

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

A Plan to Counteract the Negative Effects of *Laïcité* on Evangelism

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by

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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This action research project aims to assist believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan in France to maximize their evangelistic efforts despite the pressures and adverse effects of *laïcité*. The work rests on the historical and French legal definition of *laïcité* that parallels the biblical doctrine of the separation of church and state. This doctrine supports the libertarian approach of *laïcité* and opposes the restrictive definition growing in French culture. A group of eleven individuals participated in an intervention to assist believers in their understanding of *laïcité*, evangelism, and the practice of evangelism. This six-week intervention combined teaching times, practical exercises, and accountability components to counteract the negative effects of *laïcité* on evangelism. This research will be helpful to believers seeking to be faithful in their evangelism in the context of French *laïcité*, as well as pastors desiring to stimulate evangelism in a society that discourages it.

Keywords: Laïcité, Evangelism, Separation of Church and State, Secularism, Religious Freedom, Christian Civil Disobedience.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Illustrations | viii |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Ministry Context | 2 |
| History | 2 |
| Location | 2 |
| Demographics | 4 |
| Spiritual Life | 6 |
| Problem Presented | 7 |
| Purpose Statement | 8 |
| Basic Assumptions | 9 |
| Definitions | 10 |
| Limitations | 15 |
| Delimitations | 17 |
| Thesis Statement | 18 |
| CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK | 20 |
| Literature Review | 20 |
| The Definition of <i>Laïcité</i> | 20 |
| A Libertarian Definition | 21 |
| A Restrictive Definition | 24 |
| Practical Implementations of <i>Laïcité</i> | 30 |
| Cultural Implementation of <i>Laïcité</i> | 30 |
| <i>Laïcité in School</i> | 30 |
| <i>Laïcité in Public</i> | 35 |
| <i>Laïcité in the Media</i> | 39 |
| <i>In Summation</i> | 42 |
| Theological Foundations | 43 |
| Christ's Kingdom in His First Coming | 44 |
| Christ's Kingdom in His Second Coming | 46 |
| The Testimony of the Apostles | 47 |
| Christian Submission | 48 |
| Christian Civil Disobedience | 48 |
| Separation of Church and State as a Prerequisite to Evangelism | 50 |
| Theoretical Foundations | 52 |
| Faith Transforming the Culture | 52 |
| Training for Trainers (T4T) | 54 |
| Small Groups | 55 |
| DIY or Constructivism | 56 |
| Accountability | 58 |
| A Story to Tell | 59 |
| Conclusion | 60 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY | 62 |
| Intervention Design | 62 |
| Research Methodology | 63 |
| Data Collection | 64 |
| Learning Outcome | 64 |
| Permissions | 65 |
| Participants..... | 65 |
| Stage 1: Steps 1–5 | 66 |
| Stage 2: Steps 6–9 | 68 |
| Stage 3: Steps 9–11 | 71 |
| Stage 4: Steps 12 and 13 | 72 |
| Implementation of the intervention | 73 |
| Session 1 | 73 |
| Session 2 | 75 |
| Session 3 | 77 |
| Session 4 | 79 |
| Session 5 | 81 |
| Session 6 | 84 |
| CHAPTER 4: RESULTS | 87 |
| Collective Results | 87 |
| Data Analysis | 88 |
| Key Area #1 Participant Understanding of <i>Laïcité</i> | 88 |
| <i>Likert questionnaire</i> | 88 |
| <i>Interview Results</i> | 94 |
| <i>In Session Data</i> | 102 |
| <i>Session Comments</i> | 102 |
| Key Area #2 Participant Understanding of Evangelism | 105 |
| <i>Likert Questionnaire</i> | 105 |
| <i>Interview Results</i> | 108 |
| <i>In Session Data</i> | 109 |
| <i>Session Comments</i> | 109 |
| Key Area #3 Participant Practical Evangelism in the Context of <i>Laïcité</i> | 110 |
| <i>Likert Questionnaire</i> | 110 |
| <i>Interview Results</i> | 113 |
| <i>In Session Data</i> | 114 |
| <i>Session Comments</i> | 114 |
| <i>Sharing Time</i> | 116 |
| Summary of Results | 119 |
| Key Area #1 Participant Understanding of <i>Laïcité</i> | 120 |
| Key Area #2 Participant Understanding of Evangelism | 121 |
| Key Area #3 Participant Practical Evangelism in the Context of <i>Laïcité</i> | 121 |
| CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION | 123 |
| Research Implications | 125 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Research Applications | 128 |
| Offering a Counter-Narrative..... | 129 |
| Teaching How to Evangelize | 130 |
| Research Limitations | 132 |
| Further Research | 134 |
| APPENDIX A | 139 |
| APPENDIX B | 140 |
| APPENDIX C | 141 |
| APPENDIX D | 178 |
| APPENDIX E | 179 |
| APPENDIX F | 181 |
| APPENDIX G | 182 |
| APPENDIX H | 186 |
| APPENDIX I | 188 |
| APPENDIX J | 231 |
| APPENDIX K | 232 |
| APPENDIX L | 235 |
| APPENDIX M | 242 |
| Bibliography | 245 |
| IRB APPROVAL LETTER..... | 252 |

