new context, the persecuted Christians made their home in Hellenistic society. Christians, as a diaspora people group, have been evangelizing to people around them. In the same way, the LEBWC—made up primarily of immigrants and natives—has the privilege to see God's orchestration and carry out one of the primary purposes of the church.

To accomplish this mission of reaching the world for Christ, the researcher will teach and train the LEBWC to know and understand the primary points of the gospel, coupled with the training to do one-on-one personal evangelism. In the LEBWC, well-meaning Christians are hesitant to share about Jesus because they do not know the gospel and are not equipped with the necessary models and tools.

At the project's onset, the participants will be given a pre-questionnaire to determine their current knowledge of the gospel and participation level in evangelism. After the training, there will be a period in that participants will have to apply the learned material and do personal evangelism. The participants will then be given a post-questionnaire to determine the change

after the intervention plan. If the LEBWC at CEFC implements this ministry model of evangelism, then they will see an increase in their evangelistic engagement in the community.

## CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the pursuit of producing a reliable and honest doctor of ministry action project, it is a necessary step to research and analyze the previous collection of academic works in this field of study. The process involves collecting relevant data, analyzing the similarities and differences of voices, and presenting the research that has proceeded with this thesis project. This is a critical step since understanding the past and contemporary works will reveal any gaps and simultaneously offer a sense of direction for this project. Chapter two intends to acknowledge and present significant and relevant works of literature.

### Literature Review

The notion of church evangelism is not a novel concept for modern-day church growth strategy. It extends as far back as the time of Jesus and the apostles. In the modern-day, many ministries present many evangelism strategies and paradigms.<sup>52</sup> This literature review will examine and analyze: 1) The Definition of Evangelism, 2) The Significance of Evangelism, 3) The Essence of Evangelism, 4) Contextualizing Evangelism, 5) The Methods of Evangelism, 6)

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<sup>52</sup> According to David Wheeler, Worship-based evangelism is the understanding that biblical worship leads to evangelism. Priscilla Pope-Levison says media evangelism uses media forms, such as printed word to the internet, to engage gospel conversations and reach people for Christ. These tools include Christian books, gospel tracts, radio, television preachers, movies, etc. The authors of *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* share the "3 Circles" model that has proven effective in sharing the gospel and discipleship. The "3 Circles" begin with "God's design" for humanity. However, because of sin, there is "brokenness." Therefore, one must repent and believe to receive the "gospel." According to Alvin Reid, "mass evangelism has endured [many centuries] as a timeless" model. The late Billy Graham employed this model and preached to more people than any other crusade evangelist. Graham was known for employing the "Steps to Peace with God." D. James Kennedy, in his book *Evangelism Explosion*, equips Christians to evangelize in everyday settings. Finally, Bill Bright wrote the "Four Spiritual Laws" in 1965, which continues to be widely used to communicate the essence of the gospel.

The Tools of Evangelism, 7) Cross-cultural Evangelism, and 8) Immigrants View on Evangelism.

### The Definition of Evangelism

The English word “Evangelism” comes from the Greek word *euangelizomai*, which means “to bring or to announce the good news.”<sup>53</sup> In the Greco-Roman world, evangelizing meant communicating victory in war, and announcing national achievements, births, or weddings.<sup>54</sup> Biblically, according to 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, the good news is that Christ died, was buried, and was raised on the third day. David Gustafson says the gospel is the verbal proclamation of the person and life of Jesus Christ, communicated meaningfully to the listeners.<sup>55</sup> Alvin Reid defines the application of evangelism as “the communication of the gospel by saved people to lost people. It is not inviting people to church or getting people to be religious.”<sup>56</sup> The Lausanne Covenant, an important document for modern church history that calls all evangelicals to unite and work together to make Jesus known, defines evangelism as “spreading the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.”<sup>57</sup> J.C. Macaulay and Robert H. Belton say the gospel is good news because it answers a bad situation.<sup>58</sup> The problem is that

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<sup>53</sup> Stott, and Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 60.

<sup>54</sup> David M. Gustafson, and Robert E. Coleman, *Gospel Witness: Evangelism in Word and Deed* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 39.

<sup>55</sup> David Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2022), 10.

<sup>56</sup> Alvin Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 19.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. More information about The Lausanne Covenant and movement can be found at <https://lausanne.org/content/covenant/lausanne-covenant>. According to David Ruiz, WEA Mission Commission, The Lausanne Covenant is utilized by many mission organizations in Latin America.

<sup>58</sup> J.C. Macaulay, and Robert H. Belton, *Personal Evangelism* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1956), 11.



mankind is guilty of sin, depraved, estranged, deserving of judgment, and helpless.<sup>59</sup> Only by God's provision and grace can a sinner receive the gospel.

The result of evangelism is ultimately in God's sovereignty. The mandate for the Christian is to proclaim or share the good news of the cross and its accomplishment for humanity. John Stott, who was the Rector at All Souls Anglican Church in London, and Christopher J.H. Wright, who is the International Ministries Director of Lanham Partnership International, say, "evangelism must not be defined in terms of results, for this is not how the word is used in the New Testament."<sup>60</sup> Scott D. Hildreth, Assistant Professor of Global Studies, George Liele, Director of the Center for Great Commission Studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Steven A. McKinion, Professor of Theology and Patristic Studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, add to this conversation in agreement and says conversion is a spiritual work only God can accomplish. The Christians' responsibility is to share the gospel, not make converts.<sup>61</sup>

David Gustafson says the goal of evangelism is for people to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.<sup>62</sup> The purpose of evangelism is to win souls for the Lord rather than simply to proclaim the good news of Jesus.<sup>63</sup> In 1918, the Anglican Archbishops' Committee of Inquiry stated, "To evangelize is to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, accept Him as their Savior, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church."<sup>64</sup> Macaulay and

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<sup>59</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 13.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Scott D. Hildreth, and Steven A. McKinion, *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out: Evangelism the Way You Were Born to Do It* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2020), 33.

<sup>62</sup> David Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 10.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

Belton agree that the church is responsible for telling the gospel to sinners to bring people into a saving relationship with Christ.<sup>65</sup>

Evangelism, then, is to proclaim the good news of the gospel, to convert unbelievers to a saving knowledge and relationship with Jesus. This understanding allows Christians to share the gospel with a sense of intentionality, passion, and urgency. They must labor diligently through the saving power of the Holy Spirit.

### The Significance of Evangelism

Another theme in most of the scholarly voices in this literature review is the significance of evangelism. The church has been sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ for over two thousand years. David Gustafson says, "To reflect on the history of evangelism is to reflect on the church because evangelism is not accidental, coincidental, or additional but essential to the church's nature."<sup>66</sup>

Evangelism derives from Jesus' command to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20, ESV). The Gospel writer Matthew leaves his readers with the Great Commission to communicate the significance and authority of Jesus' last words. Notice that the central imperative is to make disciples through evangelism by going, baptizing, and teaching.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, evangelism is not merely one of the church's ministries; it is the church's primary purpose. Brooks St. Clair Morton, an ordained elder in the Northwest Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church and pastor of Idalou United Methodist Church, says, "The Great Commission of Jesus actually may become our structural model for mission and discipleship, rather than our proof-text

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<sup>65</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 10.

<sup>66</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 9.

<sup>67</sup> Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 483.

and holy launching pad for our latest idea or church growth story.”<sup>68</sup> Jim Putman, the co-founder and Senior Pastor of Real Life Ministries, adds to the conversation by stating that discipleship should be the church's primary focus.<sup>69</sup>

It is critical, at this point, to note that discipleship begins with evangelizing. Discipleship doesn't happen unless evangelism occurs first. In *Resuscitating Evangelism*, Ernest Easley and Jordan Easley say that Christians know people are lost and need Jesus, yet they fail to involve themselves in God's solution plan.<sup>70</sup> This should not be okay. Jesus told His disciples to go into all the world and announce the gospel to everyone (Mark 16:15, ESV). That mandate still stands for the church today and should be the priority of all Christians.<sup>71</sup> Easley says, “A lack of evangelism is always a big deal that always leads to an even bigger problem.”<sup>72</sup> That problem is unhealthy churches that are breaking down and closing their doors.<sup>73</sup>

Some have objected to evangelism by stating that proselytizing is wrong and offensive to non-Christians.<sup>74</sup> Others argue that it does not produce moral character.<sup>75</sup> Not everyone is thrilled with evangelism. Lin Cartwright stated, "This failure of the church to produce Christian character in the lives of those who have been reached by evangelism has wrought havoc with the morale of the whole Christian world.”<sup>76</sup> Others have argued that some evangelism is

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<sup>68</sup> Morton, *The Great CoMission*, 14.

<sup>69</sup> Jim Putman, Bobby Harrington, and Robert E. Coleman, *Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 31.

<sup>70</sup> Ernest Easley, and Jordan Easley, *Resuscitating Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2020), 5.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>74</sup> Barna Group, “Almost Half of Practicing Christian Millennials Say Evangelism is Wrong,” accessed October 25, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/>.

<sup>75</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 17.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

emotionalism, causing people to respond to the gospel without any certainty and direction.<sup>77</sup>

Additional objections point out that evangelism ignores social order and community outreach since evangelism only focuses on saving souls. While this is an important charge, the essence of evangelism still stands to convert people and save eternal souls.

### The Essence of Evangelism

The third theme in this literature review is the essence of evangelism concerning the partnership of evangelism and outreach. According to David Gustafson, the word evangelize has been used to include activities that positively impact the church's witness.<sup>78</sup> The kingdom of God brings spiritual elements to the physical world. This means that God intends to merge the spiritual and physical aspects rather than disregard the physical needs of this earth. The debate between evangelism and social justice or social gospel has been one of the controversial themes in the protestant church in North America since the early twentieth century.<sup>79</sup> Grant Osborne, Professor Emeritus of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, understands the need to balance evangelism and social concerns.<sup>80</sup> Osborne states, "Luke would not have insisted that the church choose between evangelism and social concerns, for both the physical and spiritual dimensions of the Christian movement are critical."<sup>81</sup> Stott and Wright concur that social actions (outreach) and evangelism are partners, even though they are independent of each other.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, social action is not pre-evangelism or a means to evangelism. Rather it is

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<sup>77</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 17.

<sup>78</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 9.

<sup>79</sup> Grant Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 22.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Stott, and Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 27.

the demonstration and manifestation of the gospel being proclaimed.<sup>83</sup> To be more precise, Stott and Wright claim that Jesus not only preached about the kingdom of God, He “performed visible signs of the kingdom.”<sup>84</sup> Osborne claims that Christ proclaimed the gospel of the kingdom (evangelism) and healed the sick with equal emphasis.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, he questions the impact of a saved soul if the physical body is ignored and “deteriorates through the church’s neglect.”<sup>86</sup> Eugene Cho, President and CEO of Bread for the World and founder of Quest Church, and Samira Izadi, Founder of Gateway of Grace Ministries, add to this conversation by stating that serving is an essential part of the Christian mission and the church and Christians must care for the vulnerable, the refugee, and the immigrant.<sup>87</sup> Timothy Keller, an American pastor, theologian, and apologist, says, “I am convinced that belief in the gospel leads us to care for the poor and participate actively in our culture, as surely as Luther said true faith leads to good works.”<sup>88</sup> David Gustafson says mercy ministers must be tied with the verbal proclamation of the gospel to be considered evangelistic.<sup>89</sup>

Evangelism is met with various obstacles and challenges today as Christianity continues to decline in America and people become leazier of Christians and the church. Some Christians question the effectiveness of traditional evangelistic practices, while others seem reluctant about

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<sup>83</sup> Stott, and Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 26.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Grant Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, 22.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Eugene Cho, and Samira Izadi Page, *No Longer Strangers: Transforming Evangelism with Immigrant Communities* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 23.

<sup>88</sup> Timothy Keller, *Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 30.

<sup>89</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 10.

the outreach and evangelism paradigm altogether.<sup>90</sup> Making disciples is a difficult task and requires much investment. One must be willing to endure and remain steadfast in doing good works through outreach and proclaiming the gospel through evangelism. Charles A. Davis, former Executive International Director of The Evangelical Alliance Mission, says, "Making disciples takes a lot more investment than one dollar per disciple—it requires everything we have and are."<sup>91</sup>

### Contextualizing Evangelism

Another consistent theme throughout this literature review is the notion of contextualization. It was first developed in the 1970s to help understand the relationship between culture and theology.<sup>92</sup> Contextualization is putting something into context or the process of adapting. To be more precise, according to Brooks St. Clair Morton, contextualization is the "process of successfully bringing something foreign to a new context."<sup>93</sup> Warren R. Beattie, Program Leader at All Nations Christian College in the U.K., says more directly that contextualization is the process of making the gospel "real and vivid" in every culture.<sup>94</sup>

In recent years, the idea of a "big box church" was very popular because many church planters were merely transporting a ministry model from one place to another without much contextualization. To a certain extent, this model worked because of the similarities between

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<sup>90</sup> Rob Toal, "Outreach and Evangelism: What Works Today?" *Christianity Today*, December 2016. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2016/state-of-church-ministry-2017/outreach-and-evangelism-what-works-today.html>.

<sup>91</sup> Charles A. Davis, *Making Disciples Across Cultures: Missional Principles for a Diverse World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 42.

<sup>92</sup> Warren R. Beattie, *Ministry Across Cultures: Sharing the Christian Faith in Asia* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2016), 4.

<sup>93</sup> Morton, *The Great CoMission*, 116.

<sup>94</sup> Beattie, *Ministry Across Cultures*, 4.

many urban cities. In most cases, though, contextualization is necessary to make an impact as Jesus commands of His church. For example, Vyacheslav Tsvirinko, who currently teaches at Divitia Gratiae University, states, “The impact of new Christian immigrants on the religious life of the native English-speaking American population has been minimal if it has taken place at all” due to the lack of active contextualization.<sup>95</sup> He says, "Their physical presence in the community, without active contextualized mission work directed toward people living around these churches, is neither producing significant results for God's kingdom nor is it making significant changes in the religious life of America."<sup>96</sup> In this case, both Brooks St. Clair Morton and Vyacheslav Tsvirinko are stating the same principle that contextualization must occur for something foreign to function in a new context.

A. Scott Moreau, an Associate Professor of Intercultural Studies Emerita at Wheaton College, brings the final thought about contextualization that adds to this conversation. Moreau claims that Christians, in the past, have struggled with attempting to evangelize the "pure" gospel across cultural borders.<sup>97</sup> In addition, the gospel has intrinsic attachments from one culture to another.<sup>98</sup> This is why it is extremely significant to understand the differences and similarities between one context to better impact the communities and people around us. Opoku Onyinah, an Associate Professor at Pentecost University, says, "The gospel must be incarnational in postmodern culture."<sup>99</sup> In other words, Christ can be embodied in any culture or setting.

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<sup>95</sup> Vyacheslav Tsvirinko, *Context and Contextuality: The Mission of Migrant Churches with a Focus on the Pacific Coast Slavic Baptist Association* (Carlisle, UK: Langham Monographs, 2018), 2.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> A. Scott Moreau, Evvy Hay Campbell, and Susan Greener, *Effective Intercultural Communication: A Christian Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 3.

<sup>98</sup> Moreau, Campbell, and Greener, *Effective Intercultural Communication*, 3.

<sup>99</sup> Opoku Onyinah, “New Ways of Doing Evangelism,” *International Review of Mission* 103, no. 1 (2014): 121-128, accessed January 29, 2022. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/irrom.12049>.

Evangelism can be effective through the means of art, media, and movies. The small group approach could also be effective in a society craving intimate relationships.<sup>100</sup> The idea is contextualization. Tim Keller adds to this conversation and says Christians and churches should be sensitive to the culture rather than ignoring or being oblivious to the cultural differences.<sup>101</sup>

### The Methods of Evangelism

The method of evangelism will be dependent on the context of the setting. According to Macaulay and Belton, mass evangelism focuses on gathering as many people as possible to hear the gospel of Jesus announced.<sup>102</sup> Priscilla Pope-Levison calls this the revival model of evangelism.<sup>103</sup> Between 1720 and 1744, the Great Awakening swept through North America and the British colonies, changing the religious landscape and leaving an imprint.<sup>104</sup>

Visitation, sometimes known as "door-to-door" is another form of evangelism that requires initiating conversations about the gospel with people.<sup>105</sup> This practice is closely related to Wesley's practice in the 1700s when he visited families in their homes.<sup>106</sup> Visitations were sometimes set up at regular times; other times, the visitation was spontaneous and occurred anytime during the day.<sup>107</sup> A critic of this approach says knocking on doors to evangelize is "dead on arrival."<sup>108</sup> People do not welcome uninvited guests in this postmodern era.

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<sup>100</sup> Onyinah, "New Ways of Doing Evangelism," 4.

<sup>101</sup> Keller, *Center Church*, 24.

<sup>102</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 22.

<sup>103</sup> Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2020), 29.

<sup>104</sup> John Mark Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 86.

<sup>105</sup> Priscilla Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 7.

<sup>106</sup> Jack Jackson, *Offering Christ: John Wesley's Evangelistic Vision* (Nashville, TN: Kingswood Books, 2017), 153.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 49.



The third form, according to Priscilla Pope-Levison, is liturgical. This is the integration of evangelism in the church's calendar year.<sup>109</sup> This model often creates programs and events for outsiders to experience and hear the gospel. For example, many churches do Christmas programs or concerts to draw those in the community.

The fourth method of evangelism is small group, originally from Wesley's class meetings.<sup>110</sup> In this approach, eight to twelve people meet intending to study the Bible, primarily the gospel.<sup>111</sup> This approach remains popular even today. It is a safe place for new people to explore, dialogue, and create deep community experiences.<sup>112</sup>

Personal evangelism is the final form of evangelism that is most appealing and effective. And yet, according to Priscilla Pope-Levison, Christians often fail to share their faith because they are ambivalent and do not want to cause conflict. Macaulay and Belton say personal evangelism is distinct in that it can be used in conjunction with other methods of evangelism or independently of other forms.<sup>113</sup> In his book, *Evangelism: A Concise History*, John Terry says the early church and churches throughout history until the 1900s shared their faith naturally and personally with people around them.<sup>114</sup> There was no need for a schedule or organization by the church. It was spontaneous, unplanned, and without restraint. People are evangelizing all the time anyways, telling people about exciting news around them. The truth is that people share what they are zealous about. They want to invite others to experience their joy.<sup>115</sup> It does not require a Bible degree. One does not have to be a great speaker or teacher. It does not have to be

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<sup>109</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 7.

<sup>110</sup> Jackson, *Offering Christ*, 121.

<sup>111</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 7.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>113</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 31.

<sup>114</sup> Terry, *Evangelism: A Concise History*, 138.

<sup>115</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 11.

in the church building.<sup>116</sup> Christians, who are zealous about their faith, can utilize this method of evangelism with boldness and flexibility.

### The Tools of Evangelism

Many tools of evangelism can be employed in the modern church. Media is a tool of communication.<sup>117</sup> According to Levison, media evangelism is sometimes considered “pre-evangelism, focused on seekers and surfers.”<sup>118</sup> Macaulay and Belton state that the radio has become one of the most successful methods to propagate the gospel of Jesus.<sup>119</sup> The first religious radio broadcast was in Pittsburgh on January 2, 1921.<sup>120</sup> The gospel continues to penetrate the world's mission fields, even closed countries, through airwaves.<sup>121</sup> Another effective tool of evangelism is television. Unlike the radio, there is more personality involved in using this tool of evangelism. One of the earlier television broadcasts was from Pat Robertson, who launched *The 700 Club*.<sup>122</sup> Today, it reaches millions of people with the gospel around the clock. The internet has been widely used since the 1980s as another tool of evangelism.<sup>123</sup> Among the first full worship service was Alpha Church in 1999.<sup>124</sup> Today, one can find almost every piece of information about the church on its website, Facebook page, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat.<sup>125</sup> The final tool of effective evangelism is the use of literature, which

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<sup>116</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 19.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 25.

<sup>120</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 164.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

includes Bibles, tracts, magazines, and books.<sup>126</sup> With the gospel increasing in places like Africa, Latin America, and Asia, there is a need for more literature to make disciples and establish new believers in the faith.<sup>127</sup>

### Cross-Cultural Evangelism

According to the Oxford Reference, multiculturalism “refers to the coexistence of people with many cultural identities in a common state, society, or community.”<sup>128</sup> According to Douglas J. Brouwer, a retired Presbyterian pastor, the times are changing in America. “According to the Pew Research Center, the U.S. is approaching a kind of multicultural tipping point within the next few years, so that whites will no longer constitute the majority. Dates vary for when this change will likely happen, but 2050 seems to researchers to be a conservative guess.”<sup>129</sup> This means that evangelism and outreach in the future must have the lens of “various national backgrounds, racial/ethnic groups, and skin colors.”<sup>130</sup> Kevin Ezell, President of the North American Mission Board, says thriving churches today are not only theologically robust and multigenerational but are ethnically diverse and connected to the global church.<sup>131</sup> Mark Hearn, who has been a pastor of a multicultural church for thirty-five years, agrees with Ezell and Brouwer in his statement that churches in America will become less effective unless they

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<sup>126</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 26.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Oxford Reference, s.v. “multiculturalism (n),” accessed December 19, 2022, <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780195123715.001.0001/acref-9780195123715-e-1123>.