Illustrations

Figures

| | |
|--|-----|
| Figure 3.1 Spiritual demographics of participants | 66 |
| Figure 3.2 Research project overview and design | 73 |
| Figure 4.1 Initial Likert results for questions 4, 5, and 6 on <i>laïcité</i> and religion..... | 89 |
| Figure 4.2 Post-seminar Likert results for questions 4,5, and 6 on <i>laïcité</i> and religion | 91 |
| Figure 4.3 Initial Likert results for questions 7, 8, and 9 on <i>laïcité</i> and evangelism..... | 93 |
| Figure 4.4 Post-Seminar Likert results for questions 7, 8, and 9 on <i>laïcité</i> and evangelism | 94 |
| Figure 4.5 Initial Likert results on questions 1, 3, and 10 on evangelism | 107 |
| Figure 4.6 Post-seminar Likert results on questions 1, 3, and 10 on evangelism | 107 |
| Figure 4.7 Initial Likert results for questions 2, 11, and 12 on <i>laïcité</i> and practical evangelism | 112 |
| Figure 4.8 Post-Seminar Likert results for questions 2, 11, and 12 on <i>laïcité</i> and practical evangelism | 113 |
| Figure 4.9 Sharing time results | 118 |
| Figure 4.10 Use of testimonies in gospel sharing | 119 |

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The Christian faith has, since its inception, faced many hindrances to its growth. A historical review would inform the reader that the rebellious nature that Scripture ascribes to people has always stood in the way of the gospel. In fact, this rebellious nature, and its attempt to hinder God's work is at the root of the need for the gospel itself and a contributing factor in the gospel's birth that is premised upon a Savior that would be rejected, crucified, and resurrected to save mankind. Christianity is by its nature, a religion that is based on God and His grace in the face of opposition. This opposition has taken many forms throughout history, whether it was violent persecution from civil authorities, religious authorities, wars of religion, political opposition, cultural opposition, philosophical or social opposition. Christians in France have been facing such opposition by way of a legal and political concept called "*laïcité*." Thus, Christianity in France is faced with a new foe that it must understand and combat if it is to thrive as it always has in such circumstances.

This opposition is affecting Christians throughout France, and the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan is one of the many churches that is faced with the task of equipping its members with the right tools for them to face *laïcité* in their everyday lives. Christians in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan will only thrive if they continue to advance the gospel through their evangelistic work despite "*laïcité*." In turn, the gospel will be propagated in the city of Draguignan.

Ministry Context

History

The Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan was founded in 1977 and is an independent Baptist church. Missionaries John and Doris Aseltine started the church, and after years under national leadership, missionaries Randy and Patricia Laase were called to the church in September 2002. Thus since 2002, missionary, Randy Laase has been the pastor of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. The reader will note that this author bears the same last name as the current pastor, who is his father. After theological studies in the US and support raising as a missionary, this author joined the church staff as assistant pastor in December 2021. Thus, this author is familiar with the church, its leadership, and the city of Draguignan to which this church is called to minister.

Location

This study will occur with the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. It is a small church in the southeast corner of France. This region is a rather wealthy region that is touristic and is an area that is less receptive to the gospel. It falls well into the following assessment that Christ made in Matthew: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” (Matt 19:23–24, New King James Version).

This is an important element to consider for this study, as this community is faced with a hardness of heart specific to their region that is additional to the *laïcité* problem itself. In addition, if one wants to understand the dynamics that surround the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan, it is noteworthy that the city of Draguignan has a large military community due

to an artillery school and a couple military bases in the area. This is essential to understand the church, as there is a frequent turnover of church attendees due to the frequent military changes.

However, one must add to the regional specifics that might present unfavorable evangelistic conditions, other negatives that are specific to France as a whole. France is, according to the “Observatoire de la *laïcité*”, a diverse nation on the question of God, with thirty-one percent of the population being atheist, thirty-seven percent being religious, fifteen percent agnostic, ten percent indifferent and seven percent refusing to answer.¹ The “Observatoire de la *laïcité*” was a national agency that was charged with monitoring religious activity and encroachments to *laïcité* and was therefore an important entity in the religious world in France. Thus, readers must keep in mind that this study is led in a country that is not a “Christian country,” and that the individuals studied are individuals that are in a fairly hostile environment.

Finally, it is important that one be aware of the Islamic presence in Draguignan as it is the major concern of the political drive behind the concept of *laïcité*. Indeed, as Prades states and as will be shown in the literature review, French *laïcité* appears to be the privileged framework in France for interpreting socio-cultural, identity, and security issues regarding Islam.”² According to the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies, the southeast corner of France is a region more affected than others by immigration with nearly ten percent of its population being migrants.³

¹ Observatoire de la *laïcité*, <https://www.gouvernement.fr/rapport-des-francais-a-la-religion-et-aux-convictions-chiffres-cles>.

² Jeanne Prades, “Constructions and uses of *laïcité* (French secularism) in French public discourses,” *Mathematical Population Studies*, Volume 27, No 2 (2020): 116.

³ Institut National de la Statistiques et des études économiques, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2121524>.

While one may note that not all migrants are Muslims, it is important to understand that the same institute published that one-third of the migrants in France are from Muslim countries.⁴ While this does not afford great certainty of the Muslim population in Draguignan, it is as close as one can get, considering that religious profiling by governmental agencies is illegal in France and only polls or estimates can be conducted. In addition to the attention given to immigration, it is also noteworthy that the Pew Research Center in a study published in 2017 estimated that Muslims represented close to nine percent of the French population.⁵ Hence, one must consider that there is a strong Muslim presence in this area (even though it is not a majority) which might affect the general atmosphere with regard to *laïcité* and consequently impact the way believers might understand and perceive *laïcité*. “The hypothesis that the mobilization of *laïcité* as a value is correlated with the construction of Islam and Muslims as objects of security”⁶ is correct in the eyes of Prades. Hence the statement made on the importance of the Islamic presence in the region is to be understood in light of the coinciding growth of the Islamic presence in France and the focus on *laïcité* as the response to this growing religion in France.⁷

Demographics

The Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan is a church with a congregation of approximately forty individuals that attend at least once a month. This is, in France, an average-

⁴ Institut National de la Statistiques et des études économiques, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/3633212>.