<sup>129</sup> Douglas J. Brouwer, *How to Become a Multicultural Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2017), 11.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Mark Hearn, *Techni Color: Inspiring Your Church to Embrace Multicultural Ministry* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 11.

learn to minister to a multicultural society.<sup>132</sup> This truth, for Hearn's church, is not in the future, but it is already happening today in his ministry.<sup>133</sup> Douglas J. Brouwer gives a similar warning to the Anglo-American church to be more receptive to the global voices to avoid the risk of being unprepared for ministry in the post-American church world.<sup>134</sup> The multiracial church perspective on evangelism and outreach is unique because it requires more than dumping a ministry model in any location. It necessitates a strategic plan, intentionality, and contextualization.

### Immigrants' View on Evangelism

The final theme in this literature review should be the migrant church's engagement in cross-cultural evangelism and outreach. Rodrigo Serrao, Assistant Professor of Sociology, and James Cavendish, Associate Professor of Sociology, state that when the immigrants' only social venue is the ethnic church, it stalls their integration into the larger community around them.<sup>135</sup> This causes insurmountable ramifications for the effectiveness of the immigrant church or community. Vyacheslav Tsvirinko, who seems to agree with Serrao and Cavendish, says the immigrant Russian-speaking churches of the PCSBA in America are more inclined to isolate themselves from their current society and therefore have little impact on their surrounding communities.<sup>136</sup> Tsvirinko suggests these Russian immigrant churches transition into a multicultural church, consisting of immigrants and native people, to make any impact “on the

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<sup>132</sup> Hearn, *Techni Color*, 22.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Brouwer, *How to Become a Multicultural Church*, 39.

<sup>135</sup> Rodrigo Serrao, and James Cavendish, “The Social Functions and Dysfunctions of Brazilian Immigrant Congregations in ‘terra incognita.’” *Review of Religious Research*, vol. 60, Iss. 3 (2018): 367-388. Accessed January 29, 2022. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s13644-018-0333-x>, 12.

<sup>136</sup> Tsvirinko, *Context and Contextuality*, 2.

religious life of American society.”<sup>137</sup> There is an agreement between Tsvirinko and Rodrigo Serrao that closed communities (e.g., ethnic churches) cause indisputable barriers for migrant churches. Perhaps, this is not intentional. Nonetheless, the repercussions are not only real and negative, but it is also counterproductive to the advancement of the kingdom of God. Ethnic ministries often serve as a way of delaying the integration process.<sup>138</sup> Similar to the diaspora Christians in ancient times, migrant Christians have been sent to be the light and salt of God. In this sense, they act as missionaries. Melanie E. Trexler, Associate Professor of Religion and Philosophy, says the Christian presence of living alongside, befriending, and entering the community allows opportunities to communicate the gospel.<sup>139</sup> If this is correct, ethnic communities and churches will not have opportunities to spread the gospel since they live in isolation from the rest of the surrounding community.

Christians, whether native or immigrants are called to engage in their communities. Dawit Olike Terfassa says that most migrant Christians immigrating to Europe are spreading Christianity in a diminished Christian society.<sup>140</sup> Terfassa further states, “The majority of migrant Christians come from a context where discipleship-making as a life-transforming encounter is intrinsically interrelated to evangelism and is part of the missional identity of every local church.”<sup>141</sup> Similarly, according to Philip Hughes, the influx of Christian immigrants in

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<sup>137</sup> Tsvirinko, *Context and Contextuality*, 2.

<sup>138</sup> Serrao, and Cavendish, “The Social Functions and Dysfunctions of Brazilian Immigrant Congregations in ‘terra incognita,’” 15.

<sup>139</sup> Melanie E. Trexler, *Evangelizing Lebanon: Baptists, Missions, and the Question of Cultures* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016), 121.

<sup>140</sup> Dawit Olike Terfassa, “The Impact of Migration on Evangelism in Europe,” *International Review of Mission* 103, no. 2 (2014): 2, accessed February 5, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1111/irom.12061>, 2.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

Australia positively impacts the otherwise declining Christian denominations.<sup>142</sup> For example, from 2006-2016, there were 371,571 Catholic immigrants and 45,000 Baptist immigrants who influenced the growth of these denominations.<sup>143</sup> To tie this together to the previous thought, ethnic churches must be willing to move beyond their own ethnic group and participate in the overall community to make any gospel impact. Migration is one of the most influential causes of religious changes for the better.<sup>144</sup> Therefore, migrant churches today can greatly impact the surrounding communities if they allow themselves to be opened to new opportunities.

The migrants encounter various issues residing in a foreign land. These obstacles include loneliness, injustice, language and cultural barriers, diversity, etc. According to Serrao and Cavendish, ethnic congregations and communities offer the kind of haven migrants seek. In some ways, the ethnic congregation helps to build community, identity, and an onramp to help adapt to an unfamiliar society.<sup>145</sup> Hughes states that due to the language barrier, immigrants in Australia are forming their own small congregations.<sup>146</sup> However, the haven social groups and "own small congregations" can have detrimental repercussions and hinder the process of assimilation. In this context, it restrains the impact that immigrants can have in sharing the gospel with their potential neighbors, friends, co-workers, etc.

Despite the challenges, it seems obvious that the hand of God is in worldwide immigration as God's method to spread the gospel.<sup>147</sup> God orchestrates and permits

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<sup>142</sup> Philip Hughes, "Immigration and Its Continuing Impact on Religion in Australia," *Christian Research Association* 27, no. 4 (2017): 2, accessed October 26, 2022, <https://search-informit-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/epdf/10.3316/informit.298642021361892>.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>145</sup> Serrao, and Cavendish, "The Social Functions and Dysfunctions of Brazilian Immigrant Congregations in 'terra incognita,'" 1.

<sup>146</sup> Hughes, "Immigration and Its Continuing Impact on Religion in Australia," 6.

<sup>147</sup> Terfassa, "The Impact of Migration on Evangelism in Europe," 2.

circumstances and situations in ways that sometimes make no sense to the human mind.

Certainly, God seemed absent and indifferent when Stephen was martyred in Acts 7. And yet, because of the persecution, the gospel reached the gentiles in Antioch. Acts 11:21 says, "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord" (ESV). Daniel Yang, a missiologist and church planter, says one might speculate that refugees were sent to the United States to be converted. However, Yang wonders if some refugees were sent to evangelize and reach Americans with the gospel.<sup>148</sup> Immigrants in the United States, including the LEBWC, can reach their community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### Literature Review Conclusion

This literature review examined and analyzed: 1) The Definition of Evangelism, 2) The Significance of Evangelism, 3) The Essence of Evangelism, 4) Contextualizing Evangelism, 5) The Methods of Evangelism, 6) The Tools of Evangelism, 7) Cross-cultural Evangelism, and 8) Immigrants' View on Evangelism. As reflected in this literature review, much work has been done on these subjects. All biblical scholars and voices seem to agree on the significance of evangelism even though there are various opinions on the balance of evangelism and outreach (social gospel ministries). In addition, scholars understand the necessity and significance of contextualization, whether local or cross-cultural. Finally, amid the huge library of past academic works in this field, there seem to be few works on ethnic congregations serving and reaching out in their new context. Scholars do not seem to address the challenges, obstacles, and dynamics of

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<sup>148</sup> Eric Constanzo, Daniel Yang, and Matthew Soerens, *Inalienable: How Marginalized Kingdom Voices Can Help Save the American Church* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2022), 11-12.

Ethnic churches evangelizing and reaching their new communities.<sup>149</sup> Perhaps, this is a gap in this field, or more research needs to be done by the researcher.

### **Theological Foundations**

At the outset, it is imperative to state that evangelism is grounded in biblical truth. It is not based on a church strategy for growth nor a contemporary model for reaching the lost. It is theologically rooted in Scripture. Evangelism is woven into the story and heart of God. This section establishes biblical precedence for evangelism in four areas: 1) Evangelism, the Heartbeat of God, 2) Evangelism in the Old Testament, 3) Jesus the Evangelist, and 4) Evangelism in the Early Church.

#### **Evangelism, the Heartbeat of God**

God created humanity in His image (Gen 1:27, ESV). Above all of creation, in all its complexities and intricacies, mankind is the pinnacle (Ps 8:4, ESV). Gangel and Bramer state that "man" is the only creature God created in His image, and they share a likeness that is not shared with other creatures.<sup>150</sup> In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland point out the personal statement God makes about humanity, "Let us make," as

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<sup>149</sup> Scholarly work on this subject may be limited due to the lack of minority perspectives. According to R. Stephen Warner, a sociology professor at the University of Chicago, "the great majority of immigrants coming to America are Christian." Indeed, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists also enter and contribute to American religious society. However, two-thirds or more of the new immigrants are Christian. Why are these new Christian immigrants not evangelizing in their new context if this is the case? Why is there no intentional or strategic intervention plan? According to the researcher, immigrants' priority for coming to the United States is not religion or evangelism. Their goals, hopes, and aspirations are for a better life. Evangelizing and church-related functions stay within their people group. Therefore, there is a lack of perspective and interest. As Christianity shifts from the Global north to the south, the researcher is hopeful that more conversations on this subject will surface and be added to the overall discussion on evangelism.

<sup>150</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, and Stephen J. Bramer, *Genesis*, vol. 1, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 13.



opposed to the third person, "Let there be," when God was creating all other creation.<sup>151</sup> Human beings are special creatures.<sup>152</sup> They are, personally, loved by God. They have a relationship with the God of the universe in a way that none of the other creation shares. Gangel and Bramer go on to say, "Since God and humans share such likeness, it should not be surprising that a relationship between God and humans is a focus in the rest of Scripture."<sup>153</sup>

In Genesis 3, even after the relationship was shattered, God had a plan of restoration for their relationship. The first utterance of the gospel and judgment is found in Genesis 3:15 following the fall of mankind. God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel" (Gen 3:14, ESV). Gangel and Bramer say this is the first prophetic word of promise and hope.<sup>154</sup> Longman III and Garland state the seed of the woman is one who would crush the snake and bring an end to the curse that it brought.<sup>155</sup>

Even after the fall of mankind, the heartbeat of God remains for people—now a cursed people. God's deep desire is to offer salvation to lost people. The Gospel writer, John, says God loves humanity in this way; that He gave His son Jesus Christ to die on the cross and pay for the penalty of humanity's sin. If anyone responds by believing in Christ as their Lord and Savior, they will be saved (John 3:16, ESV). God did not only send Jesus to redeem humanity by His sacrifice on the cross but also sent Jesus with a clear message of salvation and hope for the world

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<sup>151</sup> Tremper Longman III, and David E. Garland, *Genesis-Leviticus*, vol. 1, The Expositor's Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 88.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Gangel, and Bramer, *Genesis*, 43.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

(John 8:42, ESV). Gangel says God's purpose has always been to save lost people, not condemn.<sup>156</sup>

God's heart is for lost people to be reconciled to Him (2 Cor 5:19, ESV). Mark A. Seifrid says, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."<sup>157</sup> God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn it but to save the world through Him (John 3:17, ESV). When Christians proclaim Jesus Christ to the world, they announce God's heart of love for the world. God's heartbeat to offer salvation to lost souls continues today through the church (Eph 3:10-12, ESV). This is the reason and heartbeat for evangelism in its finest and purest form.

### Evangelism in the Old Testament

God's divine mission beginning in the Old Testament, is to make Himself known.<sup>158</sup> God's desire for revelation is not due to the lack of self-sufficiency but rather an overflow of the Triune God. Deuteronomy 10:15 says, "Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day" (ESV). As the God who owns the heavens and everything in it, God chose to reveal His affection to Israel's forefathers, above all the nations.<sup>159</sup>

### **Abraham, the First Evangelist**

God revealed Himself to Abraham and established a covenant with him. After the fall, the struggle between God and mankind and humanity against each other became more prevalent.

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<sup>156</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *John*, vol. 4, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 55.

<sup>157</sup> Mark A. Seifrid, *2 Corinthians*, vol. 15, Pillar NT Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 257.

<sup>158</sup> Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 75.

<sup>159</sup> Doug McIntosh, *Deuteronomy*, vol. 3, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 136.

And yet, God did not forget the prophetic words from Genesis 3:15. God chose Israel's earliest ancestors "in a land far away and superintended their migration."<sup>160</sup> It is worth noting that God revealed Himself to Abraham during a time when Abraham was not seeking God but worshipping idols (Josh 24:2, ESV). Amid judgment following the dispersion of the nations at Babylon, God offered Abraham salvation and announced the gospel to him.<sup>161</sup> "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'In you shall all the nations be blessed'" (Gal 3:8, ESV). Abraham of Ur of the Chaldeans witnessed a glimpse of the gospel and was foretold how the good news of the blessing would flow to all the nations.<sup>162</sup> Jesus said Abraham saw His coming and was glad (John 8:56, ESV).

In Genesis 12:1-3, God instructed Abraham to leave his country and that He would make Abraham into a great nation, and that all the peoples of the earth would be blessed through him. Genesis 12:5 states, "And Abraham took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan" (ESV). According to Michael Carasik, "the people that they had acquired" in Hebrew is literally, "the souls that they had made." Carasik states that some claim that Abraham acquired and taught these people to worship the Holy One.<sup>163</sup> Matthew Henry claims Abraham proselytized the servants and persuaded them to worship the true God.<sup>164</sup> Abraham was more than the deposit or recipient of the gospel; he embodied and shared it.

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<sup>160</sup> Kenneth A. Mathews, *Teach the Text Commentary Series: Joshua* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2016), 63.

<sup>161</sup> Longman III, and Garland, *Genesis-Leviticus*, 183.

<sup>162</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 12.

<sup>163</sup> Michael Carasik, *The Commentators' Bible: Genesis: The Rubin JPS Miqra'ot Gedolot* (Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 2018), 11.

<sup>164</sup> Matthew Henry, *Genesis – Complete Bible Commentary Verse by Verse* (Grupo Oxigenio Ltda-ME, 2017), 497.

Ultimately, out of Abraham would come the seed, who is Christ (Gal 3:16, ESV). Two thousand years later, the Jews witnessed the coming of Jesus, who would bless and rescue the world from the powers of Satan.

### **Israel, an Evangelistic Nation**

Israel, Abraham's descendants, is chosen to be God's servant, to be a light, and to "reach" the ends of the earth. Trent C. Butler says Israel was commissioned to be God's ambassador with "full credentials at the foreign courts."<sup>165</sup> Paul D. Wegner agrees and states that Israel was chosen among all the nations to reveal God's magnificence and splendor.<sup>166</sup> When talking about a nation, the history of evangelism begins with Israel, who was called to be the "kingdom of priests" and a "light for the gentiles" (Exod 19:4-6; Isa 42:6, ESV). This began with promises and prophecies of God.<sup>167</sup> David Gustafson says, "The promises and prophecies given to Israel were signposts of what would come fully in Jesus and the church's witness to him."<sup>168</sup>

God called Israel to respond in faith and obedience, as modeled in Abraham's response.<sup>169</sup> The covenant between God and Israel consisted of Israel's acknowledgment of the one and only true God and commitment to love and obey Him.<sup>170</sup> This paradigm from Abraham and Israel is to be replicated throughout the world and in all nations through the emphasis on mission and

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<sup>165</sup> Trent C. Butler, *Isaiah*, vol. 15, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 269.

<sup>166</sup> Paul D. Wegner, *Isaiah: An Introductory and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 17.

<sup>167</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 12.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Wright, *The Mission of God*, 215.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

evangelism. Claus Westermann says, "The blessing of God announced in the promise to Abraham does not achieve its purpose until it encompasses all the families of the earth."<sup>171</sup>

### **God's Revelation and Call to Moses**

Moses witnessed the gospel in Egypt when Yahweh revealed Himself and called Moses to lead and rescue His people from the hands of the Egyptians (Exod 3:7-8, ESV). Israel was in bondage to Egypt. "God cared for his people and provided for their deliverance."<sup>172</sup> In *Evangelism in the Old Testament: The Unfolding Drama of World Missions*, Norman DeJong says one of God's divine motives in the ten plagues was to display His power to the Egyptians.<sup>173</sup> According to DeJong, this is either evangelism or pre-evangelism.<sup>174</sup> In his commentary on Exodus 7:5, Daniel Gurtner says, "none will fail to know of The Lord's identity" when He displays might and judgment in the plagues and the exodus.<sup>175</sup>

God not only demonstrated His power through Moses, but Moses was a type or shadow of Jesus who would eventually come and reveal the invisible God (Col 1:15, ESV). Albeit it was in the embryonic form of evangelism, Moses and the prophets spoke of the Messiah coming to suffer, die, rise from the dead, and bring the "message of light to His own people and to the gentiles (Acts 26:22-23)."<sup>176</sup> According to Kenneth O. Gangel, the early Christians believed

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<sup>171</sup> Claus Westermann, *Genesis* (New York, NY: T&T Clark International, 2004), 99.

<sup>172</sup> Glen S. Martin, *Exodus*, vol. 2, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 19.

<sup>173</sup> Norman DeJong, *Evangelism in the Old Testament: The Unfolding Drama of World Missions* (Wheaton IL: Crossway, 2021), 33.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Daniel Gurtner, *Exodus: A Commentary on the Greek Text of Codex Vaticanus* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 263.

<sup>176</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 12.

these messianic passages of the Old Testament were referring to Jesus.<sup>177</sup> In the wilderness, Moses lifted the serpent on a pole, and whoever looked at this symbolism of deliverance was saved (Num 21:4-9, ESV). These two events foreshadow the power of the gospel that would eventually travel beyond cultures, languages, and other barriers.

### **Jonah the Evangelist**

In the story of Jonah, the gospel travels to the gentile world—but not just any kind—the Ninevites, who were Israel's enemies. Jonah, a prophet in Israel, was called and commissioned by God to cross geographical and cultural boundaries to bring a message of judgment and mercy.<sup>178</sup> Jonah's interaction with God displays God's heart and longing relationship with non-Israelites.<sup>179</sup> Jonah understood the wrath and compassion of God because his people, Israel, had experienced both before. When Jonah was called, he fully understood “the driving force behind God's actions and that God's justice is tempered with mercy.”<sup>180</sup>

Nineveh was not only Israel's enemy and a threat but they were filled with wickedness and evil (Jonah 1:2, ESV).<sup>181</sup> The Assyrians were known for being cruel and violent. They would destroy their enemies' cities and burn them to the ground. They tortured and mutilated their enemies. They forced family members to parade around with their loved ones' decapitated heads

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<sup>177</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 434.

<sup>178</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 15

<sup>179</sup> Daniel C. Timmer, *Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2021), 47.

<sup>180</sup> Rosa Ching Shao, *Jonah: A Pastoral and Contextual Commentary* (Cumbria, UK: Langham Global Library, 2019), 10.

<sup>181</sup> Eric C. Redmond, Bill Curtis, and Ken Fentress, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 24.

on a stick.<sup>182</sup> Assyria was blatant and proud of their wickedness. Because of this, the most powerful nation in the known world at the time was on the precipice of divine judgment and utter destruction (Jonah 3:10, ESV).

And yet, God commissioned Jonah to preach God's message to bring about repentance.<sup>183</sup> After Jonah proclaimed God's message, the people of Nineveh believed and grieved over their sins (Jonah 3:5, ESV). What is most telling about God's heart and character is found in Jonah 4:2, in Jonah's prayer to God, "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster" (ESV).<sup>184</sup> Jonah is furious with God for sparing the Ninevites' lives. In essence, Jonah is angry and bitter with the revelation of God's character toward gentiles which was also expressed to His people in Exodus 34.<sup>185</sup> Jonah believed the Ninevites were unworthy of this display of grace.<sup>186</sup> The Lord is compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, and He forgives sin to all people who are willing to repent. In application, James Bruckner says even violent enemies should be allowed to hear God's message, repent, and be forgiven.<sup>187</sup> Nothing will stop God from extending salvation to all peoples, even those in rebellion and worshipping many gods.<sup>188</sup> In addition, Jonah's story informs modern disciples of Jesus that God's sovereignty and insistence will come to fruition according to His will—not even stubborn prophets will thwart His plan of salvation for the

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<sup>182</sup> Timothy Keller, *Rediscovering Jonah: The Secret of God's Mercy* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2018), 16.

<sup>183</sup> Trent C. Butler, *Exodus*, vol. 2, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 263.

<sup>184</sup> Timmer, *Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah*, 77.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>187</sup> James Bruckner, *Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 244.

<sup>188</sup> Billy K. Smith, and Frank Page, *The New American Commentary: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of the Holy Spirit* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group), 250.

world.<sup>189</sup> God can use a stubborn evangelist to reach people of different cultures and geography, non-Israelites, for His glory and purpose. Jonah's story is a prime example.

### **Elisha Converts a Non-Israelite**

The second event that foreshadows Jesus occurs in 2 Kings 5:1-27. The scene shifts from Israel to Syria to a Syrian general named Naaman.<sup>190</sup> Naaman's reputation was impeccable, and he was considered a great man. However, he had an extreme disease called leprosy, and no cure was known then.<sup>191</sup> Leprosy is marked by "swellings, scabs, white spots, bright or dark patches or flaking skin."<sup>192</sup> Naaman was desperate for a solution, so, by recommendation, he went to the king of Israel to seek help. Eventually, Naaman was introduced to Elisha, who instructed Naaman through a series of washing. Naaman had expectations to be received with respect and taken through a distinctive healing process. Instead, he was instructed to dip in an Israelite River.<sup>193</sup> Naaman became healed from leprosy (2 Kings 5:14, ESV). Naaman's response in 2 Kings 5:17b is telling of his new state of mind. "...For from now on your servant will not offer burnt offering or sacrifice to any god but the Lord" (ESV). Gary Inrig says this is conversion language talk.<sup>194</sup> Naaman proclaimed the power of God in the healing, and Naaman became a proselyte. Through Elisha's miracle-working faith in God and evangelism, Naaman became a

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<sup>189</sup> Smith, and Page, *The New American Commentary*, 244.