⁵ Michael Lipka, *Europe's Muslim population will continue to grow – but how much depends on migration* (Washington D.C: Pew Research Center, 2017), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/12/04/europes-muslim-population-will-continue-to-grow-but-how-much-depends-on-migration/>.

⁶ Jeanne Prades, “Constructions and Uses of *Laïcité* (French Secularism) in French Public Discourses,” *Mathematical Population Studies* 27, No 2 (2020): 133.

⁷ Patrick Simon, “Le nombre de musulmans en France et en Europe: la fabrique des chiffres,” Dossier ‘La société française et la construction du “problème musulman,”’ *De facto* (2019).

sized Baptist church. Baptists in France represent a small minority of Evangelicals who only represent approximately one to two percent of the overall population (These estimates are based on the numbers of the CNEF, which is the National Council of Evangelicals in France, and are approximates).⁸ This is an important factor to take into consideration throughout this study as being part of such a small minority might be in and of itself an obstacle to the evangelistic effort. If one were to consider that this church has only forty individuals in a city of 39,433 inhabitants,⁹ then the one percent figure is not attained with this church representing only 0.1% of the city population. Thus, the people at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan are to be considered throughout this study as a small minority in the overall community.

Although this community is small, it is an active group when it comes to organized evangelism. Since this paper focuses on the hindrances that *laïcité* causes to the evangelistic effort of French believers, it is pertinent to note that this church gathers zero to twelve individuals for its weekly outreach tract distribution and street evangelism. Tract distributions have been a part of this church's outreach method for decades and consist in distributing gospel tracts in mailboxes across the city, which is legal in France. Street evangelism is a recent addition, although the church has been involved in a variety of street evangelistic efforts and was for a long period active in door-to-door efforts, it has been consistent in the past year in sending teams into the local parks to have personal conversation with people willing to be engaged.

However, it is also true that this evangelistic zeal is not necessarily carried on throughout the week in personal encounters. Only a handful feel bold enough to invite people to church or speak up during these weekly outreach activities. Another important element is that the church is

⁸ Conseil National des Evangeliques de France, <https://www.lecnef.org/page/445846-cartes-et-statistiques>.

⁹ Institut National de la Statistiques et des études économiques, <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2011101?geo=COM-83050>.

composed of a young crowd with many families in their early to mid-thirties and half a dozen individuals in their twenties. There are however some older people in the church with a couple ladies in their seventies and about half a dozen individuals between forty and seventy. This is important to consider for this study, as the church is mainly composed of active people who have jobs and responsibilities that may impact their evangelistic output and perceptions.

Spiritual Life

The Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan, although small, has always been a tight-knit community that loves to gather and have meals together. This church truly fosters a family atmosphere and is often described as warm, loving, and welcoming by visitors. It is important to note that the church's constituency is transient and there is a significant turnover rate due to people moving to different areas. Therefore, few individuals in the church have been attending for more than five years and even less for more than ten years. Because of this, the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste is active in discipleship and has contributed to the spiritual growth of numerous soldiers and church members who are still active in their churches today.

Additionally, the church has had the joy of seeing baptisms on a frequent bases, testifying of the souls saved. Although the frequency of those baptisms must be considered in relation to the French spiritual environment, which is significantly less favorable and has little evangelical culture, it is nevertheless quite exciting and frequent. The city of Draguignan has another Evangelical church in it and a reformed protestant church as well. The Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan does not work with these churches, seeing that the evangelical church is charismatic, which constitutes for this assembly a motif for separation. The Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan does not work with the reformed protestant church either because of doctrinal or practical divergences. Believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan

might be impacted by this separation in that they are cut off from evangelistic efforts that others may be involved in and are therefore not aware of what others are doing in spite of *laïcité*.

Problem Presented

Evangelism is never an easy act of obedience of which to solicit people. Sin nature and satanic opposition are always to be expected, and one will never obey God's command to make disciples without having to face obstacles. Christians are to overcome these obstacles and obey their Lord if they are genuinely His disciples. Therefore, believers and church leaders have always had to confront the obstacles that they faced.

However, there are obstacles that believers may face of which they are not aware. These obstacles may be so deeply ingrained in one's life that they are not even seen. Social constructs, pressures, culture, and education can subtly destroy a believer's impetus to obey the Great Commission. *Laïcité* is one such obstacle, as it affects French believers in Draguignan and across France. Its emphasis in schools, in French culture, politics, law, and philosophy makes it a visible enemy but with invisible consequences on the believers' ability to share the gospel as they face all these internalized pressures. *Laïcité* is not only a cultural obstacle, but it is also becoming more and more a legal and political one with the media feeding the beast. This causes many to identify with a concept they might not understand or even agree with simply because of the political and media pressure that they are facing. Therefore, the problem is that believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan are ill-equipped to evangelize in the *laïcité* context.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMIN action research project is to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*. That is, to offer believers, a biblical *laïcité* of their own to face the issues that the world's *laïcité* pose. And if one is going to counteract the effects of the cultural *laïcité*, this author believes that a clear Christian definition of *laïcité* is needed. Not only is there a need for a definition, but there is also a need for a solid biblical response for the current *laïcité*.

Believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan should be given a handbook that they should walk through with their group and leader. This handbook should function as a guide for the French believers in Draguignan to undo their misconceptions and disinhbit their evangelism. This handbook will show the believer that the definition of *laïcité* is still debatable, and that believers can take part in this debate by upholding a biblical definition. It will also provide believers with a biblical response to the arguments advanced by today's *laïcité*. This response will be rooted in Christian character, the Bible, and in a firm understanding of the law. These responses will lead the believer towards the understanding and accepting of biblical doctrines such as separation of state and church, and submission to authorities, all the while supporting doctrines like evangelism and a counter-cultural Christian boldness. This seminar will also involve a practical application for the participants to work through during their time with the leader and the group. They should then act during the week on what they have learned in this practical time. To summarize, this training should reinforce the value of evangelism in the life of believers, in light of *laïcité*, by promoting biblical evangelism that attempts to be *laïcité* aware and *laïcité* friendly without compromising the Great Commission.

Basic Assumptions

The project was undertaken with several assumptions, which the reader should understand. First, it is important to note that this paper has the central assumption, that *laïcité* is a hindrance to the evangelistic zeal of the believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. While there is much circumstantial evidence for this, it is still an assumption as the author has not done extensive research on the impact of *laïcité* in the evangelistic outlook of the members of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. This author has only been in a pastoral position at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan for a little over a year and hence, it is possible that the observations and discussions he has led with the people in the church are not pinpointing the exact issue. This assumption arose from what the author observed in many conversations among believers at the church or with the pastor himself that seemed to indicate that *laïcité* was impacting the believers in their zeal. This assumption also has its roots in what the author has observed in the lives of French believers throughout his life and ministry with French believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. But as mentioned earlier, this author has only been in contact with this congregation for about a year, and the church congregation is significantly different from his youth, therefore his analysis could be only a surface analysis, with *laïcité* only being an excuse for a rebellious heart.

There is also the assumption that this influence of *laïcité* on evangelistic zeal is partly unconscious. This assumption is based on the fact that believers might not directly mention *laïcité* as the underlying reason for the refusal to engage in an evangelistic effort or for their reticence to share the gospel. Another assumption is that believers in the church that will participate in this study will change their evangelistic zeal. This assumption is based on the presupposition that believers have the desire to grow in their walk and are willing to change when faced with biblical mandates and solid answers to their questions and objections. This

assumption is, as many Christian leaders have discovered, often a flawed one. Not every Christian wants to grow and change, and it is even more likely that evangelism is an area that is more difficult for believers to engage in. However, this author hopes that the subjects will have a zeal for the Word of God and for their own Christian growth. This author knows that the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of those individuals upon their exposure to the Word of God and hopes that they will respond positively. Therefore, this author's assumption that training based on biblical truths and answers to the *laïcité* issue could be incorrect but is based on the normal desire to grow that every disciple of Jesus Christ should have.

Definitions

In France, debating over the definition of a term is a national hobby, and a paper dealing with a French concept would be ill-written if it did not define some key terms. There is an old expression dating back to Albert Camus that is often cited when talking of definitions, “Mal nommer un objet, c’est ajouter au malheur de ce monde,”¹⁰ which is to say, “To misname an object is to add to the misfortune of this world.” Therefore, this author will attempt to set the reader on the right track to understand this research and avoid adding to the misfortune of this world. Because this paper is centered around the topic of *laïcité* the definitions given here will revolve around the key concepts of secularism and evangelism.

Laïcité. Later on, in this research, the reader will find out that this is a term that is hotly disputed and whose definition is slowly changing with political and cultural changes and public opinion. However, since this term is a legal concept, the best definition one can get is that provided by the authorities. Thus, on the government's website, at the end of a short article on

¹⁰ Albert Camus, *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris: Gallimard Pléiade, 2006), 908.

what *laïcité* is, one reads these words that encapsulate what *laïcité* is: “*Laïcité* is not an opinion among others but the freedom to have one. It is not a conviction but the principle that authorizes them all, subject to respect for public order.”¹¹ This political and legal definition is supported by history, as the first definition of *laïcité* was given by Ferdinand Buisson, an assistant of Jules Ferry, the minister of education that pushed the said *laïcité* in the schooling system in the late nineteenth-century. His definition was based on an understanding that *laïcité* was the fruit of a long historical shift, that became key in 1789, and that brought forth a secular state with equality and freedom.¹²

Secularism. *Laïcité* is often translated as secularity and even if it is not a perfect translation, there is a proximity between *laïcité*, and secularism and it is therefore important that this term be defined because it will be brought up frequently in articles and studies on the topic of *laïcité*. Charles Taylor is one of the world’s leading scholars on the topic of secularism, and in his book, *A Secular Age*, Taylor divides secularism into three definitions or sections. Taylor’s three-pronged approach to secularism begins with secularism as describing the retreat of religion from public spaces, then a diminishing of religious belief in society, and finally the loss of credibility and axiomatic status of belief in God.¹³ Thus secularism is an overall description of the retreat of God and religion from society as a whole if all three definitions are seen as one. But if each definition is taken on its own, then it is applicable to *laïcité* at times when taken in its first aspect. Thus, secularism in this study should be understood mainly in the first sense that Charles Taylor proposes.

¹¹ Comité interministérielle de la *laïcité* *Qu’est ce que la laïcité*, 2022, [Qu’est-ce que la laïcité ? | Gouvernement.fr](https://www.gouvernement.fr/la-laicite).

¹² Jean Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée* (Paris: Editions La Découverte, 2014), 43.

¹³ Charles Taylor, “A Secular Age” (Cambridge, MA: Belknap press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 15.

Evangelism. Evangelism might seem to be a straightforward concept that all Christians should understand, however, any believer can at times think he has the right understanding of what evangelism is and yet find others who disagree with him.

John MacArthur in his book, *Evangelism*, explains that evangelism is an “unleashing” of the gospel that focuses on the content rather than the method. As long as the content is focused on the gospel, on Jesus and what He has done to redeem sinners, then it can be rightly labeled biblical evangelism.¹⁴

While this simple definition of unleashing the gospel is clear, David Bosch, a noted missiologist offers us a fuller view of what evangelism is:

Evangelism is that dimension and activity of the church’s mission which, by word and deed and in light of the particular conditions and particular context, offers every person and community, everywhere, a valid opportunity to be directly challenged to a radical reorientation of their lives, a reorientation which involves such things as deliverance from slavery to the world and its powers; embracing Christ as Savior and Lord; becoming a living member of his community, the church; being enlisted into his service of reconciliation, peace, and justice on earth; and being committed to God’s purpose of placing all things under the rule of Christ.¹⁵

Bosch’s evangelism definition is broader than that of John MacArthur, but it has the merit of expounding in a deeper way the effects and the calling of evangelism, all while finding a community of thought with MacArthur on the task of offering the gospel that is the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. If one compares these two definitions, one can emerge with a synthesis that focuses on the promotion of the Lord Jesus Christ and the redemption He offers. This fits nicely with the etymology of the term tracing back to koine Greek εὐαγγέλιον, meaning “good news.”

¹⁴ John MacArthur, *Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011), ix.

¹⁵ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 420.

Therefore, the act of evangelism is simply the act of preaching the good news that MacArthur calls people to unleash and Bosh calls believers to offer to all by word or deed.

Proselytism. It is important for the sake of this study, that one clearly define what proselytism is and what evangelism is, and how they differ. This is essential as the government in France differentiates these two terms. The importance of this matter must not be limited to France. It must be expanded to the world, as the Pope himself in his address to the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions considered this nuance crucial in light of the growing tensions between secularism and faith across the globe, and the catholic historical background that informs these tensions.

There is a danger that reappears – it seemed outdated but it tends to re-emerge -: confuse evangelization and proselytism. No. Evangelism is the testimony of Jesus Christ, dead and risen. It is he who attracts. This is why the Church grows by attraction and not by proselytism, as Benedict XVI said. But this confusion is somewhat born of a politico-economic conception of “evangelization”, which is no longer evangelization. [...] It is not a question of looking for new members for this “Catholic society”, no; it is to show Jesus: that he makes himself seen in my person, in my behavior; and open spaces to Jesus throughout my life. This is evangelizing.¹⁶

Thus, evangelism and proselytism must be understood to differ in the means and purpose of the content being shared. Evangelism is a sharing of the faith that seems to leave the interlocutor completely free without the evangelist attempting to convince him to adhere or join, it is a declaration or offer. Thus, evangelism falls under freedom of speech. Proselytism, on the other hand, is more active in sharing, it is more engaged, and has an end goal of converting the person. While many might disagree with this distinction, it is necessary to define the terms as they are seen in the country of study, namely France, and this distinction that Pope Francis made is reflective of what the French government believes proselytism to be. The “Observatoire de la

¹⁶ Pope Francis, *address by Pope Francis to the participants in the general assembly of the pontifical institute for foreign missions, (PIME) May 20 2019, Aux participants au Chapitre général de l’Institut pontifical des Missions étrangères (PIME) (20 mai 2019) | François (vatican.va).*

laïcité”, a government agency that is charged with oversight on matters of *laïcité*, defined proselytism as consisting of “trying to convince people to adhere to a religion.”¹⁷ Some readers might consider this the definition of evangelism, but the fine nuance in France at least is that one is simply sharing one’s opinion, the other is engaging in a conversion process. All agree, that when one evangelizes, he is seeking to make a convert, but this fine distinction in intent and in methodology is important in France and is such an important issue that even the Pope addressed it.

Also, if one understands this difference, it is apparent that evangelism is protected by freedom of speech and proselytism by religious freedom.¹⁸ As will be seen later, proselytism is negatively perceived by French law, although permitted and protected, there are exceptions to it that are more extensive than those imposed on evangelism.

Gospel. Today with the accumulation of “gospels” it might seem difficult to define the gospel as it has been used by many with various definitions. However, this thesis is written by an evangelical author in an evangelical context and will therefore use an evangelical definition of the gospel. This author also contends that the following definition is the only correct definition of the gospel as it is rooted in the Scriptures alone.

The term itself comes from the Greek *euaggelion* which means good news.¹⁹ But what do the scriptures say this good news is? Zuck offers a good definition in his book, *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. In his work, he defines the gospel as the sound teaching that the

¹⁷ Observatoire de la *laïcité*, *LIBERTES ET INTERDITS DANS LE CADRE LAÏQUE*, 2016, 3
2. [libertes et interdits dans le cadre laïque 0.pdf \(gouvernement.fr\)](#).

¹⁸ Sylvie GOY-CHAVENT, MM. Joël GUERRIAU, Alain DUFAUT, Alain MILON, Mme Esther SITTLER, MM. Michel BÉCOT et René BEAUMONT, *Proposition de loi visant à instituer un délit de harcèlement religieux*, SÉNAT SESSION ORDINAIRE N 64, 2012.