<sup>190</sup> Gary Inrig, *2 Kings*, vol. 7, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 224.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Donald J. Wiseman, *1 and 2 Kings: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 222.

<sup>193</sup> Richard, D. Patterson, and Hermann J. Austel, *1 & 2 Kings*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, ed. Tremper Longman III, and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 262.

<sup>194</sup> Gary Inrig, *2 Kings*, vol. 7, Holman Bible Commentary, 224.



God-fearing gentile. "God's blessing had been designed for Naaman's response in repentance and faith."<sup>195</sup>

### Tying Outreach with Evangelism in the Old Testament

Coupled with proclaiming God's power and glory in word, Israel was called to help and serve the poor and the needy as an extension of God's love for people (Deut 15:11; Prov 31:20, ESV). This was also a display of God's generosity toward Israel. Doug McIntosh says Moses instructed Israel to always be openhanded to their fellow citizens, especially toward the poor and needy.<sup>196</sup> Some have tried to argue that generosity and care should be for those in the faith. Moses instructs Israel to permit the foreigners to glean from the field as an act of service to the poor (Lev 23:22, ESV). How will the nations know and understand God? It would be through the proclamation and generosity of Israel. The notion of evangelizing and outreach go hand in hand with the Old Testament. Through proclamation and outreach, Israel was to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" to the world (Exod 19:6, ESV). These same words would later echo the New Testament church to proclaim the virtues of God.

### Jesus the Evangelist

Jesus is the ultimate model of an evangelist in three main ways: the substance of His teaching, the posture of His heart, and the methods by which He accomplished the mission from God. Jesus said He was sent to preach the good news of the kingdom of God and heal people with disease and sickness (Luke 4:43; Matt 4:23, ESV). The first thing to notice is the passive form in Luke 4:43. Jesus did not come on His own but was sent by God the Father to accomplish

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<sup>195</sup> Patterson, and Austel, *1 & 2 Kings*, 262.

<sup>196</sup> Doug McIntosh, *Deuteronomy*, vol. 3, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 190.

a mission. As already mentioned, the heartbeat of God is to save people who are lost and far from Him. The second thing to notice is the phrase "kingdom of God." Jesus came to preach the good news of the "kingdom of God." What exactly is the "kingdom of God." According to James R. Edwards, the kingdom of God refers to the reign and rule of God as the exalted one above all gods and kingdoms.<sup>197</sup> Stuart K. Weber claims the phrase "the good news of the kingdom" is used interchangeably throughout the gospels with such phrasing as "the gospel," "the gospel of Christ," and "the gospel of God."<sup>198</sup> Weber says, "Jesus' message is good news because it focuses on the forgiveness and restoration of God."<sup>199</sup> The third thing to notice is the holistic ministry of Jesus, exemplified by His care for people's physical needs. Trent C. Butler says Jesus' ministry involved preaching the gospel and addressing the needy people who were brought to Him.<sup>200</sup>

It is worth pausing here to point out the posture of Jesus' heart. He evangelized, taught, and served by identifying Himself as a servant of God. Even though He was God, He emptied Himself and became a servant to the Father (Phil 2:6-7, ESV). To say that the God of the universe became a human is one thing, but to take the nature of a "servant" is another level of humility.<sup>201</sup> Even though Jesus was God, He did not come to earth to be served. Rather, He laid

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<sup>197</sup> James R. Edwards, *Luke*, Pillar NT Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 148.

<sup>198</sup> Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 483.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Trent C. Butler, *Luke*, vol. 3, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 65.

<sup>201</sup> Max Anders, *Philippians*, vol. 8, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 224.

down His life on the cross for people (Matt 20:28, ESV). Jesus paid the ransom price of death so that many people could be set free.<sup>202</sup>

Finally, Jesus evangelized in multiple ways, including in small groups, large groups, and one-on-one, and often it was spontaneous. Jesus could have disciplined many people, yet He decided to only call twelve people, teach them, and send them out. Matthew 5:1-2 states, "Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. He opened his mouth and taught them." Stuart K. Weber says it is good to take note of the audience. Jesus saw a crowd and slipped away to be with His disciples.<sup>203</sup> In Luke 9, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God to five thousand people. In contrast to the disciples' intention to eliminate the crowd, Jesus saw the crowd's needs, had compassion, and met their spiritual and physical needs.<sup>204</sup> Jesus also evangelized one-on-one to a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council (John 3:1, ESV). According to D.A. Carson, even though Nicodemus had a certain respect for Jesus, he failed to believe Jesus' witness.<sup>205</sup>

Nicodemus has found Jesus' teaching hard to understand, but Jesus turns that incredulity into a fundamentally Christological question. Nicodemus had approached Jesus with a certain amount of respect (v. 2), but he had not even begun to appreciate who Jesus was. At the bottom, Nicodemus's failure was not a failure of intellect but a failure to believe Jesus' witness: *you people do not accept our testimony*. The failure to believe was more reprehensible than the failure to understand since it betrayed a fundamentally inadequate appreciation of who Jesus is.<sup>206</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Leon Morris, *Matthew*, Pillar NT Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 511.

<sup>203</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 56.

<sup>204</sup> Butler, *Luke*, 143.

<sup>205</sup> D.A. Carson, *John*, Pillar NT Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 198.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*

It is significant to note that Nicodemus failed to believe the great evangelist—Jesus. Finally, Jesus' method of evangelism was sometimes spontaneous, such as the example with the Samaritan woman found in John 4.

### Evangelism in the New Testament

The final biblical precedence for evangelism is seen in God's work through the early church. Before Jesus ascended back into heaven, He gave the final command to His disciples to make more disciples of all nations (Matt 28:18-20, ESV). In these passages, Jesus lays down the foundation for this mission: His authority. Stuart K. Weber says Jesus' authority is the catalyst for success.<sup>207</sup> Secondly, the command is to produce disciples. At the heart of mission, evangelism, and outreach is to make more learners of Jesus Christ.<sup>208</sup> Finally, the method to make disciples is by the three participles: going, baptizing, and teaching. Jesus gave this final command to His disciples and instructed the early church not to go until they had received the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4, ESV). They would be His witnesses in "Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, ESV).

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came on the disciples and prepared them to reach the world. And yet, the disciples became hesitant and cowardly because of persecution and opposition until God forced them out through great persecution against the church in Jerusalem (Acts 8:1, ESV). Acts 8:4 says, "Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went" (ESV). One could argue that this was merely a coincidence. Another perspective could be that God's sovereignty allowed the persecution to drive the early church to reach out as Jesus had commanded. David Peterson is also intrigued and says Luke "observes the extent to which those

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<sup>207</sup> Weber, *Matthew*, 483.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*

who had been scattered were involved in the task of evangelism."<sup>209</sup> Grant R. Osborne claims that the Spirit had to force the early church outward because they had misunderstood their mandate to evangelize, interpreting it as the nations coming to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel.<sup>210</sup> The early Jewish church became another sort of diaspora living amongst the Gentiles. In essence, they became refugees pushed out of their nation. However, Ajith Fernando says the early church was not sent out as refugees but as missionaries.<sup>211</sup> Peterson agrees and says ordinary disciples of Jesus became evangelists and preached the Word wherever they went.<sup>212</sup>

Saul, who became the apostle Paul, was the person that persecuted the church and caused havoc on the Christians (Acts 8, ESV). In God's sovereignty, Paul caused the church to scatter into other cities. Even though Paul, a trained Pharisee, had plans to destroy the church, God had a different purpose and changed the course of his direction. Gangel says God selected a "highly trained and full-time missionary to the Gentiles."<sup>213</sup> This speaks to the significance and priority of evangelism. In Acts 13, Paul and Barnabas began the first missionary journey to evangelize in places they were familiar with. Kenneth O. Gangel says, "some accepted the gospel, some rejected it, and others became stumbling blocks to those who were trying to understand the truth."<sup>214</sup> This would be the pattern everywhere Paul went to evangelize. Paul's later missionary journeys would take him more and more west as the Holy Spirit led.

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<sup>209</sup> David Peterson, *Acts*, Pillar NT Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), 236.

<sup>210</sup> Osborne, *Acts*, 108.

<sup>211</sup> Ajith Fernando, *Acts*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 262.

<sup>212</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 278.

<sup>213</sup> Gangel, *Acts*, 138.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

In the end, the book of Acts is about the forward and progressive movement of the Gospel through evangelism led by God through the Holy Spirit.<sup>215</sup> Luke, the writer of Acts, summarizes the message that Paul proclaimed about the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>216</sup> God wants the church today to continue to evangelize and share how one can enter the kingdom of God through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Bible is clear from the examples above that the gospel must continue to advance. It is one of the main thrusts of the Bible. The good news of Jesus must be proclaimed to everyone because evangelism is the heart of God. It is rooted in the Old Testament. Jesus, the evangelist, models it, and it was practiced in the early Church.

### **Theoretical Foundations**

Following the full weight of biblical precedence to spread the gospel everywhere, the Lahu-English bilingual worship community has the responsibility and privilege to share in the work of evangelism. The upside of the here and now is that Christians do not have to start afresh and reinvent the wheel. Modern proclaimers of the gospel of Jesus can look back, assess, and build upon what has been attempted. This section aims to review and adopt a method that would be compatible with the LEBWC.

### **Incompatible Models of Evangelism**

The LEBWC has about seventy to one hundred people, including adults and children. The annual budget is \$5,000. It is bilingual, including a language and culture unknown to many

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<sup>215</sup> Gangel, *Acts*, 468.

<sup>216</sup> Peterson, *Acts*, 721.

people.<sup>217</sup> Therefore, according to the researcher, the following evangelism models would not be compatible with the LEBWC.

Mass evangelism proclaims the gospel to as many people as possible. It is often hosted by a well-known church or speaker. According to Macaulay and Belton, Wesley, Whitefield, Finney, and Moody are outstanding examples of people who experienced successful outcomes with this model of evangelism.<sup>218</sup> Some have freely declared that mass evangelism is over, due to the contemporary times, and the repercussions of new converts not being disciplined.<sup>219</sup>

One-to-one visitation or door-knocking is also incompatible due to some language and cultural barriers for first-generation Christians in the LEBWC. According to Priscilla Pope-Levison, this model of evangelism is becoming more difficult since people are hesitant to welcome uninvited guests in general. Adding the layer of language for some would be a deal-breaker.

Inviting people to church is another model of evangelism. In this model, the congregation members and attendees invite their friends, family, and neighbors to their church to experience the church community and to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed. Due to the nature of having two languages in the LEBWC, this would not be a conducive space for those who do not speak Lahu. A non-Lahu-speaking guest would have to sit through portions of the worship service that they would not understand.

The High-Church model integrates evangelism into the church calendar through various programs and church events. The LEBWC cannot host attractive programs for the community,

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<sup>217</sup> The attendance data is according to CEFC's database that is not published. The budget is according to the researcher's conversation with the CEFC's treasurer and a stewardship committee member. This information is not published.

<sup>218</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 22.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

neither in budget nor personnel. It requires big budgets and many personnel to accomplish this model.

The seeker evangelism model has elements similar to mass evangelism and the liturgical model. It focuses on inviting large groups with attractive programs and concerts to proclaim the gospel. According to G.A. Pritchard, Willow Creek has been known for attracting many people to church but producing little discipleship.<sup>220</sup> S. Michael Craven, from *The Christian Post*, says the “mile wide and inch deep” refers to “its lack of spiritual and theological depth,” while attracting a mass crowd.<sup>221</sup> The LEBWC does not have the budget or the personnel to accomplish this model. More importantly, the researcher speculates this model does not align with the LEBWC’s philosophy of ministry.

#### Incompatible Tools of Evangelism

Platforms such as Twitter and Instagram would be non-effective for the LEBWC since more than half of the congregation does not use such social media platforms. There are various tools for evangelism in the modern world, including media, radio, television, website, Facebook page, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. While these are great tools for evangelism in the modern world, most would not be viable options for the LEBWC. There is a learning curve for all these platforms. It would be difficult for people with limited English competence to learn the programs. Television and radio would require a financial investment, which is not a line item in the already established budget.

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<sup>220</sup> G.A. Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 1996), 268.

<sup>221</sup> *The Christian Post*, “Willow Creek’s Confession,” accessed June 27, 2022, <https://www.christianpost.com/news/willow-creek-s-confession.html>.



### Compatible Models of Evangelism

There are many ways to evangelize and share the gospel. What is suitable for one may not be ideal for someone else or another group. The researcher believes the personal evangelism approach is most appropriate for the LEBWC. According to Priscilla Pope-Levison, a personal one-on-one conversation is the most effective model of evangelism.<sup>222</sup> In *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully Lovingly*, Will Metzger agrees with Pope-Levison and says the best promise of evangelization is the model of personal evangelism.<sup>223</sup> However, less believers are willing to take part in this method of sharing the gospel. According to Barna Group research, people do not like to bring up faith and religion with their peers because it creates tension, it has been too politicized, and due to ignorance of the subject.<sup>224</sup> And yet, the gospel spreads most effectively through relationships. Priscilla Pope-Levison presents the biblical, theological, and historical foundations for this model of evangelism.

First, personal evangelism is found in countless examples in the Gospel of John. Jesus, Himself invited Andrew to come and see where He was staying (John 1:39-40, ESV). Immediately, Andrew invites his brother Simon and others to join him in meeting the Messiah (John 1:41, ESV). In John's Gospel, "the good news spreads one by one via personal invitation among friends and family."<sup>225</sup> Jesus also interacts one-on-one with a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus (John 3:1, ESV). Their interaction causes Nicodemus to care for Jesus' body after the

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<sup>222</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 11.

<sup>223</sup> Will Metzger, *Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel wholly by Grace communicated Truthfully Lovingly* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 20.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

crucifixion.<sup>226</sup> There are also numerous illustrations of personal evangelism in Acts. For example, the Holy Spirit led Philip to encounter an Ethiopian eunuch, who was a court official. Through their interaction with Scripture, the Ethiopian eunuch received Christ and was baptized immediately (Acts 8:26-38, ESV).

Second, personal evangelism is grounded in theology: Christology and Pneumatology.<sup>227</sup> The second person of the Trinity took on earthly image and lived among mankind to display the invisible God (John 1:14; Col 1:15, ESV). Jesus then entrusted His disciples with the same task to reveal the gospel of God to the world. As God sent Jesus, Jesus also sent His followers to spread the good news (John 20:21, ESV). The Holy Spirit is the divine guide for all believers who evangelize. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would empower the believer to evangelize (Acts 1:8, ESV). As mentioned above, the Holy Spirit ordained and led Phillip to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-38, ESV).<sup>228</sup> Similarly, the Holy Spirit will guide, so believers can have absolute confidence that they are not alone. The Holy Spirit guides the believer and "convicts people of their need for transformation."<sup>229</sup> In 1919, "the Archbishops' 'Committee of Enquiry into the Evangelistic Work of the Church' formulated, 'To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit that men shall come to put their trust in God through him.'"<sup>230</sup> John Stott says evangelism should be measured by the faithfulness of sharing the gospel message and not in terms of success.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 13.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Stott, and Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 61.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

Third, personal evangelism is rooted in history, such as Dwight L. Moody, who became a follower of Christ through personal evangelism by his Sunday school teacher.<sup>232</sup> Moody impacted young Christian leaders through Moody Bible Institute and other events and programs. Because of Moody's influence, campus ministry organizations such as InterVarsity, Navigators, and Cru continue to emphasize personal evangelism.

### **Personal Evangelism Format**

Priscilla Pope-Levison claims personal evangelism is not complicated and offers practical foundations to enhance and increase its efficacy.<sup>233</sup> The first practical foundation is "begin with a lifestyle of evangelism," coined by Joseph Aldrich.<sup>234</sup> The focal point of this foundation is that the lifestyle of a believer should communicate the gospel. In his book *Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You*, Joseph Aldrich says effective evangelism includes the outward display and the verbal proclamation of the truth.<sup>235</sup> "Christ's personal communication strategy was incarnational."<sup>236</sup> People recognize priorities by observing the lifestyle choices of the believer. Integrity is key, and any display of hypocrisy will get in the way of the gospel.<sup>237</sup> David Wheeler and Vernon Whaley emphasize the significance of right living as much as the right biblical information. They say, "You cannot divorce Jesus' message from the life He lived."<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 15.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> Joseph Aldrich, *Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 1993), 31.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>238</sup> David Wheeler and Vernon M. Whaley, *The Great Commission to Worship: Biblical Principles for Worship-based Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011), 22.

The second practical foundation is to "raise your evangelistic temperature." Kevin Harney, in his book *Organic Outreach for Churches: Infusing Evangelistic Passion In Your Local Congregation*, states that every Christian has an outreach temperature.<sup>239</sup> Harney goes on to say that the outreach "temperature impacts the way we live and interact with those who are far from God."<sup>240</sup> According to the Barna Group, there continues to be a decline in Christians' conviction about the necessity to share the gospel with people. From 1993 to 2018, there was a 25 percent drop.<sup>241</sup> Christians are becoming more reluctant and embarrassed to share their faith with people around them. Priscilla Pope-Levison encourages people to invest and develop their own spiritual life and disciplines if there is a lack of motivation for evangelism. Scott D. Hildreth agrees and says evangelism is an overflow of the believer's vibrant relationship with God.<sup>242</sup>

The third practical foundation is "foster the relationship." Priscilla Pope-Levison says, "building a relationship of trust, credibility, and communication through your presence is fundamental to personal evangelism."<sup>243</sup> Mutual love, care, and respect can be cultivated in this relationship so that intimidating conversations about faith could occur.

The fourth practical foundation is "share the gospel."<sup>244</sup> Living a lifestyle worthy of the gospel, increasing the evangelistic temperature, and fostering meaningful relationships is good. However, there comes the point where one must share and explain the gospel. This is a daunting task for many believers. Priscilla Pope-Levison offers a few suggestions. One could begin with a

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<sup>239</sup> Kevin G. Harney, *Lifestyle Evangelism: Learning to Open Your Life to Those Around You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 118.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 19.

<sup>242</sup> Hildreth, and McKinion, *Sharing Jesus Without Freaking Out*, 15.

<sup>243</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 22.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

spiritual question. Another approach to personal evangelism is to begin by sharing your faith story. Finally, use a rubric or format such as the Romans Road or the Four Spiritual Laws.<sup>245</sup>

The fifth practical foundation is "follow up." There should be continual conversations about faith. Personal evangelism is a long-term commitment. If people are uncertain about faith and Jesus, follow up and answer questions.<sup>246</sup> If, by God's grace, someone is converted by the Holy Spirit, encourage them to share the gospel with others.

This researcher believes personal evangelism is the most effective way and the most conducive and feasible model of evangelism for the LEBWC. This is not to say that the LEBWC is not attractive, nor that mass evangelism is not possible. It simply means that it is the best viable option in three ways. First, even though some of the Lahu people cannot have advanced or sophisticated conversations, they can converse with people in English. This means they can speak one-on-one at their pace with people about the gospel without the constraint of time and pressure. Many first-generation Christians also have friends or co-workers who are immigrants who speak English as a second language. They would communicate on the same level. Second, the language and cultural barriers can be intimidating, especially if one is asked to share the gospel with someone they have just met. This model provides the most comfortable environment for an open and relaxed conversation. Third, personal evangelism does not require facility usage and little budget. Implementing an attractive service with a limited budget and facility is difficult.

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<sup>245</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 24.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

## **Evangelism & Outreach Through Small Group**

Another viable option for the Lahu-English worship community is in the context of a small group. Jim Putman states that the small group is the backbone of discipleship and offers three critical components of the small group structure.<sup>247</sup> First, it is a place of shepherding. In Ezekiel, leaders were rebuked for their lack of care for the people. Small group leaders model shepherding so that potential leaders can observe and shepherd their own groups they lead in the future. It is significant to keep in mind that Christ is the ultimate shepherd. The second critical component is teaching. It is a place where discussions and spiritual conversations take place. The small group leader facilitates discussion rather than lecturing. The third critical component is authenticity and accountability. Through love as the foundation, difficult issues can be worked through and dealt with. Putman says Satan would love to separate believers and make them lonely. Sharing brings real-life issues into the light to be exposed and graciously dealt with. According to the researcher, the fourth component is one Jim Putman leaves out. The researcher believes evangelism in the context of a small group is feasible and practical. It is much easier for a group to do an outreach project and evangelize to minimize the pressure on one person. Some Lahu people can share Acts-like stories of how God worked in Thailand and Laos through healing and deliverance from Satan's bondage.

## **Multicultural Church Plant**

The final viable option is to transform the LEBWC into a multicultural worship community or church plant in the future. Even though the LEBWC is not as isolated as it used to be, it is still a relatively closed community unless a person is somehow related to one of the

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<sup>247</sup> Putman, Harrington, and Coleman, *Discipleshift*, 192.

attendees. The researcher would provide a supplementary class or group for the first-generation believers to ensure everyone is growing and maturing in Christ.