¹⁹ Walter Bauer, William Arndt, F.W. Gingrich and F.W. Danker. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 402.

church is to guard and consists of salvation made “available to humans who can receive eternal life by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Through His death and resurrection, the ransom for sin has been paid, the believer redeemed, and a mediated relationship with God has been established with the promise of life and ultimate immortality.”²⁰ This definition is based upon a collection of texts that provide the reader with a clear understanding of the gospel. This work cannot address every one of these texts but will provide one key text that offers a solid defense of the previous definition.

1 Cor 15:1–8 is an essential text because it is an ancient text that is considered by Gary Habermas to be one of the earliest New Testament texts that defines the gospel.²¹ In it, one can quickly see that the gospel is what saves if one believes in it and is founded on two essential truths, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3, NKJV) and “He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:4, NKJV). Both of these truths reaffirm the previous definition and underline the importance of faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ for salvation.

Limitations

This action research project will be limited by the participants, as they are the main actors of this research. Therefore, it is important to note that this author has no control on how the church people will respond to the project. While this researcher believes that most will be excited and want to be a part of this research, this project will require a commitment of both time and honesty and this author knows that not all the people at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste will be

²⁰ Roy Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago IL: Moody Press, 1994), 354.

²¹ Gary R. Habermas, “The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus,” in *Defense of Miracles*, ed. R. Douglas Geivett & Gary R. Habermas (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1997), 264.

willing to partake in this project, which might in turn impact the diversity of individuals that will partake. The group that will partake in this research is also limited by the church constituency; with only forty regular attendees the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan has a limited pool from which to draw. The majority of those forty regular attendees are as mentioned earlier in the ministry context, fairly young, thus even if this author will attempt to delimit a varied group that is representative of the church, it is possible that the participants in this research will represent a very homogeneous age group.

In addition to the difficulty of finding those who will be willing to partake in this study, there is also a potential difficulty in constancy throughout the study. Some may be willing and excited to be a part of this project but because of busy lives and schedules are not able to be present at all the meetings needed for both the research and the training. It could also be that some of these individuals will drop out of the research group altogether seeing that the time commitment exceeds what they had originally expected. This author will seek to make this group large enough to accommodate such cases and will also seek to make this training course as flexible as possible.

Also, in the context of the research, the author cannot guarantee the honesty of the individuals that will be examined. Believers might, in a desire to please the pastor, exaggerate, minimize, or emphasize some aspects, deemphasize others, or even lie. Although this author will seek to ease and reassure the sample group on their “reputation” and the perception he has of them, honesty is assumed but it is an element that is out of this author’s hands. There may also be an attempt to help the researcher by exaggerating the answers the participants give in order to provide the researcher with “favorable” results, also known as the “Hawthorn effect.”

Delimitations

This research action project will focus on a group of individuals who are believers and regular attenders at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. They must be professing believers, as this study is focused on believers. This study focuses on how to counteract the effects of *laïcité* on the people at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan, therefore, this study will only comprise individuals that come to at least two services or outreach activities a month. The Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan meets three times a week, once on Sunday morning for a worship service, once on Thursday afternoons for a midweek prayer meeting and Bible study, and once on Wednesday afternoons for outreach. This means that the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan meets twelve times a month for church activities, thus with an attendance of two meetings a month, the individuals that are a part of this study are individuals that are partaking in 16% of all church events.

The researcher has chosen to place the threshold at 16% in order to interview individuals who are somewhat consistent and involved in the church. This serves a double purpose. First, the study group is a group that truly belongs to the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. Second, this group is also a group that is somewhat serious about their involvement in the church and in their spiritual growth. If one is going to propose a solution to the impact *laïcité* has on believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan, it is necessary that the people being studied are serious with their faith since this researcher is seeking to research how to counteract the effects of *laïcité* on evangelism and not how to deal with a lack of desire to grow. One could argue that under 16% attendance, one is not demonstrating a seriousness towards spiritual matters. Individuals chosen for this study may or may not be members if they meet the 16% attendance criteria and are professing believers. This is because there are people at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan who are involved in the church but for reasons of

conviction, baptismal status, or age are not members. Therefore, to best represent the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste, it is necessary to engage with persons who may not be members.

This research will limit itself to a small group within the church. This author intends for this group not to exceed fifteen individuals and no less than eight with a target of ten, given that the church is made up of approximately forty individuals with an average attendance of thirty. Thus, the study group will be representative of about 25% of the church congregation if ten individuals participate. In addition, it is more likely that this group will be able to meet if it is limited in size having therefore fewer conflicting schedules. This study will limit itself to French nationals or individuals who have spent their whole lives in France given that they are the ones most prone to be influenced by *laïcité*. It will also be comprised of believers with differing amounts of years in the faith and differing levels of involvement in the church's activities.

Finally, this study will limit itself to participants eighteen and over. This choice is due to the fact that although minors are individuals with wills and a responsibility to evangelize, this study is focused on the overall influence of *laïcité* on the believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan, and one could argue that minors are vulnerable to pressures and thus may be pressured by *laïcité* today without it carrying over to the next year, and vice versa, they could be pressured by the religious environment they are in and offer inaccurate answers in an attempt to comply with social pressure. Adults are certainly not free from these issues, but they offer us greater certainty and clarity than minors would.

Thesis Statement

Disciples of Jesus Christ should always seek to grow and follow Jesus Christ, their master. The Christians of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan should be such disciples who seek to grow and follow Jesus. *Laïcité* is an obstacle in this endeavor, and if the

believers of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan are offered a clear response and training to assist them in overcoming this obstacle, they should, provided they are willing, use this training and thus be able to overcome the obstacles of *laïcité*.