The negative push-back against this idea is from the first-generation LEBWC Christians who fear the loss of their language, culture, and traditions. The Lahu language and culture have been lost already but transforming this worship community into a multicultural community would be the final lingering element of attempting to maintain the Lahu background. To some LEBWC Christians, maintaining the Lahu culture is more important, or at least just as important. The positive side of transforming the LEBWC into a formal multicultural setting would permit this group to integrate into the culture and make an impact in small and big ways. This does not mean the Lahu culture would be ignored; rather, it would be one of the cultures that would be celebrated.

#### Synthesis of Small Group and Evangelism Models

Models of evangelism that seem to fit the LEBWC is a form of personal evangelism. The pros are that it is biblical, theological, and historical, and it is an approach that people of various theological levels and maturity could do. On the other hand, personal evangelism is challenging since the evangelist is the person sharing the message. However, in comparison, this approach is more feasible than other approaches, especially when considering all things such as language, cultural, and social barriers.

Putman does not include evangelism and outreach in the small groups model, even though he claims that it may be a vital component of the process.<sup>248</sup> LEBWC does have small groups, but outreach or evangelism has not been a regular routine or practice. Incorporating outreach and service allows the small group to serve together and minimize the anxiety of

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<sup>248</sup> Putman, Harrington, and Coleman, *Discipleship*, 197.

outreach to strangers. Moreover, those interested in the LEBWC could also be a part of the small group meetings where they will be shepherded, taught, and enjoy an authentic community.

What has not been explored is the notion of primarily ethnic minorities serving the community. The LEBWC would need a new mentality. Rather than viewing themselves as victims or an inferior group, they must rise above the status quo and understand their mission. Just like the early churches that became missionaries because of persecution, the LEBWC must accept its mandate to reach and evangelize.

### **Conclusion**

Like the issues of other ethnic churches, the problem is that the LEBWC at Calvary Evangelical Free Church is not serving and reaching the surrounding community. The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to develop a ministry model of evangelism to the surrounding community. If the LEBWC at CEFC implements this ministry model of evangelism, then they will engage the unbelievers, evangelize, and see more people come to Christ. In the end, whether people come to Christ or not is in God's hands. The church's responsibility, including the LEBWC, remains obedience to the Great Commission.

The problems of the ethnic churches and the LEBWC are not in isolation. Much has been researched, explored, and written about this topic. The literature review included examining and analyzing: 1) The Definition of Evangelism, 2) The Significance of Evangelism, 3) The Essence of Evangelism, 4) Contextualizing Evangelism, 5) The Methods of Evangelism, 6) The Tools of Evangelism, 7) Cross-cultural Evangelism, and 8) Immigrants View on Evangelism.

Furthermore, chapter 2 included establishing biblical precedence for evangelism and outreach in three areas: 1) Evangelism, the Heartbeat of God, 2) Evangelism in the Old Testament, 3) Tying Outreach with Evangelism in the Old Testament, 4) Jesus the Evangelist,



and 4) Evangelism in the Early Church. The researcher also explored various models of evangelism and provided a perspective on a model that would be compatible with the LEBWC.

If the LEBWC at CEFC incorporates evangelism, then they would help advance the kingdom of God along with many churches in America. Rather than merely existing as an independent and ethnic worship community that does not reach beyond their ethnicity, this group of believers could become God's instrument for bringing hope to their surrounding community more fully.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

This chapter aims to describe the methodology of the intervention design in detail with action steps and specific teaching plans. This study utilizes primarily qualitative research, which focuses on collecting and explicating non-numerical data, such as notions and experiences, through interviews and focus groups with participants. Additionally, this research study employs the merits of the quantitative technique using questionnaires. The researcher believes integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques will bring the best results for this intervention design.

### **Intervention Design**

The overall objective of this intervention design is to develop a ministry model of evangelism into the life and culture of the LEBWC to make disciples and reach people for Christ. There are three specific primary goals in the intervention design. The first is to equip the participants to be proficient in the gospel's content so that they can articulate and summarize it. The second is to encourage and inspire the participants to share the gospel regularly with the people around them, including their children (if they have any) and family members. The final goal is to train the participants to evangelize and share the gospel with conversion in mind. The end goal of evangelism is for people to be receptive to God's Word, repent, and believe the good news of salvation (Mark 1:15, ESV). The practical paradigm for evangelism will be an adaptation of Priscilla Pope-Levison's evangelism foundations.

### Implementation of the Intervention Design

This project was approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) on June 13, 2022.

Upon approval of the proposal by the IRB, the researcher sought to obtain affirmation from the LEBWC core leaders (see Appendix A) and the Senior Pastor (see Appendix B). The LEBWC is a part of the Calvary Evangelical Free Church body and abides under the oversight of the Leadership Board. However, due to the language and cultural barriers, the LEBWC operates independently in preaching, teaching, worship, small group, and community life. The core group of the LEBWC was founded two years ago after the vision changed from exclusively using the Lahu language to Lahu and English.

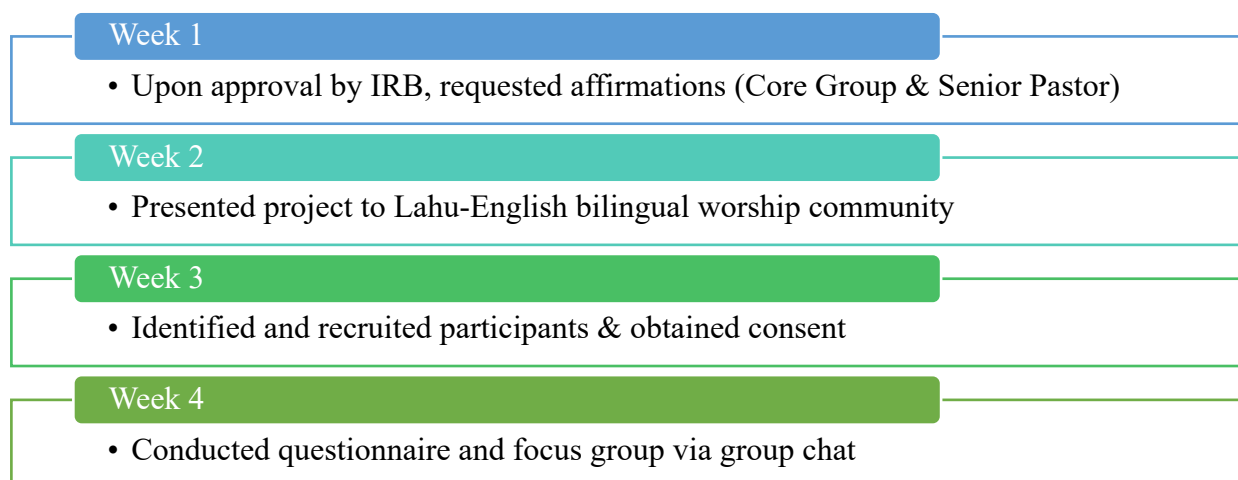


Figure 1. Timeline of Recruiting Participants and Collecting Data

#### Present Project to Lahu-English Bilingual Worship Community

After obtaining approval from the core leaders and Senior Pastor, the researcher formally presented this action research project to the LEBWC on August 28, 2022. The LEBWC was aware of the researcher's doctoral studies at Liberty University. There were fifty-nine people in attendance, including children. Even though not everyone would be participating in the

interview, focus group, and questionnaires, it was critical for this congregation to be informed of the project to ensure proper communication protocol. The researcher named the training and teaching series "Living to Make Him Known." See Appendix C for an outline of what was presented at the initial LEBWC project presentation.

## Week One

### **Teaching and Training**

One of the by-products of the pandemic was that it forced the LEBWC to utilize technology to live stream and record the services. Initially, all the elements of the worship service were pre-recorded. However, when the city officials lifted social distancing, some attendees regathered while others remained home. To accommodate these people, the LEBWC started a live stream of the worship service via Facebook. All the technology was set up prior to the evangelism training. All the teaching and training sessions were live-streamed and recorded in case anyone missed the training series. They could go back and watch it online on the Lahu-English Facebook page.<sup>249</sup>

There were three goals for the initial teaching and training. The first goal was to inform the LEBWC of the project. This included explaining the ultimate reason for the project, which is found in Mark 16:15-16. Jesus instructs all His disciples, including the LEBWC, to "go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15-16, ESV). In this message, the researcher preached with biblical authority and urgency and provided a vision for what this process could entail for the current LEBWC and possibly the future.

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<sup>249</sup> The Lahu-English bilingual worship community can be found here. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/462999080951589>.

The second goal was to inspire the congregation to participate in God's plan to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. This worship community consists of first, second, and third-generation immigrants from Thailand, Caucasians who have intermarried Lahu people, and other non-Lahu speakers who have been invited.

The third goal was to identify, request, and get confirmation from a core group of participants for this project while encouraging all to participate. The researcher aimed to get a diverse buy-in from the congregation. Following the presentation to the congregation, the researcher selectively identified and recruited qualified members of the Lahu-English service. According to the Doctor of Ministry Program and Candidacy Handbook, there are two categories for identifying and recruiting participants: inclusion and exclusion criteria.<sup>250</sup> The characteristics of participants for this research must be eighteen years of age and a current regular attendee of this service. Additionally, since the LEBWC includes Lahu, White Americans, and other people groups, it would include non-Lahu participation. Including non-Lahu people is significant since they can shed light and observe things that the Lahu people do not see culturally in the church or in general. The following characteristics would exclude someone from participating: infrequent attendance and refusal to commit to the end of this project.

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<sup>250</sup> Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, *Doctor of Ministry: Program and Candidacy Handbook*, 73.

Name	First-Generation	Non-Lahu Speakers	Second-Generation	Comments
Participant 1	√			Evangelist in Thailand
Participant 2	√			
Participant 3	√			Evangelist in Thailand
Participant 4	√			
Participant 5	√			
Participant 6	√			
Participant 7	√			
Participant 8			√	
Participant 9				
Participant 10		√		
Participant 11		√		
Participant 12			√	
Participant 13			√	
Participant 14			√	
Participant 15			√	
Participant 16		√		
Participant 17		√		
Participant 18		√		
Participant 19			√	
Participant 20			√	
Participant 21			√	
Participant 22		√		
Participant 23			√	

Figure 2. List of confirmed participants

### Observation and Reflections

The teaching and training during the first week were called "Living to Make Him Known." This researcher was encouraged and waits with expectancy for what the Lord will do through the LEBWC. The researcher noticed various body and facial reactions during the teaching and training sessions. One reaction was "agreement" to the content that was being shared. The second reaction was "surprise." For example, when the researcher stated that according to Barna Group research, 86 percent of visitors came to church because their friends

invited them, people had a "surprised" agreement facial reaction. After the service, one of the non-Lahu speakers expressed appreciation for the focus on sharing the gospel in the Lahu-English worship community. One of the first-generation attendees stated on the phone that there should be an evangelistic prayer and worship night for the Lahu community's older and adult children who are not following the Lord and not attending church. The participant was supportive of the project and encouraged additional evangelistic applications.

### **Recruiting and Consent**

Some people were enthusiastic and eager to be trained to share the gospel. Even before the researcher initiated the conversation, they were already convinced of their participation. Most of the second-generation participants confirmed joining the project after further clarifications. The researcher also noted that one second-generation attendee came up after the teaching and training and asserted not to be asked to participate. In addition, others did not want to participate. These were expressed directly, others passively, and some would not participate due to their busy season of life. Finally, some of the first-generation stated they were not capable of accomplishing what the researcher was requesting to be done.

The researcher selectively recruited qualified attendees of the LEBW using the questionnaire in figure 3. Note that all the potential candidates were over the age of 18 years old and are current attendees. Additionally, all the potential participants were regular attendees and consented to finish the project to the end. The selection includes six first-generation attendees, seven second-generation attendees, and seven non-Lahu speakers. This selection method of different generations would be critical to observing and researching whether there is resistance or openness. Finally, the researcher recruited 20-30 percent more participants than required to safeguard in case someone drops out.

Once the participating candidates were identified, the researcher called all the candidates via phone to answer final questions and obtain their verbal consent. The researcher obtained their verbal consent over the phone and through interaction the following week. The participants were asked to commit to the project and agree to the consent form (see Appendix D).

## Questionnaire

The researcher initiated the intervention process by collecting data through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was written in English and distributed to second-generation and non-Lahu speakers. The participants could answer the questions onsite or return the form the following Sunday.

Even though first-generation attendees can have casual conversations in English, they have limitations in reading and writing. Therefore, the researcher called the first-generation participants and verbally translated the questionnaire that week. The researcher recorded the first-generation participants' answers and kept the documents. There was the possibility of causing unnecessary nervousness due to the nature of this telephone call. The researcher reassured the first-generation participants to answer the questions truthfully, not necessarily what the answer should be. The researcher agreed with most of the responses to the questions but was pleasantly surprised that most participants stated they were already sharing the gospel.

The following questions were asked in the questionnaire:

PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE	
<i>Circle the answers that are best for you. There are no wrong answers</i>	
1. In the last 6 months, I have shared my faith with _____ people.	
a. 0	
b. 1-2	
c. 3-5	
d. 5+	
2. I intentionally tell people about Jesus _____.	



a. Daily
b. Weekly
c. Monthly
d. I can't specifically remember when I intentionally told someone about Jesus
3. I have at least one specific activity that allows me to serve my community.
a. Daily
b. Weekly
c. Monthly
d. I don't get around my community a lot
4. I have _____ non-Christian friends whom I am currently talking to about Jesus.
a. 0
b. 1
c. 2
d. 3+
5. Who should tell non-Christians about Jesus (check all that apply)?
a. Church Leaders
b. The Pastor
c. Christians
d. I am not sure
6. I am praying for my friends who are not Christians.
a. Daily
b. Weekly
c. I don't pray a lot
d. That is not what I pray about
7. I invite my non-Christian friends to church with me.
a. Daily
b. Weekly
c. When going to church comes up in a conversation
d. I do not have non-Christian friends
8. I have invited my non-Christian friends to Bible study _____ over the last month.
a. Once
b. Twice
c. More than twice
d. I don't invite non-Christians to Bible study
9. I am confident that I know how to lead people to Jesus.
a. Yes
b. No
c. I am not confident
d. I would call the pastor for help
10. I read the Bible.
a. Daily
b. Weekly
c. When I am at church
d. I would like to, but I don't know where to begin
11. I know what the Gospel is.

a. Yes
b. Yes, but I am not confident
c. I am not sure
d. I was baptized when I was young, and that is all that I know
12. I can summarize the Gospel in 30 seconds.
a. Yes
b. No
c. I am not sure
d. I don't know the Gospel.
13. When the pastor preaches, I have a tendency to _____.
a. take notes
b. listen closely
c. follow what he says in my Bible
d. look at my cell phone
14. I have had specific training in personal evangelism.
a. Many times, I could teach the class
b. Yes, but I don't remember all of it
c. Maybe, but it was a long time ago
d. Never
15. I know what Romans 10:9-13 says.
a. Yes
b. No
c. Maybe
d. I don't read the Bible much
16. I can lead someone to follow Jesus.
a. Yes
b. No
c. Maybe
d. I am afraid I might mess up

Figure 3. Pre-Questionnaire

The researcher took notice of four primary questions in the questionnaire. These questions help determine if this project succeeds or if more teaching and training should be instituted. Tim Sensing states that the intervention should "accomplish the purpose of the project and appropriately respond to the problem of the project."<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>251</sup> Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 69.

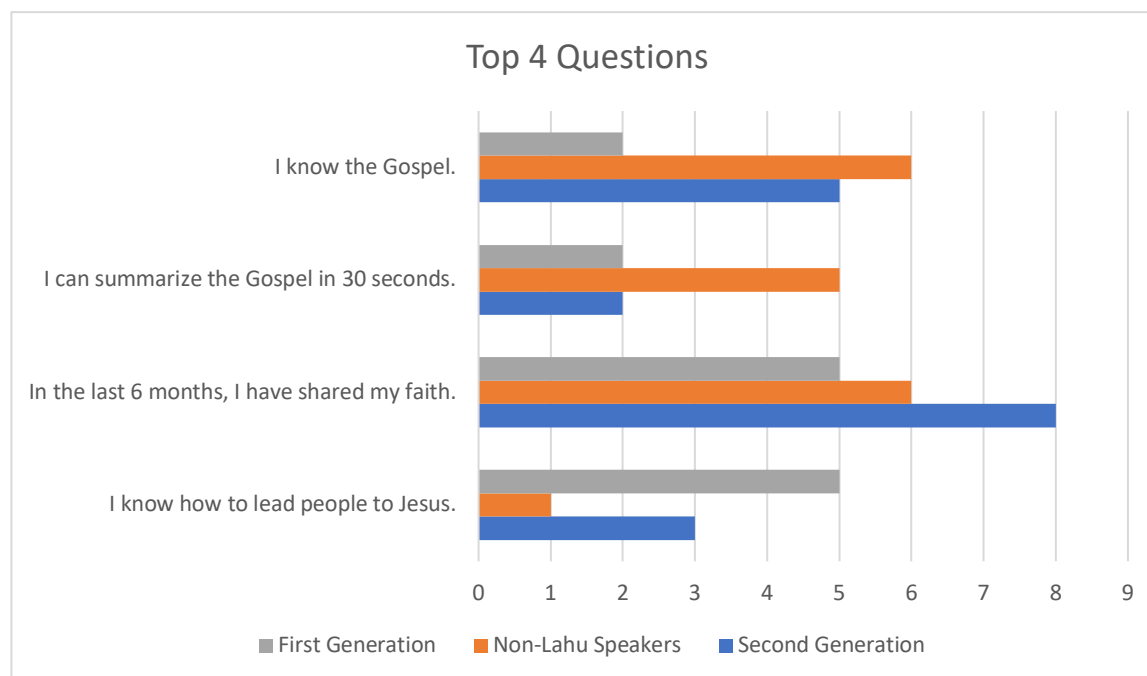


Figure 4. Four Primary Questions from Questionnaire

### Common Theme(s) From Group Chat

The researcher also provided another option for acquiring data in a text group setting.<sup>252</sup> One of the benefits of this approach was for participants to express, reflect, and build on each other's experiences and thoughts without feeling the constraint or biases of the researcher. Surveys and questionnaires provide limited data.<sup>253</sup> This method helped acquire qualitative data in a less time-consuming fashion. The original plan was to do live personal interviews and focus groups, but scheduling became an issue. The researcher ensured this impromptu method was just as adequate as live focus groups since participants had more time to prepare and articulate their thoughts and experiences better.

The group discussion consisted mostly of English-speaking participants via group chat. This group generated a good discussion and provided ample information without the participants

<sup>252</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 111.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

feeling judged based on their feedback, questions, or opinions. The chat permitted freedom without feeling the pressure of time. In addition, they were able to respond as they were available. This focus group was conducted with the researcher giving some basic instructions: 1) Everyone was encouraged to share something during the discussion, 2) everyone was to be mindful of others' opinions and feedback, and 3) the researcher would be recording notes of the discussion. The researcher utilized questions similar to those in Appendix E, along with other questions or comments they desired to share.

The researcher collected a common theme via text message and personal observation: "I'm nervous." Some expressed being “nervous” about sharing Christ with a stranger—or someone not in their network of familiarity. They expressed that they are more reactive than active in sharing their faith. Even though participants were nervous, there was a sense of “willingness” to listen and be trained to evangelize. Finally, others were “eager” to participate in the training and be taught to better reach the people around them with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Week Two

### **Teaching and Training**

The second teaching and training title was "The Content of the Gospel." Once again, this was taught during the Lahu-English worship service. Like the first week of teaching and training, the sermon was in English and Lahu. The researcher had asked all the participants to be present in all the teaching and training. If they were to miss a particular Sunday, they were instructed to watch the replay of the Facebook live video.

The two primary goals of week two were to help the LEBWC—including all the participants in the project—to understand the depths of the gospel and be able to articulate and

summarize the content in thirty seconds. If the goal is to share the gospel with people, it makes sense to know the scope of the gospel. It might be appropriate to pause here and say that the original outline from the "Intervention Design" was not utilized since it didn't have the depth and width of the gospel story. Knowing how to summarize the gospel in thirty seconds is also an advantage. It is beneficial doctrinally and practically.

To fully appreciate the gospel's good news, one must understand the bad news first. The bad news is that all are sinners deserving of hell, and mankind cannot save itself. The early Christians used the verb "gospel" as "to proclaim the good news."<sup>254</sup> The earlier mentions—during Paul's day—of the word "gospel" referred to the oral proclamation. It was only later that the word "gospel" was referred to as the written gospel.<sup>255</sup> This gospel is good news to those who have fallen and missed the mark (Rom 3:23, ESV). The good news is that God loves the world, God sent Jesus to die for mankind, and God offers salvation to everyone who believes in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The researcher's goal for the second week of training was to help the congregation understand and articulate the depths of the gospel and be able to summarize the main points in thirty seconds. Finally, the researcher encouraged parents to share the gospel with their children for two reasons: for the salvation of their children and to implement and practice the learned material.

### **Data Collection**

The researcher sent a text to the group of participants and asked, "How was the first week of training?" The researcher encouraged the participants to reply to the whole group as they felt comfortable or to the researcher for privacy. One common theme was that the training was

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<sup>254</sup> Graham N. Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

"helpful" and strengthened and reinforced their knowledge of the gospel. One participant stated they were not confident about summarizing the gospel in thirty seconds. The participant was worried that they would simply mumble. However, the training established confidence in their ability to articulate the gospel clearly. Another theme that stood out was "motivation." One participant wrote, "I am more motivated to share the gospel and have more confidence than before to do so."

According to Sensing, one way to organize data is to discuss the common themes, areas of disagreement known as "slippage," and silences, which are realities not expressed.<sup>256</sup> The researcher should acknowledge that some participants who consented to the project have not given any feedback. The researcher interprets this "silence" as perhaps too busy, uninterested, apprehensive, or apathetic toward evangelism and reaching people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Week Three

#### **Teaching and Training**

The title of the third teaching and training was called, "How Can Someone Be Saved?" The initial title of the "Intervention Design" was "How Do I Receive the Gospel?" The researcher changed to communicate a more evangelistic title rather than a focus on "me." The reader should notice from figure 4 that participants did not feel confident about leading someone to Christ. The goal of this training is for participants to be equipped with God's Word to lead someone to Christ if an unbeliever desires to turn to Jesus. A few participants stated they would need the help of a pastor if an unbeliever wished to follow Jesus. All disciples of Christ should be able to lead unbelievers to Christ.

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<sup>256</sup> Stanton, *Jesus and Gospel*, 197.

The main text was from Romans 10:9, which states, "...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (ESV). The participant must first help the unbeliever understand the gospel and believe it in their heart. The second week of training becomes helpful here since an unbeliever must understand and believe the gospel's content in their heart. That is, believe what the gospel says and turn from old habits to Jesus—this is called repentance. The second step is to declare with their mouth that Jesus is their new king in public. Faith may be a personal matter, but it doesn't stay private. It must come out for the public to hear so that people can believe what has happened in the heart. Finally, the newly converted Christian should make Jesus their Lord and follow Him – which is obedience. As soon as people have believed, they should get baptized immediately as their first step of obedience. Then, as the Great Commission instructs Christians, they should teach the new believers to obey all God has commanded. This is called discipleship.

#### Week Four

#### **Teaching and Training**

Personal evangelism is what Jesus taught His disciples to do. It is a highly effective tool for many Christians to incorporate into their regular spiritual journey. There are numerous methods of evangelism; however, personal evangelism is compatible with the LEBWC. This model was adapted from Priscilla Pope-Levison's book, *Models of Evangelism*. The researcher chose this model because it is relational, non-combative, practical, and effective. These practical steps are easy to follow and implement.

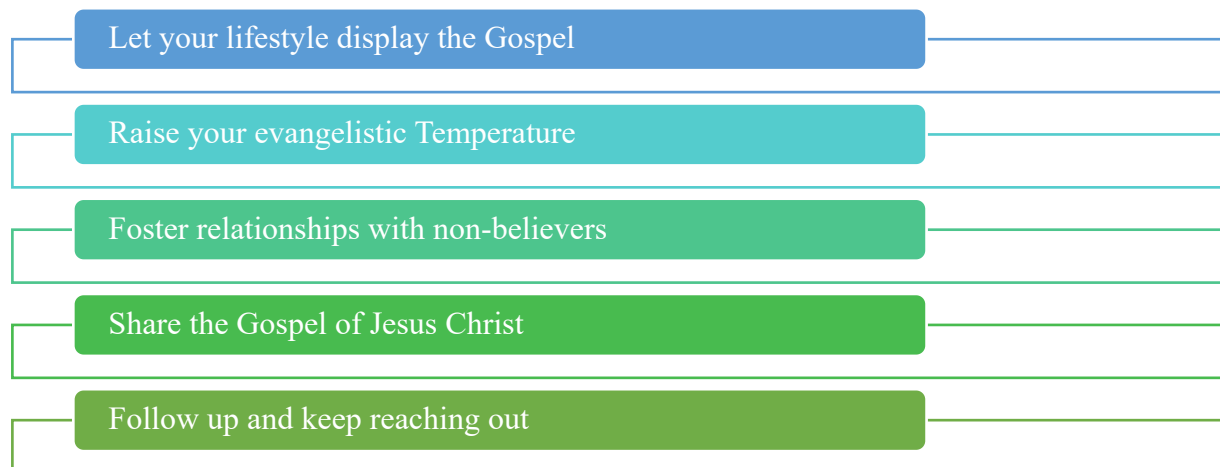


Figure 5. Model of Evangelism Adapted from Priscilla Pope-Levison

By word of introduction, even though this is an action research project, evangelism is not a project but a process. The researcher emphasized this point to the LEBWC. Evangelism and sharing the gospel with people takes time, and there is no "generic remedy for every kind of sinner."<sup>257</sup>

In personal evangelism, one should first live out the gospel in their lifestyle. So that when they speak, their words have integrity and respect. Lifestyle includes finances, hobbies, priorities, and how one treats others. This is not to say that one must be perfect before sharing the gospel. However, the person bringing the gospel should have integrity. The second step is to raise one's evangelistic temperature.<sup>258</sup> The Barna Group came out with an article in May 2018 titled "Sharing Faith in Increasingly Optional to Christians."<sup>259</sup> The article states that "a growing number of Christians don't see sharing the good news as a personal responsibility."<sup>260</sup> If Christians are to heed the call of Christ to share the gospel, one way to raise the temperature is to

<sup>257</sup> MacArthur, *Evangelism*, 152.

<sup>258</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 19.

<sup>259</sup> Barna group, "Sharing Faith is Increasingly Optional to Christians," <https://www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians/>, accessed October 13, 2022.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.



pray for neighbors, friends, and people who do not have a relationship with Jesus. One must set aside unrushed, intentional, and purposeful time to pray. One cannot go out without prayer.

The third step is to foster relationships with non-believers. Christians cannot be stuck in their Christian bubbles. One cannot share the gospel without first cultivating relationships. There are various methods to developing friendships—such as kid's sports, community events, work, or neighbors. The fourth step is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>261</sup> The Great Commission does not instruct Christians to go and be an example. It says to go evangelize and make disciples. Eventually, one must be willing to share the gospel, as awkward as that may be. It is fine to share one's testimony and what God has done. However, it can't stop there. Unbelievers need to hear the gospel. One way to do this is by observing those who are in pain. Rick Warren once said in a YouTube interview titled, "Rick Warren on Finishing Well," "If you'll focus on people in pain, you'll grow a church."<sup>262</sup> If one is praying, God will guide and lead one to people in need of the gospel. Finally, follow up and keep reaching out. Following up includes helping them find a church community, reading the Bible with them, and inviting them to a Bible study group.

### **Data Collection**

One common theme that the first-generation participants expressed via phone calls was that they have "fewer non-Christian friends" since they've retired from work. Before their retirement, they were required to work near others which naturally turned into co-workers and even work friends. The first-generation attendees informed the researcher that they lack in this area and find it hard to share the gospel with non-believers. The researcher believes this to be true. Due to the language and cultural barrier, it is more difficult for first-generation attendees to

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<sup>261</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 23.

<sup>262</sup> Carey Nieuwhof, "Rick Warren on Finishing Well," January 4, 2022, Youtube Video, 1:45:25, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X03gY7HPr7Q>.

build relationships, especially when they are no longer a part of the environment that naturally permitted them to build and foster relationships.

Another theme that surfaced was the subject of "prayer." Some participants stated due to the busyness of life with young children, they do not have adequate time to intentionally pray and spend time with God before being sent out to share the gospel. One participant candidly stated they are not motivated to pray, which affects their desire to share the gospel and be a witness.

The final theme is "boldness." Some participants stated that they needed the audacity to be more active in sharing their faith rather than simply being reactive. Indeed, participants are not shying away from sharing and explaining their faith. However, they admit that they only share their faith story or the gospel when they are approached, or others instigate the conversation.

### Implementation Period

After four weeks of training and collecting data through questionnaires, interviews, and group chat, all the participants were encouraged to implement the learned material. All twenty-three participants were instructed to pray for opportunities, share the gospel with their children, family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers, and ask for responses from people. The end goal of sharing the gospel is conversion as the Spirit opens and leads. As they were taught in the classroom, now it was time to go out into the real world and share the good news with the people around them.

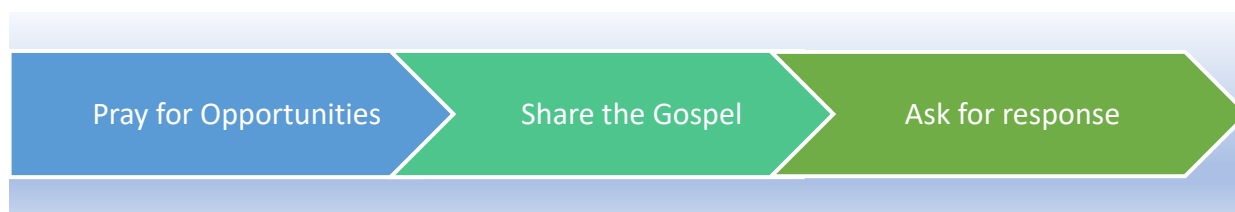


Figure 6. Specific Instructions During the Implementation Period

During the implementation period, the researcher continued to encourage the participants through Sunday morning preaching. The researcher heard feedback that some participants still felt inadequate and did not feel knowledgeable to go out and share comfortably.<sup>263</sup> The researcher prepared four sermons to encourage and build confidence in the participants.

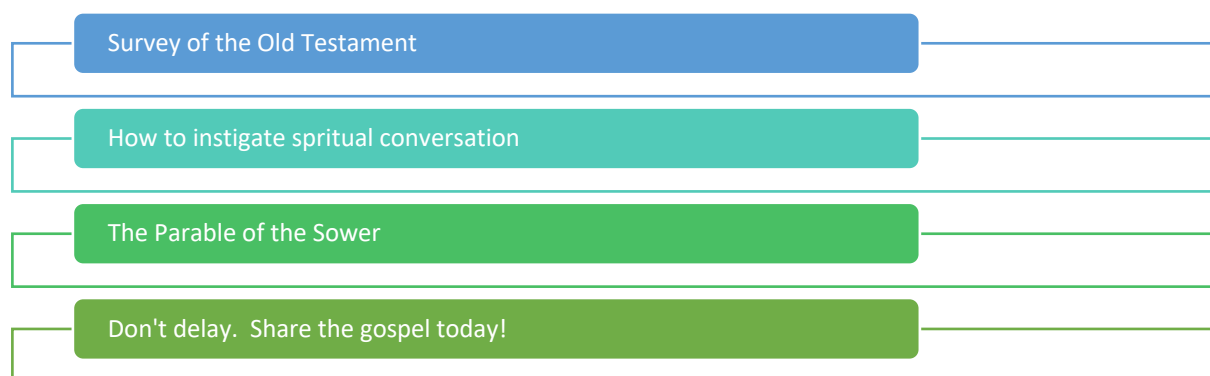


Figure 7. Four Sermons During the Implementation Period

The researcher also checked in weekly to encourage and answer questions from the participants. For example, on the third week of the implementation period, the researcher checked in with the participants and shared his evangelism story with an AT&T salesperson. During this group chat, the participants could ask questions about the interaction. One of the participants asked, "How did you start the conversation?" The researcher began by saying,

<sup>263</sup> The researcher believes one will never feel fully adequate to do the Lord's work, and the gospel is more than ample to bring a sinner to repentance. It is in weakness that the power of God is maximized and made perfect (2 Cor 12:9).

"Look, you've been kind to me and my family by giving us a great family deal. I'd like to reciprocate this kindness and tell you about a God who loves you and wants to have a relationship with you." Another participant asked, "How did the AT&T salesperson respond?" The salesperson did not accept Christ on the spot but was appreciative. Through the researcher's real-life experience, the participants were able to ask questions and consider how they could engage with people to share the gospel.

In the group chat, the participants shared about how they were sharing the gospel with their children, friends, family, and co-workers. One participant invited his next-door neighbor to church. Another participant invited and brought several co-workers to church. Family members are a great mission opportunity. One of the participants had spiritual conversations and shared the gospel with his sister and father.

#### Post-Questionnaire and Final Interviews

The researcher conducted personal interviews with all the participants after the implementation period. Each interviewee received the questions ahead of time to reduce anxiety and increase participation level. See Appendix F for the list of questions used during the final interview.

The following transpired during the interview. First, the researcher communicated words of encouragement about the contribution that each of the participants made. Second, the researcher asked permission to take notes and record information. The nature of the interview was casual and informal to gather concluding information. It was the goal of the researcher to only listen and record verbatim notes and not appear biased with personal interests or agendas.<sup>264</sup> Finally, the researcher asked the participants three main objective questions: (1) Can you

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<sup>264</sup> Stringer, *Action Research*, 105.

summarize the gospel in thirty seconds, (2) did you share the gospel with anyone during the implementation period, and finally, (3) did you ask anyone to receive Christ?

Finally, the researcher asked the participants to identify and explain barriers and obstacles to sharing the gospel. What prevented the participants from sharing more? To conclude the interview, the researcher asked if having the status of an "immigrant" had any influence or impact on sharing the gospel with the people around them.

### Analyze Collected Data

Once all the data were collected through the triangulation technique, it was time to analyze the data. The researcher sorted, identified, and categorized the data in matrix form using themes and topics. The researcher categorized missing topics as "silence" in the matrix. The personal interviews and the focus group were analyzed qualitatively, and the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively. The researcher created a table showing the results of the questionnaire. Please see Appendix G for a sample of the matrix.

### A Word on Outreach

The researcher's initial plan was to incorporate outreach events in conjunction with evangelism through a small group in the intervention design. Community outreach has a way of breaking down obstacles that non-believers and skeptics presuppose about Christians who desire to share the gospel. The plan was to have the small group lead an outreach project. According to Jim Putman, a small group meeting consists primarily of shepherding, teaching, and accountability.<sup>265</sup> Although Putman states that outreach is important, it is not listed as the primary reason for a small group. The researcher believes outreach should be a primary

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<sup>265</sup> Putman, Harrington, and Coleman, *Discipleshift*, 192.

component. The goal was for the small group to initiate outreach projects for the whole LEBWC to participate in, including all the participants. The researcher had to put this element on hold because there were no small groups meeting. Furthermore, the evangelism element was already a sizeable project.

### **Conclusion**

The intervention design detailed the action steps, and specific teaching plans to accomplish its objectives. This researcher also conducted questionnaires, interviews, and telephone calls to obtain and collect data from the participants. The integration of qualitative and quantitative methods was beneficial in ensuring balanced data to be assessed in the following chapter. Through all the designing, coordinating, conducting, and implementing, it is possible to lose focus on what is important. The great efforts of these things point to sharing the gospel with those who are far from the Lord.

In his book, *Evangelism after Pluralism: The Ethics of Christian Witness*, Bryan Stone says the practice of evangelism should reconnect to the initial perception as “beauty.” Many people today consider evangelism to be arrogant and offensive.<sup>266</sup> Beyond the external perceptions, sharing the gospel requires discipline and hard work internally. It is uncomfortable and awkward at times. It is complex work. Allow Isaiah 52:7 to remind all Christians who labor in the harvest that beautiful are the feet who bring good news to those around them. This intervention plan attempted to train and bring ease to evangelism to accomplish the set objectives.

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<sup>266</sup> Bryan Stone, *Evangelism after Pluralism: The Ethics of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2018), 76.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this DMIN action research project was to address the lack of evangelism in the LEBWC through a four-week training intervention plan. The rebranding of the LEBWC two years ago has caused greater fellowship, the development of two small groups, and the improvement of the worship service experience. However, this worship community still lacks an emphasis on evangelism and reaching out to the surrounding community. The researcher hopes that the intervention plan will yield the anticipated results so that evangelism is incorporated into the life and culture of the LEBWC.

The following data were compiled from the questionnaire, focus discussion, and personal interviews. As advised by Sensing, descriptions and quotations will be collected through interviews, focus discussion, and the questionnaire to permit the "reader to enter into the situation and thoughts of the people represented in the report."<sup>267</sup> The researcher will also illustrate the findings of the data through graphs and charts to see the changes, growth, or lack thereof. The researcher will assess and explicate four questions or statements from the questionnaire.

After the approval by the IRB and confirmation from the core group and Senior Pastor of Calvary Evangelical Free Church, the researcher presented the action research project to the LEBWC. The researcher encouraged all to participate as this was a high calling from God that everyone should share the gospel with the people around them.

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<sup>267</sup> Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 209.

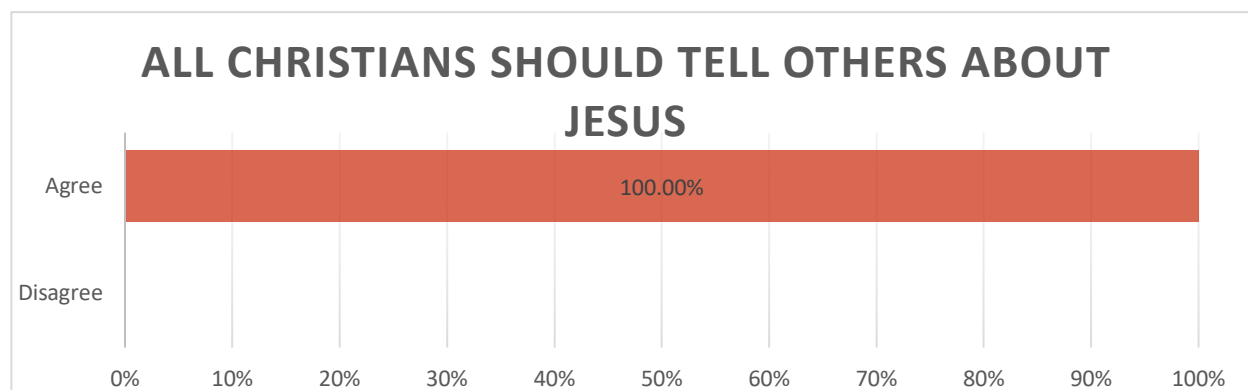


Figure 8. All Christians Should Tell Others About Jesus.

Out of twenty-three participants, including first and second-generation immigrants and non-Lahu speakers, all participants agreed that all Christians are responsible for demonstrating and articulating the gospel to the unbelieving world. One might assume this is stating the obvious and that one of the core tasks among Christians should be evangelism. However, according to the Barna Group's research, "More than half of practicing Christian millennials say evangelism is wrong."<sup>268</sup> Another Barna Group research study states that merely 73 percent of Christians think they have the responsibility to share the gospel.<sup>269</sup> This means nearly three in ten Christians do not see the need to share the love of Jesus. This is reflected in the LEBWC.

One first-generation immigrant participant stated, "Whoever knows about Jesus and loves Him" should share about Jesus. This participant said that one does not have to be great at evangelizing but at least be willing to try their best. However, not everyone feels this way. One first-generation Christian immigrant in the LEBWC refused to participate in the project and stated they didn't possess the gift of evangelism. This non-participant expressed their desire to live as a "common Christian." After the researcher presented the project to the LEBWC, one of

<sup>268</sup> Barna Group, "Almost Half of Practicing Christian Millennials Say Evangelism Is Wrong," <https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/>, accessed November 3, 2022.

<sup>269</sup> Barna Group, "Is Evangelism Going out of Style Is Wrong," <https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/>, accessed November 3, 2022.



the second-generation attendees approached the researcher and exclaimed, "Don't ask me. I won't do it." Others stated that this was a busy season in their lives. One first-generation attendee apprehensively stated that she would not know how to participate or assist in this project.

The researcher assumed that those who love God and have a relationship with Jesus would automatically be eager or willing to share the gospel. This is not the case in all situations, like the early Christians in Acts. In Acts 1:8, Jesus instructed His disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit to empower them for the task of evangelism. In Acts 2, God sent the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:4 says, "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them" (ESV). And yet, in Acts 8, Christians were still in Jerusalem until God permitted persecution. They had not obeyed Jesus' command to be His witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria and to the end of the earth. Stanley M. Horton says the early believers were being trained and had not moved out until the persecution occurred.<sup>270</sup> There had to be an outside force to compel the early Christians to go out and evangelize. Therefore, evangelism must be emphasized, encouraged, and training must be made available to church members.

The twenty-three participants who agreed that evangelism should be the responsibility of all Christians are significant. This does not assume that the twenty-two participants were confident and eager to participate. One participant wrote, "I do want to participate, but I am nervous about how to approach people. I am afraid of not being able to answer their questions or defend what I believe." Another participant agreed with that statement. God is seeking willing hearts to share His glory with the rest of the world. In his book *Share Jesus Without Fear*, William Fay says, "We all must evangelize through the power of the Holy Spirit. God has given

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<sup>270</sup> Stanley M. Horton, *Acts Commentary* (Spring, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2001), 159.

us the strength to share our faith, despite our lack of gifts, talents, and abilities.”<sup>271</sup> Christians are not left to their own. At the conclusion of the Great Commission, Jesus said, "And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt 28:20, ESV). Rick Richardson says the only witness to yield fruit is one shared in collaboration with and through the Holy Spirit.<sup>272</sup> “Jesus’ secret to powerful evangelism” is being directed by the Holy Spirit.<sup>273</sup> This means that the Holy Spirit can work in and through the participants of the Lahu-English worship community—even if they are apprehensive, timid, or afraid.