The application of the training and the truths taught in a clear and potent handbook will provide believers with a solid biblical understanding that will open their eyes to *laïcité*'s challenges. The practical work and exercises done in the group setting with the leader will assist them in responding to these challenges. Thus, the participants are taught biblical *laïcité* and how to face restrictive *laïcité*. They will learn to evangelize and thrive in their walk with the Lord amidst a secular society, because they are rooting their practice in the Word of God and in faith. This author also believes that to have a grasp of what *laïcité* is, they must be informed of many of the factual, legal, and political elements that relate to *laïcité*, so that they will be able to assimilate the biblical model more effectively. If believers are equipped to face *laïcité* through an “Evangelistic *Laïcité*” seminar, then they will adjust their understanding to overcome the obstacles of *laïcité* to evangelism.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

If one is to create a training including a handbook that promotes the biblical version of *laïcité*, and addresses today's *laïcité* issues, it is imperative that one have a firm grasp on the relevant literature. Therefore, this literature review engages *laïcité*'s main themes. Not only should one understand and know the relevant literature on *laïcité*, but it is also crucial that one know what the Scripture has to say on questions of separation of church and state, and on public displays of faith. This review also includes some theological and historical support for a biblical model of *laïcité*.

Literature Review

Laïcité is a hot topic in France today. It is at the center of many debates and battles continue regarding its definition and application. The battle for the definition of *laïcité* has major implications for the implementation of this central concept in France. Two sides face each other on this matter, one defends a more libertarian definition and application of *laïcité* while the other defends a more restrictive definition and application. While there is still a fierce battle raging over this concept, *laïcité*'s restrictive definition is already being implemented and is impacting religious people.

The Definition of *Laïcité*

When trying to understand any given topic, a researcher should start by examining what the academic world understands this topic to be. A definition is crucial in the understanding of any given topic, it is the foundation for the rest of the researcher's work. However, when one

reads a variety of academic and popular works on the matter of *laïcité*, one quickly finds that there is no consensus for defining *laïcité*.

A Libertarian Definition

Christopher Lizotte, a lecturer in human geography for the school of social sciences at Oxford Brookes University, defines *laïcité* as “France’s version of secularism,” but goes on to explain that it is “dense with historical genealogy, practical contradictions and – crucially political geographies that have accumulated during the centuries of a tumultuous process defining the relationship between the French state and organized religions.”¹

This definition is a clear example of the difficulty of defining *laïcité*. Lizotte has explained what *laïcité* deals with, and in his definition, he has expressed the difficult journey of *laïcité* through the centuries, but also its “practical contradictions” denoting the persisting blurriness surrounding the topic.

The reason for the difficulty in the definition of *laïcité* is based on the recent evolution of the terminology. Jean Baubérot is the chair of The History and Sociology of *Laïcité* at the “Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes” in Paris France. In his book, *La laïcité falsifiée*, he explains that the word *laïcité* has undergone a radical change and has been “falsified” for political gain, going from a liberty-giving concept to a restrictive concept with identarian motifs.²

Baubérot is a recognized scholar on this topic, and his thesis on this political shift of the meaning of *laïcité* has been widely commented. Nilsson from Upsala University shares this understanding with Baubérot and summarizes Baubérot view of falsified *laïcité* in these terms

¹ Christopher Lizotte, “*Laïcité* as assimilation, *laïcité* as negotiation: Political geographies of secularism in the French public school,” *Political Geography* 77 (2020): 1.

² Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 43.

“secularism has been perverted by the conservatives and the far right and turned into a neo-nationalist anti-Muslim discourse.”³ Francesco Ragazzi a professor in political sciences came to the same conclusion on the matter and relays Bauberot’s thesis that *laïcité* has been hijacked by those who hold to a “tough” understanding of the concept and root their understanding in an identitarian ideology.⁴

Baubérot and many who share his views hold to a more libertarian view of *laïcité* based on a strict understanding of the law of 1905. The 1905 law was according to the “Observatoire de la *laïcité*” (a government agency) a law of “compromise and balance, the fruit of an important work of parliament and long debates, closed the founding period of republican secularism. It gave full meaning to the principle of citizenship.”⁵ This law of “compromise and balance” was meant to increase religious freedom in the nation as the state was now neutral towards the individual’s religious beliefs as Medhi Cohu, Christelle Maisonneuve, and Benoit Testé explain in their article “One Conception of Secularism for All? A Comparison of Conceptions of *Laïcité* among Nonbelievers, Catholics, and Muslims in France.”⁶

And this interpretation is not an ad hoc reinterpretation of the law in contradiction with the spirit of the law as history affirms a more libertarian reading of the law. Fath, a member of the French National Center for Scientific Research and a prominent expert on the history of evangelicalism in France, wrote an article in which he explains how the law of 1905 was a

³ Per-Erik Nilsson, “‘Secular Retaliation’: A Case Study of Integralist Populism, Anti-Muslim Discourse, and (Il)liberal Discourse on Secularism in Contemporary France” *Politics, Religion & Ideology* Vol. 16, No. 1 (2015): 100.

⁴ Francesco Ragazzi, “Counter-radicalization, Islam and *Laïcité*: policed multiculturalism in France’s Banlieues” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* Vol 46, No 4, (2023): 2.

⁵ Observatoire de la *laïcité* “RAPPORT ANNUEL de l’Observatoire de la *laïcité* 2015–2016,” (2016) :20.