### Three Objectives Drawn from the Intervention Design

#### I Can Summarize the Gospel

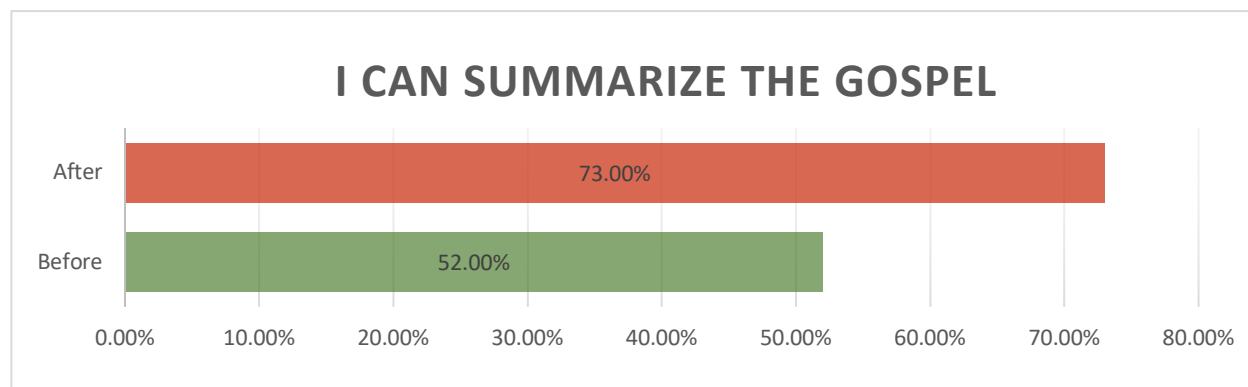


Figure 9. I Can Summarize the Gospel

### Quantitative Findings

One of the primary goals of this research project’s intervention plan was to teach the gospel to the LEBWC so that they not only understand the depths of the gospel but to be able to

<sup>271</sup> William Fay, *Share Jesus Without Fear* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 16.

<sup>272</sup> Rick Richardson, *Reimagining Evangelism: Inviting Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2006), 36.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

summarize the gospel. The expectation was communicated to the participants that they would be able to summarize the gospel based on the sermon titled "The content of the gospel." According to Tibor Koltay, "Abstracting is a complex activity that employs information decoding and encoding. It develops critical reading skills and enhances the understanding of basic rhetorical principles, as it requires a thorough study of texts."<sup>274</sup> Pam Weber agrees and says summarizing requires a thorough reading of the text. Once the overall content is understood, the abstract maximizes the impact of the information.<sup>275</sup> If the participants can summarize the gospel, they likely have a good grasp of the overall gospel.

The data obtained in figure 9 reflects the twenty-three people who participated in this research project. Prior to the intervention plan, merely 52 percent stated that they could summarize the gospel.<sup>276</sup> After the intervention plan, 73 percent of the participants stated that they could summarize the gospel. Statistically, this is a 40 percent increase from the baseline, which suggests that the intervention plan produced positive and effective results. Of the 73 percent of participants who were proficient in summarizing the gospel, six were first-generation immigrant attendees, five were second-generation immigrant attendees, and six non-Lahu speaker attendees.

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<sup>274</sup> Tibor Koltay, *Abstracts and Abstracting: A Genre and Set of Skills for the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, UK: Chandos Publishing, 2-10), 10.

<sup>275</sup> Pam Weber, *7 Important Reasons to Summarize Writing*, <https://inkforall.com/copy-editing/summarize/why-do-we-summarize/>, accessed November 4, 2022.

<sup>276</sup> The researcher did not interview the participants prior to the intervention plan to determine the accuracy of their gospel summarization. It was only assumed that the participant's version of the gospel was accurate. The primary reason for this question was to determine if they were sharing or evangelizing. The content was secondary at this stage.

Researcher's Summary of the Gospel.	One Participant's Summary of the Gospel
We are all sinners (Romans 3:23)	We are sinners
We are all deserving of hell (Romans 6:23)	We deserve hell
We cannot save ourselves (Romans 3:10-12)	We can't do it out of good works
God loves the world (John 3:16)	God loves us so much
God sent Jesus to die for us (John 3:16)	God sent Jesus to be a substitute
God offers salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9)	If we believe, we can join Jesus in heaven

Figure 10. Intervention Design Training Compared to One Participant's Summary

### Qualitative Findings

The participants who were able to summarize the gospel used similar verbiage as shown in the example above of one participant's gospel summary. Most of the first-generation participants were more than proficient in articulating the gospel using the Lahu language, as it was also taught using the Lahu language during the training sessions.<sup>277</sup> The rest of the participants who were not proficient in abstracting the gospel could articulate a form of their testimony, who God is, and Christian ethics. For example, one participant summarized the gospel in the following way: "The gospel is about Jesus and what he did for us. We are to live like him by being kind and respectful to people." Another participant explained the gospel by beginning with the exodus story. Like Moses, the participant understood and believed that God had brought the participant from a place of poverty to the prosperity of America. The participant continued by

<sup>277</sup> The following is a gospel summary of the first-generation participants. Mi gui<sub>1</sub> chaw ya hk'a<sub>1</sub> peu-e<sub>1</sub> ven<sub>1</sub> ba<sub>1</sub> caw<sub>1</sub> ve yo. Chi beu, G'ui<sub>1</sub> sha mi gui<sub>1</sub> ya<sub>1</sub> hta<sub>1</sub> ha<sub>1</sub> ja<sub>1</sub> ve pa taw, yaw<sub>1</sub> ve Ya<sub>1</sub> hpu pi<sub>1</sub> la<sub>1</sub> ve yo. Hke te leh<sub>1</sub>, Ye<sub>1</sub> su<sub>1</sub> mi gui<sub>1</sub> hk'o<sub>1</sub> lo la leh, la<sub>1</sub> ka hk'o<sub>1</sub> lo hkan suh ve yo. A shu yon<sub>1</sub> ve chaw hk'a<sub>1</sub> peu-e<sub>1</sub>, htai<sub>1</sub> hk'aw<sub>1</sub> ve hta<sub>1</sub> g'a tu yo. Yaw<sub>1</sub> ve aw bon hta, pui hk'aw ma<sub>1</sub> g'a. Ya hk'a, G'ui<sub>1</sub> sha ve taw hk'aw hta na yu leh, yaw ve a lo<sub>1</sub> hta<sub>1</sub> te caw<sub>1</sub> ve yo.

sharing how Jesus died for mankind because human beings are sinners. People should believe, confess, and trust Him. Will Metzger states, "The content of our message is Christ and God, not our journey to faith. Our personal testimony may be included, but witnessing is more than reciting our spiritual autobiography."<sup>278</sup>

### **Unexpected Results**

One of the unexpected results is that some participants were unable to articulate and summarize the gospel explicitly; Christ came to rescue sinners by becoming a man, dying on the cross, and resurrecting from the dead. Summarizing the gospel is one of the core components of sharing the gospel. One cannot share what one does not know. The expectation was made known during the first training session. Following the intervention plan, 28 percent that could not summarize the gospel explicitly shared about who God is, about Jesus, and Christian ethics. This is not to assert that spiritual conversations are not beneficial. However, according to the researcher, spiritual conversations do not take the primary place of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. As it were, the gospel was sprinkled in their spiritual conversations rather than the other way around. In his book, *How to Give Away Your Faith*, Paul E. Little says Christians have failed when the person of Jesus Christ isn't communicated clearly in the gospel presentation. "Unless non-Christians see that the issue is their own relationship to this person, we have failed."<sup>279</sup>

One possible explanation for the participants' desire to include additional verbiage beyond the gospel might be reflected in conversations with participants during the interview process. One participant found it interesting that the researcher included the topic of "Creation"

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<sup>278</sup> Will Metzger, *Wholly by Grace Communicated Truthfully Lovingly* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 55.

<sup>279</sup> Paul E. Little, *How to Give Away Your Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 28.

apologetics in one of the training sessions.<sup>280</sup> The participant stated this inclusion was an "attention grabber." This could mean that in evangelism, there may need to be various "attention grabbers" before presenting the gospel. The "attention grabber" can be casual or general spiritual conversations that draw people in before presenting the gospel directly. Another participant stated that one "should not just bring a Bible in their bag" when evangelizing. The point that the participant was trying to assert was that apologetics in each culture is significant. The gospel by itself will not reach many people.<sup>281</sup>

### **Assessing Implementation Design**

The researcher acknowledges that the intervention plan could have been more developed and thorough in this area. When asked about improvements that could be made in the training, one of the participants suggested "having people practice on the spot." Although the participant added that this approach could cause anxiety for some people, "You don't feel comfortable until you're flowing in sharing." Another participant recommended having the intervention training in a smaller setting to increase interactive participation. The participant claimed this might build people's confidence in sharing. The researcher agrees with these assessments and acknowledges the faulty intervention design and implementation in this area. As suggested by the participants, their confidence will only increase when they are "flowing" in articulating the gospel. In his book, *What to do When You're New: How to be Comfortable, Confident, and Successful in New Situations*, Keith Rollag says it takes deliberate practice to be modestly good at something and to

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<sup>280</sup> During the implementation period, the researcher trained the LEBWC on practical ways to engage non-believers. In this training, the researcher stated that those who believe in the Big Bang theory are still unsure who created the initial singularity.

<sup>281</sup> One participant explained that people are content with their philosophy of life and religion. They are not seeking new religions or practices. The participant stated that apologetics and understanding other worldviews will improve the possibility of connecting with non-believers.

see a real difference.<sup>282</sup> This was a missing step before sending the participants out to share the gospel successfully.

The participants who could articulate and summarize the gospel clearly and cohesively expressed their appreciation for the training since it strengthened their confidence and reinforced their understanding of the gospel. One participant stated that they felt more inspired to share their faith and the gospel after the training. Another first-generation participant stated that the participant knows more about the gospel even though the participant was still unclear about summarizing it. As noted above, most first-generation participants were proficient in articulating and summarizing the gospel in their own Lahu language.<sup>283</sup> Some first-generation participants stated that the researcher's training aligned with their previous evangelism training in Thailand.

#### I Shared the Gospel with Someone

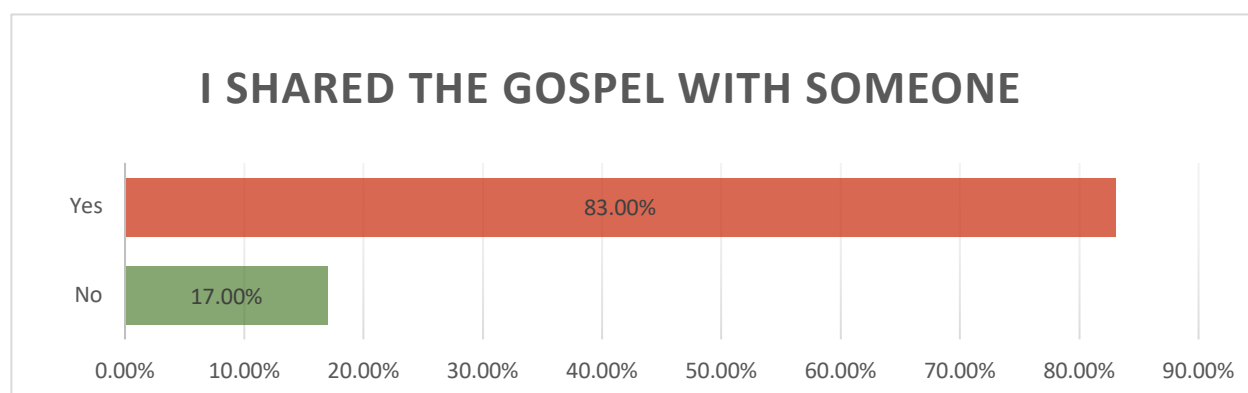


Figure 11. I Shared the Gospel with Someone

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<sup>282</sup> Keith Rollag, *What to Do When You're New: How to be Comfortable, Confident, and Successful in New Situations* (New York, NY: Amacom, 2016), chapter 4.

<sup>283</sup> Some of these first-generation participants have served in ministry and leadership roles in the past, back in their home country (Thailand) and the United States in an ethnic church. One participant was an evangelist and a pastor with many years of experience making disciples by sharing the gospel, baptizing people, and teaching God's Word. This participant has even taught evangelism in the past. One of the realities of immigrating to the United States is that he cannot evangelize to and reach the natives of the United States as he has done before due to the language barrier.

The data collected from the interview indicates that 83 percent shared the gospel, and 17 percent did not share the gospel during the implementation period. The participants who shared the gospel were primarily second-generation and non-Lahu speakers. During the post-questionnaire interview, the researcher gathered that the participants shared the gospel with their children, friends, and co-workers. For first-generation and non-Lahu speakers, developing relationships is natural, which offers them opportunities to share their faith story or the gospel with others.

One interesting observation is that many participants merely shared the gospel when asked about their faith. In other words, these participants shared their faith when they were approached, asked, or questioned. Rather than actively and directly sharing the gospel, the participants would respond to people who were curious about their faith. One participant stated that they have a Bible verse on their desk and other readily available resources in case someone is curious about their faith. Another participant stated that they are not ashamed to share their faith when asked by friends and co-workers. According to the Barna Group's research, more than half of Christian millennials believe sharing the gospel is offensive. This sentiment seems to be reflected in this group. In his article titled *The Apostles Never 'Shared' the Gospel, and Neither Should We*, Elliot Clark makes the case that the early church never shared the gospel; rather, they proclaimed the gospel whether there was an openness or not from the hearers.<sup>284</sup> The researcher hopes the LEBWC will have this kind of resolve moving forward.

The 17 percent that did not share the gospel were first-generation attendees. The primary reason for not evangelizing was that they did not have opportunities. One first-generation participant stated that there were more opportunities to share the gospel when the participant was

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<sup>284</sup> Elliot Clark, "The Apostles Never 'Shared' the Gospel, and Neither Should We," <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2019/july-august/elliott-clark-evangelism-exiles-sharing-gospel.html>, accessed November 15, 2022.



employed. After leaving employment, the natural avenues to developing and fostering relationships with non-believers became difficult and limited. Another participant claimed they did not travel much outside of a couple of familiar places, which put a barrier and limitation on connecting with others to share the gospel.

On the other hand, one of the first-generation participants had an opportunity to share their faith story with a new Asian neighbor. Specifically, the participant shared the gospel and invited the new neighbor to church. The new neighbors declined the invitation and said they were happy and content with Buddhism.

#### I Asked Someone to Receive Christ

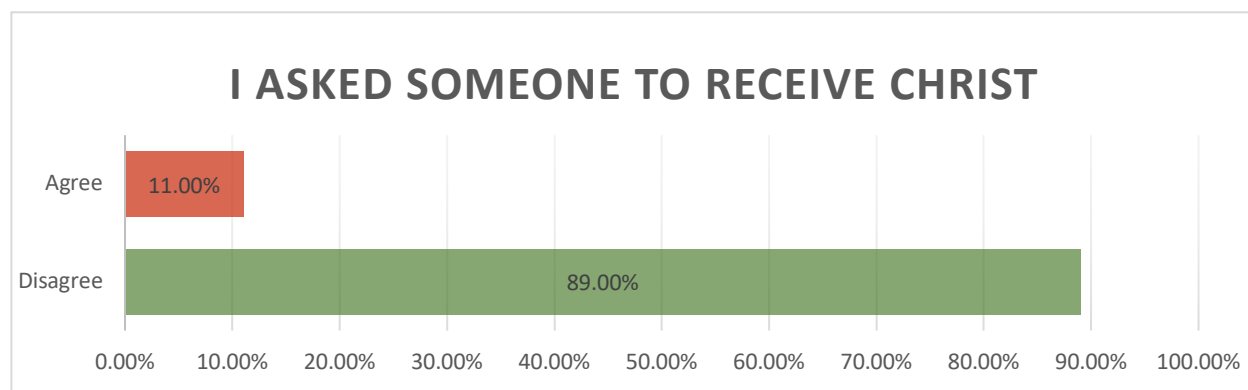


Figure 12. I asked Someone to Receive Christ

### Quantitative Findings

The third objective of this intervention plan was to train the Lahu-English bilingual worship community to "pop" the question: "Would you like to receive Christ today?" A disciple of Christ can be exceptional in summarizing the gospel and boldly engaging people in spiritual conversations, but if one does not ask the most significant question, how will unbelievers ever begin a relationship with God? After the intervention training, the participants were given one month of implementation time. During this phase, the participants were encouraged to share the

gospel with the people around them, including their children and families. According to the data collected, 83 percent of the participants shared the gospel during the implementation period. The 17 percent that did not share the gospel or their faith during the implementation were first-generation attendees.<sup>285</sup> Out of the nineteen participants who shared the gospel and their faith, only two (11 percent) asked anyone to receive Christ. One participant preached the gospel to about one hundred youth group students. In the post-questionnaire interview, the participant regrets not asking anyone to receive Christ. This may indicate that the participant knew what to do but did not have the willpower to act. More of this will be addressed later in the "barriers and obstacles" section. According to one of the participants, some responded positively, and others stated they would consider receiving Christ, which the participant realized was a passive rejection of the gospel. The other participant shared the gospel with an individual, and the response was also positive.

### **Expected Results**

The ability to discern the right moment to "pop" the question is subjective. It is more an art than science, which makes this stage in evangelism intimidating. This is indicated in the data collection that merely 11 percent of the participants asked anyone to receive Christ. According to the pre-questionnaire, all the participants shared the gospel and their faith regularly with the people around them. The problem is that the outcomes do not reflect the endeavor. This is not the result of a poor implementation design. The researcher is optimistic that people will become more comfortable as they continue to share the gospel. One participant stated that the fear of rejection and the unknown of how people will respond is overwhelmingly paralyzing. The

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<sup>285</sup> Two of these participants stated that they hardly go anywhere, nor do they develop relationships beyond what they currently are a part of. One participant stated in Lahu, "I haven't shared the gospel because I haven't gone anywhere besides home and a couple of places." This will be addressed later in the "Barriers and Obstacles" section.

interesting observation is that when participants asked whether someone desired to receive Christ, there were both positive and negative reactions, as described in Matthew 13, The Parable of the Sower. There will be many rejections, but some will respond positively to the gospel. Charles Spurgeon says one in four grounds (or hearers) has been plowed into "good soil" by God's gracious work.<sup>286</sup> The seed of the gospel will eventually fall onto the proper soil.

### Barriers and Obstacles to Sharing the Gospel

Data collection shows that 73 percent of participants could articulate and summarize the gospel. While some articulated the gospel with proficiency, others summarized the gospel exceptionally well. In addition, 83 percent of the participants shared the gospel with someone during the implementation period. It is critical to point out that many participants shared the gospel or their faith story when they were approached. What keeps LEBWC from actively sharing the gospel?

#### **Lack of Boldness**

One of the barriers and obstacles is the lack of boldness. During the post-questionnaire interview and discussion time, some participants spoke up and stated they needed boldness. The researcher shared his experience of actively evangelizing an AT&T sales representative without being approached or invited into the conversation. One of the participants wrote, "Praying for boldness! That's what I need." Another participant wrote, "I need to pray for boldness." In his book, *Share Jesus Without Fear*, William Fay says Christians have six fears when sharing the gospel: (1) Afraid of being rejected, (2) afraid of what my friends will think, (3) afraid of sharing in a work environment, (4) afraid of not knowing enough, (5) afraid of losing friends and

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<sup>286</sup> Charles Spurgeon, *The Parable of the Sower* (Balneário Rincão: Grupo Oxigênio Ltda-ME, 2016), 14.

relatives, and finally (6) afraid of not knowing how.<sup>287</sup> One of the participants desired to share Christ at work but was unsure if it was permitted. Early on in this research project, some of the participants admitted to having anxiety about participating in this project. Other participants agreed they were nervous but were willing to participate, knowing that God calls all Christians to evangelize and share the good news with everyone around them. Rebecca Manley Pippert says, "Fear, not ignorance, is the real enemy of evangelism."<sup>288</sup>

### **Lack of Motivation**

While some are fearful and need boldness, others lack motivation. One of the participants noted that more time is spent reading other books than God's Word. The participant acknowledged the correlation between reading the Bible and the effects it has on people's motivation to share the gospel. The participant wrote, "I am in need of getting back on the right track." In his book, *Gospel Witness: Evangelism in Word and Deed*, David M. Gustafson explains this clearly. He says, "Gospel witness is about more than sharing the gospel with others. It is about whom we worship, who we are, what we receive, what we say, and what we do. Books about gospel proclamation run risks of imbalance."<sup>289</sup> Gustafson continues and says the act of worship informs and shapes the practice of evangelism.<sup>290</sup> J.I. Packer says two motives compel Christians to evangelize: love of God and concern for man.<sup>291</sup> One participant stated that they needed to spend more time in prayer so that God would give the participant more opportunities to share the gospel.

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<sup>287</sup> Fay, *Share Jesus Without Fear*, 17-26.

<sup>288</sup> Rebecca Manley Pippert, *Out of the Saltshaker and Into the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 4.

<sup>289</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness*, 1.

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> J.I. Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2012), 74.

## Cultural Barrier

Another potential barrier that came to the surface was the "immigrant" status. In this research project, seventeen participants, out of the twenty-three participants were made up of first and second-generation immigrants. One second-generation participant made the case that the general public is not receptive to being taught by immigrants, including the teaching of the gospel. With this perception in mind, it creates tension in these first and second-generation immigrants' mentality. According to the Pew Research Center, more than 68 percent of white evangelical Protestants say, "the U.S. does not have a responsibility to accept refugees."<sup>292</sup> In addition, 51 percent of all Americans say, "the U.S. has a responsibility to accept refugees in the country." It may be overthinking or presumptuous; however, these statistics do not sit well with immigrants. Knowing this sentiment from American society, one participant wrote, "I think it can deter us from sharing things, including the Gospel, because we may be rejected or looked down upon."

Another participant agreed that the "immigrant" status presents a greater challenge rather than making it easier. The participant wrote, "The second-generation immigrants still feel a pressure to fit in, and if Christianity by nature is counter-cultural, then it would present even a greater challenge when sharing the gospel." Another participant added to this conversation by stating, "I think it takes boldness and courage to be able to share the gospel. Going against the grain of today's culture is probably the last thing immigrant want to do, especially when they are just trying to fit in themselves."

To be fair, not all the participants believe having the "immigrant" label is inherently negative. One participant stated that it is neither positive nor negative. What matters is that the

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<sup>292</sup> Hannah Hartig, "Republic Turns More Negative Toward Refugees as Number Admitted to U.S. Plummet," Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (May 24, 2018) <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/05/24/republicans-turn-more-negative-toward-refugees-as-number-admitted-to-u-s-plummet/>.

person sharing the gospel genuinely loves God and people. One non-Lahu speaker wrote, "I think immigrants are viewed positively, as more trustworthy, hardworking, and considerate. Immigrants can use this to their advantage in evangelism." Another non-Lahu speaker stated, "In many ways, the white Christian voice is losing credibility in the modern U.S. It is seen as oppressive, hypocritical, and too closely linked with political voices. Because of this, I think the LEBWC would be better received as a Christian voice in today's time, and thus more effective at evangelizing." As one can see, there are differing opinions on this issue. For some, perception is still real and affects one's mind when sharing the gospel with others.

### **Language Barrier**

A barrier for first-generation immigrant participants is language. The first-generation participants did not express fear or lack of motivation for evangelism. Their biggest obstacle is the ability to communicate the gospel fluently and cohesively. One second-generation participant stated in Lahu, "I cannot say what I want to say. So, I love people, help people, and be hospitable." During the interview, this participant also shared with the researcher that the participant had reached out to two new friends who were also Asians. Based on this information, the researcher concludes that immigrants are more comfortable sharing with other immigrants even if the language barrier is an issue. Their mindset shifts when it is immigrant to immigrant and not immigrant to native. A level of comfort is perceived when the interaction is between immigrants and immigrants.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> This first-generation participant shared one experience of reaching out to an Asian non-believer and sharing the gospel with her for the first time. The non-believer, one day, became a believer, and the participant continued to disciple the new believer. Also, during the implementation period, this participant reached out to the new Asian neighbors and shared their spiritual journey. These two stories indicate that even though language is a barrier when it is between immigrants, the level of comfort is increased.

Another first-generation participant stated that it is difficult to evangelize and share the gospel with others since “we do not fully know the language.” This participant continued and stated that it is difficult to befriend or interact in depth with non-Lahu speakers. On the other hand, not all first-generation feel the same way. According to one first-generation participant, they could befriend and share the gospel with people at work when this participant used to be employed. This participant is also able to befriend and fellowship with other congregation members at church. Still, the majority consensus among first-generation participants is that language is a real barrier. Another participant stated that their level of effectiveness in evangelism has waned. A few years ago, this participant was in Thailand and evangelized to a Lahu witch doctor. Eventually, the witch doctor repented and became a follower of Christ. When the city officials were informed of the witch doctor's conversion, they threatened him to recant his faith, or they would sentence him to jail time. The new disciple did not recant and continues to follow the Lord today. Throughout this ordeal, the participant was able to help guide and mentor the new disciple. The participant stated that he is not able to have this kind of witness and discipleship influence due to the language and cultural barrier.

### **Conclusion**

There were three objectives in this DMIN action research project. First, it was to train the LEBWC to be proficient in summarizing the gospel. To be more specific, summarize the gospel in approximately thirty seconds. The training was accomplished both in the Lahu and English languages. Out of the twenty-three participants, 73 percent were proficient in summarizing the gospel after the intervention training as opposed to 52 percent before the evangelism training. This is a 40 percent increase which is a result directly traceable to the training. Even though the

researcher had hoped to see everyone become proficient, this is still moving in the right direction for the LEBWC.

The second objective of this DMIN action research project was for the participants to share the gospel with the people around them, including their children and families. During the implementation one-month period, 83 percent of the participants shared the gospel with someone. According to Barna Group research in 2013, merely 52 percent of born-again Christians shared the gospel.<sup>294</sup> In 2018, Barna Group research stated that sharing the gospel is becoming increasingly optional for Christians.<sup>295</sup> In 2019, half of practicing Christian millennials claimed that sharing the gospel was wrong and offensive to non-Christians.<sup>296</sup> The LEBWC is above average in this regard. While it is true that most of the participants share the gospel regularly, even before the training, the intervention plan has reinforced the need and excitement for evangelism. Moreover, the training instilled more confidence and inspiration in their evangelism. This is another direct traceable outcome of the intervention plan.

The final objective of this DMIN action research project was for the participants to "pop" the question and ask someone to receive Christ. This was an important final step since evangelism's goal is conversion and leading people to Christ through discipleship. The outcome of evangelism is to make disciples and faithful witnesses; therefore, participants cannot avoid asking unbelievers to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior.<sup>297</sup> Out of the 83 percent who shared the gospel, merely 11 percent (two participants) asked someone to receive Christ.

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<sup>294</sup> Barna Group, "Is Evangelism Going Out of Style?," accessed November 18, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/is-evangelism-going-out-of-style/>.

<sup>295</sup> Barna group, "Sharing Faith is Increasingly Optional to Christians," October 13, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians/>.

<sup>296</sup> Barna Group, "Almost Half of Practicing Christian Millennials Say Evangelism Is Wrong," accessed November 3, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/>.

<sup>297</sup> Metzger, *Wholly by Grace*, 229.



Moreover, out of the 83 percent who shared the gospel and their faith story, many shared because someone instigated the conversation. In a culture that is increasingly more secular, Christians must have the audacity to be more outspoken about the gospel and be expectant for God to move in the hearts of the unbelievers. Perhaps, they were fearful or did not believe that God would bring to fruition their efforts. Randy Newman says, “Evangelism occurs at the intersection of the human and the divine, where people do ordinary things...and God does what only he can do.”<sup>298</sup> The researcher acknowledges the gap in the intervention plan to equip the participants to be confident in God and to earnestly pray for God to do His part. This could have been accomplished through a small group setting where all the participants come together to encourage, pray for each other, and share stories of how God has saved some people in the past. Newman says, "If we forget about God's supernatural power to save, we can find plenty of data to discourage us."<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Randy Newman, *Unlikely Converts: Improbable Stories of Faith and What They Teach Us About Evangelism* (Grand Rapid, MI: Kregel Publications, 2019), 59.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

## **CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION**

Jesus said in Mark 16:15, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation” (ESV). James R. Edwards says the target of the gospel is universal import and that the disciples are sent “into all the world.”<sup>300</sup> God has placed the LEBWC in Rochester, Minnesota, to import the gospel into everyone around them. This DMIN action research project attempted to address the need to execute the Great Commission by developing a model of evangelism compatible with the LEBWC.

### **Where Should this Research Go from Here?**

The undertaking of this research does not end here. Two primary criteria should be considered when measuring the project's success: immediate outcome and long-term sustainability. The three primary objectives of this intervention design were to equip the LEBWC to be proficient in summarizing the gospel, share it with the people around them, including their children and family, and ask someone to receive Christ. According to the research, 73 percent of the participants stated they could articulate and summarize the gospel. This was a 40 percent increase from the baseline. In addition, 83 percent of the participants shared the gospel during the implementation period. All of this points to success in the kingdom of God. The one area where improvements could be made is asking people to respond to the gospel of Jesus. Merely 11 percent of those who shared the gospel asked someone to receive Christ. According to Stuart K. Weber, the second participle of the Great Commission in Matthew 28 associates closely with

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<sup>300</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 418.

the decision of faith.<sup>301</sup> “Baptizing” is just as important as “going” and “teaching.” Therefore, Christians must lead non-believers to Christ in the evangelism process.

The more important consideration at this juncture is long-term sustainability. Evangelism and making disciples are not a project or situational endeavors. Jesus promises He would be with His disciples “to the end of the age,” which implies longevity and persistence until He returns. If the LEBWC continues to familiarize themselves with the gospel, they will become more fluent in articulating and summarizing the gospel. The LEBWC should continue to foster relationships with non-believers and share the gospel with one person every quarter to maintain sustainability and consistency. Finally, the LEBWC should intentionally ask people to respond to the gospel when they share it. It is uncomfortable and challenging to ask people to accept Christ as their Lord and Savior in a pluralistic society. During the time of the Judges, “everyone did what was right in his [or her] own eyes” (Judg 21:25, ESV). The same is true for the Apostle Paul, who encountered similar situations in Athens and proclaimed, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent....” In their book, *The Gospel in the Marketplace of Ideas: Paul’s Mars Hill Experience for Our Pluralistic World*, Paul Copan and Kenneth D. Litwak state, “Western culture has begun to resemble the relativism repeatedly described in the book of Judges.”<sup>302</sup> The culture will continue to change and adapt. However, participants should continue to engage and share the gospel and ask people to receive Christ as the Lord leads, even in uncomfortable and daunting situations.

Sustainability is contingent on utilizing a plan. Antoine de Saint-Exupery once said, “a goal without a plan is just a wish.” Many Christians wish and even desire to share the gospel, but

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<sup>301</sup> Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 484.

<sup>302</sup> Paul Copan, and Kenneth D. Litwak, *The Gospel in the Marketplace of Ideas: Paul’s Mars Hill Experience for Our Pluralistic World* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), 11.

few plan for success. The model of evangelism described by Priscilla Pope-Levison in figure 5 is a paradigm that can be executed over a long period. This model should be implemented and become the "way of life" for all the participants and the LEBWC.

This research also has collective implications for the LEBWC. The opportunities that have been presented are multicultural in the sense that the LEBWC utilizes Lahu and English. Most of the first-generation participants felt more comfortable developing relationships with other non-English native speakers since they perceived that as being on the same status level. Perhaps a multicultural approach would be more desirable and effective in reaching more people. This means that the LEBWC would take steps to become a multicultural church, utilizing only the English language to be open to all cultures in the community.

### **How the Results of this Research Compare to Previous Studies**

The first comparison of this project's results to previous studies pertains to sharing the gospel. According to the Barna Group in 2013, theoretically, 73 percent of Christians felt responsible for sharing the gospel with those around them. Functionally, merely 52 percent of Christians shared the gospel once in the past year.<sup>303</sup> In the same year, Lifeway Research also found that 80 percent of Christians believed they should share the gospel but concluded that 61 percent "have not shared how to become a Christian with anyone in the previous six months."<sup>304</sup> According to this study, merely four out of ten Christians shared the gospel. Furthermore, another study conducted by Barna Group concluded that more than half (83 percent) of Gen Zs

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<sup>303</sup> Barna Group, "Is Evangelism Going out of Style Is Wrong," accessed November 3, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/>.

<sup>304</sup> Lifeway Research, "Churchgoers Believe in Sharing Faith, Most Never Do," accessed December 7, 2022, <https://research.lifeway.com/2012/08/13/churchgoers-believe-in-sharing-faith-most-never-do/>.

rely more on actions rather than using words to share their faith.<sup>305</sup> In this project, 83 percent of the participants shared the gospel once with those around them during the implementation period. Compared to the Lifeway Research study and Barna Group research, this project had better results. The researcher instructed the participants of the LEBWC that while actions are significant and add integrity to the gospel, the gospel must be shared verbally.

The second comparison of this project's results to previous studies pertains to the definition and summary of the gospel. A study was released on August 4, 2020, that stated 52 percent of Christians accepted a works-oriented means to salvation.<sup>306</sup> This is the false notion that salvation can be earned by being good or doing good. More than half of Christians do not understand or know the gospel. During the intervention period, the researcher taught the content of the gospel, hoping that the participants would be proficient in articulating and summarizing the gospel. The main points were that mankind are sinners who deserve hell, and humans cannot save themselves. Therefore, God sent Jesus to save us by dying on the cross. This gift of salvation is free to all who respond by faith, according to Ephesians 2. In this project, 73 percent of the participants were able to summarize the gospel after the training sessions. For example, one participant stated in the post-interview that "we deserve hell, and we can't save ourselves by doing good works." This is an important statement regarding the authenticity of the gospel. When Christians begin to rely on themselves rather than on the finished work of Jesus Christ, this belief system becomes false and misleading.<sup>307</sup> Joe Carter says, "There is, of course, more to

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<sup>305</sup> Barna Group, "Actions, Invitations, Storytelling—How Gen Z Approaches Evangelism," accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/gen-z-evangelism/>.

<sup>306</sup> George Barna, "American Worldview Inventory 2020," <https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AWVI-2020-Release-08-Perceptions-of-Sin-and-Salvation.pdf>.

<sup>307</sup> Joe Carter, "Survey: Majority of American Christians Don't Believe the Gospel," The Gospel Coalition, accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/survey-a-majority-of-american-christians-dont-believe-the-gospel/>.

the gospel than the good news about our salvation being purchased by Jesus and through faith in him sinful men and women are reconciled to a holy God. But if you do not believe that aspect of the gospel you do not believe the gospel. And if you don't believe the gospel, you should stop calling yourself a Christian."<sup>308</sup> In this project, even though some participants could not summarize the gospel, they at least understood that the gospel is the gift of salvation from a gracious God.

The third comparison of this project's results to previous studies relates to Christians leading non-Christians to Christ. In his book, *Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News*, Greg Laurie claims that 95 percent of all Christians have never led anyone to Christ.<sup>309</sup> This is a staggering number that should awaken all Christians. In this project, 83 percent of the participants shared the gospel during the implementation period. Out of the 83 percent, merely 11 percent asked someone to receive Christ. This compares closely with Laurie's claim that few Christians lead anyone to Christ. While it is encouraging that 83 percent of the participants shared the gospel with someone, the pivotal question must be asked at the end. "Would you like to receive Christ as your Lord and Savior?"

The final comparison of this project's results to previous studies pertains to who is responsible for sharing the gospel. This project found that all the participants believed all Christians are responsible for reaching out and sharing the gospel with the people around them. It should be stated that some of the LEBWC attendees did not hold this thought. Some refused to participate in the project. One individual stated that he did not have the gift of evangelism nor felt called to evangelize. According to the Barna Group, "In 1993, 89 percent of Christians who

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<sup>308</sup> Carter, "Survey: Majority of American Christians Don't Believe the Gospel."

<sup>309</sup> Greg Laurie, *Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2016), 9.

had shared their faith agreed this is a responsibility of every Christian. Today, just 64 percent say so—a 25-point drop.”<sup>310</sup> Merely 40 percent of Christians do not believe sharing the gospel is their responsibility. According to another Barna Group research study, “51 percent of churchgoers don’t know of the Great Commission.”<sup>311</sup> Of the 49 percent who know the term, “only 17 percent are familiar with the passage.” Based on this study, it is understandable that they do not accept the responsibility to evangelize. Besides the few, this project indicates that most of the LEBWC and the participants understand the significance of their personal responsibility to share the gospel.

### **How the Results of this Research Compare to the Literature Review**

#### Definition of Evangelism

This research project has differences and similarities to previous studies or published work. The first observation regarding the definition of "evangelism" in the literature review is manifested in how the participants evangelized. Scott D. Hildreth and Steven A. McKinion believe that the Christians’ role is to merely share the gospel and leave the results up to God. Merely 11 percent of the participants who evangelized asked someone to receive Christ. It may not be presumptuous to assume that 89 percent of those who shared the gospel did not think evangelism’s role was leading someone to Christ—only to share. There could have been other reasons for not asking someone to receive Christ, such as hesitancy, nervousness, or timing. However, 11 percent is a telling percentage and supports Hildreth and McKinion’s view.

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<sup>310</sup> Barna Group, “Sharing Faith is Increasingly Optional to Christians,” accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians/>.

<sup>311</sup> Barna Group, “51% of Churchgoers Don’t Know of the Great Commission,” accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/half-churchgoers-not-heard-great-commission/>.

### Significance of Evangelism

The second comparison in the results of this project is the significance of evangelism. The primary voice in the literature review agrees that evangelism derives from Jesus and is critical for Christians to obey. Figure 8 shows that everyone who participated believed sharing the gospel was significant and every believer should evangelize. In the literature review, there is a minority group of Christians who believe that evangelism does more harm than good in the grand scheme. Not every Christian is thrilled with sharing the gospel and asking someone to receive Christ. They claim that people who have been reached by evangelism have not produced moral character.<sup>312</sup> Others claimed that evangelism is offensive.<sup>313</sup> Similarly, some in the LEBWC did not desire to evangelize.

### The Essence of Evangelism

The third comparison in the results of this project is the essence of evangelism. Grant Osborne says there must be a balance between evangelism and social charities.<sup>314</sup> Stott and Wright say that evangelism and social actions are partners.<sup>315</sup> Keller states that the gospel should lead people to care ministries for the poor.<sup>316</sup> To tie it all together, David Gustafson says mercy ministries should be tied with a verbal proclamation to be considered evangelistic.<sup>317</sup> In this project, the participants were not instructed nor encouraged to perform charitable acts as they evangelized. During the post-interview, some participants suggested that the LEBWC do an

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<sup>312</sup> Macaulay, and Belton, *Personal Evangelism*, 17.

<sup>313</sup> Barna Group, "Almost Half of Practicing Christian Millennials Say Evangelism is Wrong," accessed October 25, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/millennials-oppose-evangelism/>.

<sup>314</sup> Osborne, *Acts: Verse by Verse*, 22.

<sup>315</sup> Stott, and Wright, *Christian Mission in the Modern World*, 27.

<sup>316</sup> Keller, *Center Church*, 30.

<sup>317</sup> Gustafson, *Gospel Witness Through the Ages*, 10.



outreach event to reach the community by doing good works. This indicates that some participants desire to be outwardly focused and have a greater impact on the community. More importantly, they see the link between evangelism and good works.

### Contextualizing Evangelism

The fourth comparison in the results of this project is contextualizing evangelism. Warren R. Beattie says contextualizing makes the gospel real and tangible in every culture.<sup>318</sup> Christ must be embodied in any culture or setting.<sup>319</sup> The participants were trained to foster and develop relationships in their network of people. They were instructed to share the gospel with those around them whom they have a relationship with. Even though this is not cross-cultural, it requires knowledge and understanding of people's backgrounds with whom they share the gospel. Every situation is different and necessitates unique ways to approach and bring up the subject of the gospel. For example, one of the participants shared the gospel with a person who was openly practicing homosexuality. This requires a unique perspective on how to bring up the gospel. Many Lahu participants are second-generation immigrants who migrated to America very young. Even though they have embraced the American values and way of life, some of them feel the impact of Third Culture Kid (TCK). Some describe this feeling as belonging "everywhere and nowhere" simultaneously or not quite belonging to any place.<sup>320</sup> Some of the second-generation participants had to contextualize to share the gospel. One participant conveyed that they must understand different cultures because there is a significant difference in how other cultures communicate, and you want to communicate contextually. This participant

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<sup>318</sup> Beattie, *Ministry Across Cultures*, 4.

<sup>319</sup> Opoku Onyiah, "New Ways of Doing Evangelism." *International Review of Mission* 103, no. 1 (2014): 121-128, accessed January 29, 2022, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1111/irom.12049>.

<sup>320</sup> Gene H. Bell-Villada, and Nina Sichel, *Writing Out of Limbo: International Childhood, Global Nomads and Third Culture Kids* (Newcastle Upon Tyne, ENG: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 26.

said that one way of communication is not better; it is merely different, and people who share the gospel ought to understand the difference.

### Immigrants' View on Evangelism

The final comparison in the results of this project is the immigrants' view and impact on evangelism in their new context. In the literature review, Tsvirinko stated that the Russian-speaking churches in America were less impactful on their community since it was isolated from society.<sup>321</sup> Serrao and Cavendish say even though not intentional, immigrant churches can become barriers to reaching out.<sup>322</sup> In this project, some first-generation participants stated that building and fostering relationships with others was difficult. Difficult in the sense that building relationships with others outside of the LEBWC did not come naturally, nor did it seem pertinent. Other first-generation attendees of the LEBWC did not want to participate because they felt inadequate when asked to participate in the project. According to Hughes, the influx of Christian immigrants positively influences Australia's declining Christian denominations.<sup>323</sup> The question is, what kind of influence are immigrant Christians having besides neutralizing the declining number? Like the Russian-speaking churches mentioned by Tsvirinko, the LEBWC have minimal impact on the community if they cannot develop relationships to share the gospel with outsiders.

There is also some trepidation amongst the second-generation participants. While other second-generation participants felt completely comfortable sharing the gospel with outsiders, some were hesitant, believing it could cause a nuisance to share the gospel as a foreigner or

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<sup>321</sup> Tsvirinko, *Context and Contextuality*, 2.

<sup>322</sup> Serrao, and Cavendish, "The Social Functions and Dysfunctions of Brazilian Immigrant Congregations in 'terra incognita,'" 15.

<sup>323</sup> Philip Hughes, "Immigration and Its Continuing Impact on Religion in Australia," *Christian Research Association* 27, no. 4 (2017): 2, accessed October 26, 2022, <https://search.informit-org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/doi/epdf/10.3316/informit.298642021361892>.

immigrant. Overall, the first and second-generation's view on evangelism is positive. They want to see greater outreach and evangelism in their community. Over time and with more training and inspiration, the LEBWC is on track to have greater influence in their city through outreach and evangelism.

### **Gained Knowledge from Implementing this Project**

There are several gained insights from implementing this project. First, the researcher is convinced that most Christians will obey the Great Commission to evangelize and make disciples if they are taught, equipped, and encouraged. There will be the few who will never evangelize and contrive excuses such as anxiety, fear, lack of time, not being gifted, fear of offending someone, apathy, inadequacy, ignorance, etc. However, according to this project, most people will share the gospel if equipped and inspired.

The statistics shared in this research project on evangelism are staggering. Merely 52 percent of Christians shared the gospel in the past year. Eighty-three percent of Gen Zers believe sharing the gospel through actions is more effective than proclamation. Ninety-five percent of Christians have never led anyone to follow Christ. These shocking statistics are discouraging and disappointing. However, this project indicates that Christians are willing to try and share the gospel if taught, equipped, and encouraged. Many of the participants were not outright eager to evangelize. However, they were willing to be used by the Lord. They were willing to be trained and equipped. This begs the question, what are churches teaching the congregants to do and accomplish? What is the church's mission, and what are the functioning values? Do churches today have a focus on evangelism and making new disciples? This project had three primary objectives: 1) Articulate and summarize the gospel, 2) Share the gospel, and 3) Ask someone to receive Christ. Most of the participants were willing to learn the content of the gospel and share

the gospel. Over time, the researcher believes the participants will be more comfortable asking people to respond to the gospel. Ryan Denton says, "The Local Church is extremely important for evangelism."<sup>324</sup> They may not be enthusiastic initially, but they are willing if the church will take the initiative to teach, equip, and encourage the congregants.

The researcher's second insight gained from this project is that most participants are more reactive than proactive in sharing the gospel. In other words, they are more reluctant to instigate a spiritual conversation or share the gospel. According to a research study conducted in 2018 by the Barna Group, 11 percent of Christians were proactive in initiating spiritual conversations with non-Christians in 1993. In contrast, today, 19 percent are proactive in looking for ways to share the gospel.<sup>325</sup> Even though the percentage has increased, it is still a low number. The Barna Group says Christians are reluctant and not proactive in sharing the gospel because of the "cultural trends of secularism, relativism, pluralism, and the digital age."<sup>326</sup> Church leaders must help everyday Christians see the connection between their faith and everyday life activities so that they can be more proactive in seeing the connection between life and the gospel.

The third and final insight that the researcher gained from this project is that personal evangelism is one of the best tools for all Christians to utilize. Priscilla Pope-Levison states, "There is a stark simplicity to personal evangelism."<sup>327</sup> Of course, many evangelism models and strategies can be easily adapted and tailored to almost every situation; however, personal evangelism is inexpensive, flexible, requires little planning, requires no sacred space, and doesn't

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<sup>324</sup> Ryan Denton, *Ten Modern Evangelism Myths: A Biblical Corrective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2021), 48.

<sup>325</sup> Barna Group, "Sharing Faith is Increasingly Optional to Christians," accessed December 7, 2022, <https://www.barna.com/research/sharing-faith-increasingly-optional-christians/>.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid.

<sup>327</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 19.

require a theological degree.<sup>328</sup> Michael Green claims that the first Christians did not have remarkable strategies or tactics.<sup>329</sup> Acts 8:4 states, "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word" (ESV). Regarding this verse, Kenneth O Gangel says, "any congregation needing a verse for every-member evangelism can find it right here."<sup>330</sup> Personal evangelism was the primary method found in the early church. They did not hold events and programs to proclaim, yet they turned the world upside down with the gospel of Jesus Christ through proclamation and evangelism. Again, Michael Green states that the explosive spread of Christianity in the early church was largely achieved by informal missionaries and "must have been to a large extent haphazard and spontaneous."<sup>331</sup> Green says the scattered Christians shared the gospel "through informal chattering to friends and chance acquaintances, in homes and wine shops, on walks, and around market stalls."<sup>332</sup> Christians today can effectively do likewise through personal evangelism.

### **How the Results Apply in Other Settings**

The results of this project can apply to other settings in two ways. First, based on this project, churches can assume an increase in evangelistic activities if they teach, equip, challenge, and encourage their congregants. Often, churches seek out times other than Sunday morning to teach evangelism. The researcher suggests training congregants during the Sunday morning

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<sup>328</sup> Pope-Levison, *Models of Evangelism*, 19.

<sup>329</sup> Michael Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 16.

<sup>330</sup> Kenneth O Gangel, *Acts*, vol. 5, Holman Bible Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 120.

<sup>331</sup> Green, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, 218.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

message while everyone is there already. Rather than holding another event where only ten to twenty percent show up.

The Pew Research Center states that the decline of Christianity in America continues at a rapid pace.<sup>333</sup> It is projected that in 2070, Christians will only make up 54 percent of the population.<sup>334</sup> While these statistics are staggering and alarming to Christians, this is not the primary reason for evangelism. The impetus for evangelism should not be reactive; Christians must evangelize because King Jesus, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth, commands his followers to make disciples. Despite the decline or growth of the church in America, Christians should always evangelize and make disciples.

Learning new things requires training, repetition, coaching, and encouragement in all other life settings. Whether in the academic setting, sports, or life in general, learning new things requires time, effort, and hard work. The researcher concludes that churches must teach, train, coach, and encourage their congregations to evangelize, share the good news in word and deed, and make disciples. This project's findings indicate that Christians will be more comfortable and desire to reach out and evangelize if they are trained. There will be an increase in the ability to communicate the gospel, an increase in Christians sharing the gospel, and an increase in new converts. This must be replicated in all the churches in America and worldwide.

The second implication from this project that might apply in other settings relates to ethnic churches' impact on their communities. There are many ethnic churches scattered throughout America that are in similar situations. The researcher, from personal experience, is aware of other Lahu churches, Hmong churches, Lao churches, and Chinese churches scattered

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<sup>333</sup> Pew Research Center, "In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace," accessed December 8, 2022, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.

<sup>334</sup> Pew Research Center, "Modeling the Future of Religion in America," accessed December 8, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2022/09/13/modeling-the-future-of-religion-in-america/>.

throughout America. They fellowship, worship, teach, and preach like all other churches. However, they are not reaching beyond their ethnicity due to cultural and language barriers. These ethnic churches consist of first, second, and third-generation Christian immigrants. The first-generation's desire to keep their ethnic traditions, ethnic community, and to preserve the language, if possible, often hinders the spiritual influence they can have in their community. In this project, the first generation especially faced difficulty developing relationships outside the LEBWC. In addition, some second-generation admitted to being hesitant to share the gospel because of their immigrant status. The longer these ethnic groups hold out, the longer it will take them to be comfortable reaching out and evangelizing.

Immigrant churches need to take a serious look at how they are contextualizing in their new environment. The researcher hopes for immigrant and ethnic churches to find ways to reach out and evangelize in the new settings God has placed them in. Samuel Escobar says, "Drive and inspiration to move forward and take the gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth, crossing all kinds of geographical and cultural barriers, is the work of the Holy Spirit."<sup>335</sup> According to Escobar, the Holy Spirit is already at work in mission strategies today, where you find Americans, Europeans, Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans working together to accomplish the same task of making disciples. The first thousand years of church history happened primarily under the Eastern church. The Western church leads the second millennium. The Southern church will lead the third millennium. Escobar goes on to say that another missionary force is taking place among migrants and refugees, who are witnessing for Christ as they move.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Mission: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2003), 19.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-19.

Immigrant churches can make a greater impact if they see their new context as God's calling on their lives.

### **A Topic that Emerged that Merits Future Research**

One topic that emerged from this project that merits future research is the effectiveness and mission of ethnic and immigrant congregations in America. Namely, the effectiveness of evangelism in these congregations reaching out to the community beyond their ethnic background. Ethnic and immigrant churches must become more than a haven for immigrants and refugees. They must obey the Great Commission and make disciples of all nations, including their new context location. Immigrant churches must find ways to preserve their cultural identity and simultaneously reach the broader community. There seem to be few discussions on the spiritual implications of immigrant churches on American communities. The researcher recommends exploring multicultural church philosophy and practices for immigrant churches to effectively reach non-Christians in their community.

### **Conclusion**

The LEBWC lacked emphasis and training on evangelism. This affected the individual attendees and the community. The problem was that many people in the LEBWC were not proactive in sharing the gospel with the people around them. This project's objective was to train and equip the LECWC to be proficient in articulating and summarizing the gospel so that the participants can share the gospel and ask people to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The participants were trained in four sessions and given a month to implement evangelism. Many participants could articulate and summarize the gospel after the intervention plan. Eighty-three percent of the participants willingly shared the gospel during the implementation period. This



was not without reluctance and anxiety. Many of them expressed barriers and hindrances. Some participants stated that they were reactively sharing the gospel because they lacked the boldness to instigate spiritual conversations. Others lacked the motivation to share the gospel. There were also cultural and language barriers, primarily for the first-generation participants as well as some of the second-generation participants. Despite the many barriers to spreading the gospel, the researcher believes the LEBWC were willing to share the gospel because they were trained and encouraged during the intervention plan. Christians desire to be called up, challenged and encouraged to be used by the Lord. The researcher is convinced that more Christians will evangelize and share the gospel with the people around them if they are trained, coached, and encouraged to do so.

## APPENDIX A

## RESEARCHER'S AFFIRMATION REQUEST FROM CORE LEADERS

Dear Core Leaders,


I have been permitted by Liberty University Rawlings School of Divinity to conduct a research project on the topic of evangelism in the Lahu-English worship community. The project requires me to conduct interviews, focused groups, and questionnaires with the parishioners of the Lahu-English bilingual worship community. As Core Leaders of the Lahu-English service, I would not only request your affirmation but covet your prayers to ensure this project advances the outreach and evangelism endeavors of the Lahu-English service and ultimately bring praise to God.

Sincerely,

Pastor Dorkham See  
Researcher

## APPENDIX B

## APPROVAL LETTER FROM SENIOR PASTOR



**Calvary Evangelical Free Church**  
*Passion for Christ, Compassion for People*

June 6, 2022

Dorkham See  
Pastor of Lahu-English Worshipping Community  
Calvary Evangelical Free Church  
5500 25<sup>th</sup> Ave NW  
Rochester, MN 55901


Dear Dorkham:


After careful review of your research proposal entitled, "A Model of Outreach and Evangelism for a Bilingual Worshipping Community," I have decided to grant you permission to contact the Lahu-English worshipping community and invite them to participate in your study.

Check the following boxes, as applicable:

I grant permission for Dorkham See to contact the Lahu-English Bilingual worshipping community to invite them to participate in his research study.

I am requesting a copy of the results upon study completion and/or publication.

Sincerely, 

  
Dr. Kyle Bushre  
Senior Pastor  
Calvary Evangelical Free Church

## APPENDIX C

## PROJECT PRESENTATION OUTLINE TO CONGREGATION

**“LIVING TO MAKE HIM KNOWN”**

## 1. Why are we doing this series?

Mark 16:15-16. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He instructed us to go into all the world and share the Gospel-the good news. All Christians are instructed to share the gospel with those around them.

A study states that 95% of Christians have never led anyone to Christ.

## 2. What are we doing in this series?

Participants will go through 3 weeks of evangelism training. The goals are: (1) To be proficient in articulating and summarizing the gospel, (2) Share the gospel, and (3) Ask people to receive Christ.

Sharing the gospel should be natural for Christians. The goal is for everyone to share the gospel with the people around them, including their children and family.

## 3. When will we be doing this?

The next 3 weeks, there will be evangelism training.

## APPENDIX D

## CONSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT FORM

**Title of the Project:** A Model of Evangelism for a Bilingual Worship Community

**Principal Investigator:** Dorkham See, 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 old and a current attendee of the Lahu-English bilingual worship community. 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 create a model of evangelism for the Lahu-English bilingual worship community.

**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. Attend the four training sessions on Sunday morning during the worship service.
2. Fill out a questionnaire, participate in group discussions, and share the gospel.
3. To conclude the study, you will be asked to fill out the post-questionnaire and participate in an interview with the researcher.

**How could you or others benefit from this study?**

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are as follows:

1. You will know the content of the gospel.
2. You will know how to summarize the gospel.
3. You will know how to share the gospel.

**What risks might you experience from being in this study?**

There are no risks involved in this study.

**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 kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.

**How will you be compensated for being part of the study?**

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study. However, after the project is over, all the participants will have a chance to enter a \$150 drawing.

**What are the costs to you to be part of the study?**

There are no costs involved to participate in this research study.

**Is study participation voluntary?**

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision on whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Pastor Dorkham See. 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 notify the researcher. 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 Dorkham See. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at [REDACTED].

**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](mailto: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. 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

APPENDIX E  
PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

*Circle the answers that are best for you. There are no wrong answers*

1. In the last 6 months I have shared my faith with \_\_\_\_ people.
  - a. 0
  - b. 1-2
  - c. 3-5
  - d. 5+
  
2. I intentionally tell people about Jesus \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Daily
  - b. Weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. I can't specifically remember when I intentionally told someone about Jesus
  
3. I have at least one specific activity that allows me to serve my community.
  - a. Daily
  - b. Weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. I don't get around my community a lot
  
4. I have \_\_\_\_ non-Christian friends whom I am currently talking to about Jesus.
  - a. 0
  - b. 1
  - c. 2
  - d. 3+
  
5. Who should tell non-Christians about Jesus (check all that apply)?
  - a. Church Leaders
  - b. The Pastor
  - c. Christians
  - d. I am not sure
  
6. I am praying for my friends who are not Christians.
  - a. Daily
  - b. Weekly
  - c. I don't pray a lot
  - d. That is not what I pray about

7. I invite my non-Christian friends to church with me.
- Daily
  - Weekly
  - When going to church comes up in a conversation
  - I do not have non-Christian friends
8. I have invited my non-Christian friends to Bible study \_\_\_\_\_ over the last month.
- Once
  - Twice
  - More than twice
  - I don't invite non-Christians to Bible study
9. I am confident that I know how to lead people to Jesus.
- Yes
  - No
  - I am not confident
  - I would call the pastor for help
10. I read the Bible.
- Daily
  - Weekly
  - When I am at church
  - I would like to, but I don't know where to begin
11. I know what the Gospel is.
- Yes
  - Yes, but I am not confident
  - I am not sure
  - I was baptized when I was young and that is all that I know
12. I can summarize the Gospel in 30 seconds.
- Yes
  - No
  - I am not sure
  - I don't know the Gospel.
13. When the pastor preaches, I have a tendency to \_\_\_\_\_.
- take notes
  - listen closely
  - follow what he says in my Bible
  - look at my cell phone



14. I have had specific training in personal evangelism.

- a. Many times, I could teach the class
- b. Yes, but I don't remember all of it
- c. Maybe, but it was a long time ago
- d. Never

15. I know what Romans 10:9-13 says.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe
- d. I don't read the Bible much

16. I can lead someone to follow Jesus.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe
- d. I am afraid I might mess up

16. What part of Acts 1:8 do you consider your church community?

- a. Jerusalem
- b. Samaria
- c. Judea
- d. the ends of the earth

APPENDIX F  
POST-QUESTIONNAIRE

*Circle the answers that are best for you. There are no wrong answers*

1. In the last 6 months I have shared my faith with \_\_\_\_ people.
  - a. 0
  - b. 1-2
  - c. 3-5
  - d. 5+
  
2. I intentionally tell people about Jesus \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Daily
  - b. Weekly
  - c. Monthly
  - d. I can't specifically remember when I intentionally told someone about Jesus
  
3. I have \_\_\_\_ non-Christian friends whom I am currently talking to about Jesus.
  - a. 0
  - b. 1
  - c. 2
  - d. 3+
  
4. I am praying for my friends who are not Christians.
  - a. Daily
  - b. Weekly
  - c. I don't pray a lot
  - d. That is not what I pray about
  
5. I am confident that I know how to lead people to Jesus.
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. I am not confident
  - d. I would call the pastor for help
  
6. I know what the Gospel is.
  - a. Yes
  - b. Yes, but I am not confident
  - c. I am not sure
  - d. I was baptized when I was young and that is all that I know

7. I can summarize the Gospel in 30 seconds.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I am not sure
- d. I don't know the Gospel.

8. I know what Romans 10:9-13 says.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe
- d. I don't read the Bible much

9. I can lead someone to follow Jesus.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Maybe
- d. I am afraid I might mess up

10. Did you ask anyone to receive Christ during the implementation period?

- a. yes
- b. no
- c. I don't know how

How many people did you lead to Christ during the implementation period?

- a. 0
- b. 1
- c. 2-4
- d. 5+

## APPENDIX G

## ANALYZING TOOL SAMPLE

Topics	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4
Gospel summarization			proficient	Vague in sharing the gospel
Need more training in evangelism		“We need more training in evangelism.”		
Language barrier to evangelism	1 generation attendees lack fluency in English to share the gospel with their neighbors.			
Cultural barrier in outreach to community				In the past, the 1 <sup>st</sup> generation Christians didn’t really know the culture to reach out.
Asked for a response		Participant shared the gospel with kids and one received Christ		
Shared the Gospel with someone			Co-worker asked about my faith and we had a good conversation	

## APPENDIX H

### SERMON OUTLINES

#### **The Content of the Gospel**

**Objective:** To be able to articulate and summarize the content of the gospel.

The word “Gospel” literally means “good news.” However, before we can fully appreciate the good news, we must understand the bad news first.

#### **1. Bad News**

- A. We Are Sinners (Romans 3:23)
- B. We are all deserving of hell (Romans 6:23)
- C. We cannot save ourselves (Romans 3:10-12)

#### **2. Good News**

- A. God loves the world (John 3:16)
- B. God sent Jesus to die for us (John 3:17)
- C. God gives salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9)

People will want to talk about politics and culture. It’s ok to engage in those conversation, but always bring them back to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You are successful when you share the gospel and people understand you. Whether they accept or not is up to God and them.

#### **How Can Someone Be Saved?**

Romans 10:9-15  
Ephesians 2:8

**9**If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

**Main point:** Salvation is by faith alone.

**The Big Question:** How can an unsaved person receive the Gospel and be saved

#### **Introduction**

In this context, the Apostle Paul is writing to his fellow Israel. Paul is saddened to see that Israel has failed to recognize that salvation is only by faith in Jesus and not in their works and keeping the law.

### **1. Believe in your heart.**

Rather than believing in their works, Paul longed for Israel to believe in their hearts that God raised Jesus from the dead.

Salvation is by faith alone.

Salvation is free. Isaiah 55:1-2

### **2. Declare with your mouth.**

“What the heart believes, the mouth confesses.” – Kenneth Boa

“To profess a thing with the mouth is to speak of it; to declare it; to do it openly and publicly.” – Barnes Notes on the Bible.

Matthew 10:32, “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven.”

### **3. Make Jesus your Lord.**

“Ascribe deity to Jesus of Nazareth.” – Kenneth Boa

Submission is making Jesus your Lord. After submission is obedience. Baptism is the first step of obedience for a new believer. Matthew 28 says, teach new disciples to obey everything Jesus has commanded.

Conclusion.

The gospel is a gift from God. Receive it today and share it with those around you.

## **Evangelism Model**

*Evangelism is not a project but a process.*

### **1. Let your lifestyle display the gospel**

Even before you speak a word about the church or the Gospel, your lifestyle should communicate the gospel.

Lifestyle includes everything: from finances, and hobbies, to what we wear, what we eat and drink, our priorities, and how we treat people.

### **2. Raise your evangelistic temperature**

According to Barna research, “the evangelistic temperature of many Christians in America is cool and growing cooler.” Some think sharing the gospel is not their responsibility. Some are embarrassed to talk about their faith.

Pray for your neighbors. Pray for your friends. Pray for the lost.

### 3. Foster relationships with non-believers

You must seek ways to interact and develop meaningful relationships with non-Christians through sports, clubs, hobbies, community events, work, etc.

### 4. Share the gospel of Jesus Christ

We can't only live out the gospel. The Bible says to proclaim the gospel. Share the good news.

### 5. Follow up and keep reaching out

Don't forget to follow up. If they decide to follow Christ, invite them to church with you. Read and study the Bible together. Invite them to a small group.

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## IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.**  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 13, 2022

Dorkham See  
Brent Kelly

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-1185 A Model of Evangelism for a Bilingual Worshipping Community

Dear Dorkham See and Brent Kelly,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.

Decision: No Human Subjects Research

Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:

Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. **If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word *research* with the word *project* throughout both documents.**

If you have any questions about this determination or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at [irb@liberty.edu](mailto:irb@liberty.edu).

Sincerely,

**G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP**  
*Administrative Chair of Institutional Research*  
**Research Ethics Office**