⁶ Medhi Cohu, Christelle Maisonneuve, Benoit Testé, “One Conception of Secularism for All? A Comparison of Conceptions of *Laïcité* among Nonbelievers, Catholics, and Muslims in France” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* Volume 60, Issue 1 (March 2021): 104.

subject of celebration for Baptists and Protestants more generally. He explains that they saw this law as a law that brought equality and freedom for religious minorities against the Catholic privilege.⁷ Thus, many hold to this interpretation of the concept of *laïcité* which allows for more freedom and is in accordance with the founding text of “republican secularism.”

But this libertarian definition is not restricted to the past or to some academics, it is also affirmed in the current legal system. Of course, the 1905 law is still the reference on the matter, but with the topic becoming a point of controversy, the government has created an official webpage with the following statement that reinforces a libertarian reading of the concept of *laïcité*.

*“Laïcité guarantees freedom of conscience. From it comes the freedom to manifest one’s beliefs or convictions within the limits of respect for public order. Laïcité implies the neutrality of the State and imposes the equality of all before the law without distinction of religion or belief. Laïcité guarantees believers and non-believers the same right to freedom of expression of their beliefs or convictions.”*⁸

In addition, it is important to note that many things have changed since 1905, and the legal system is one of them. It changed with the European Union and the changes it brought to all the European nations and their legal systems. The new European system brought its members into an international agreement on a European Convention of Human Rights that trumps constitutions and has its own court that acts as a “Supreme Court” of sorts on court decisions that go against articles in the said convention. In this court decision, the right to publicly share one’s faith was guaranteed by the Court of the European Convention of Human Rights. This court ruled in 1993 in the case Kokkinakis vs. Greece that sharing one’s faith publicly is legal and is a right that the European nations must protect. This is essential for those who defend a libertarian definition of

⁷ Sebastien Fath, “Baptistes et Catholiques en France, le choc des différences 2: Appaisements de 1875 à la veille de Vatican II” *Revue d’Histoire du protestantisme* Vol 4, No 1 (Janvier-Février-Mars 2019):110.

⁸ Comité interministérielle de la *laïcité* *Qu’est-ce que la laïcité*, 2022 [Qu’est-ce que la laïcité ? | Gouvernement.fr](https://www.gouvernement.fr/la-laicite)

laïcité because this historical definition is not only based in history and in national law, but it is also in accordance with the supra-nation law contrary to the restrictive definition of the term.

This ruling is foundational because in it the court affirms that the protection of the rights and freedoms of individuals is necessary in a democratic society. More importantly “religious freedom implies the freedom to ‘manifest one’s religion,’ not only collectively, ‘in public’ and in the circle of those whose faith one shares, but also ‘individually’ and ‘privately.’ It includes, in principle, the right to try to convince others.”⁹ In this decision the court uses article nine of the convention to defend and guarantee religious expression in public, which is exactly what the restrictive definition of *laïcité* opposes, causing the libertarian definition to be *de facto* the only definition permissible and applicable.

The libertarian definition is one that surely dominates the legal landscape. However, one must not neglect the restrictive definition, as it is a very popular view with a strong political representation. Thus, this author is now going to engage in a study of the literature on this modern restrictive redefinition of *laïcité*.

A Restrictive Definition

As mentioned earlier Jean Baubérot explains in his book, *La laïcité falsifiée*, the change in the meaning of *laïcité* is due to a shift of focus from what the law says and from a church-state emphasis to a cultural and identarian focus.¹⁰ In a 2019 study a group of researchers in the field of psychology lead by Professors Troian, Arciszewski, and Apostolidis, came to the conclusion that the restrictive definition of *laïcité* was due to a misguided linking of French national identity

⁹ *Kokkinakis V. Grèce*, European Court of Human Rights, (1993), KOKKINAKIS v. GREECE (coe.int) (accessed June 26, 2023).

¹⁰ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 43.

and *laïcité*.¹¹ In their study, they determined that the general understanding of this new *laïcité* has led people to an understanding of *laïcité* as an “ideology of social exclusion,”¹² when it is historically the exact opposite and was meant to be inclusive.

Dimitri Almeida, a German professor of intercultural studies, understands this tension between the two definitions as a differing of understanding as to the nature of *laïcité*. For the libertarian reading, *laïcité* is a “principle of justice,”¹³ but for the restrictive reading, it is a “doctrine with intrinsic moral significance.”¹⁴ What is most interesting is the three-part argumentation that Almeida affirms is the support for this moralistic view. According to Almeida, this moralistic view starts with the premise that the state has an “emancipatory mission” to liberate its citizens from the “religious tutelage.”¹⁵ It then affirms the imminence of the threat posed to the republic and finally, the necessity to promote a “civil religious bond to the nation.”¹⁶ One can thus see three concepts emerge, emancipate, protect, and promote that is present throughout the restrictive applications of *laïcité* in French society. It is clear that the best way for one to create a national identity, one must first emancipate the individual from his current allegiance and protect and promote the desired end result, which is in this case a uniform French identity. *Laïcité* is then a moral tool for the advancement of a new national identity rather than a freedom-giving “principle of justice.”

¹¹ Jais Adam-Troian, Thomas Arciszewski and Themistoklis Apostolidis, “National identification and support for discriminatory policies: The mediating role of beliefs about *laïcité* in France,” *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.*, vol. 49 (2019): 932.

¹² *Ibid.*, 933.

¹³ Dimitri Almeida, “Doing Secularism: Commemorating the National Day of *Laïcité* in French Schools,” *Religion, State and Society* (2022): 210.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

The desire to create a new national identity must be understood in light of the recent abandonment of France's Catholic roots. With this historical uprooting, France has been left without a national common identity and has been seeking a new identity. This view is supported by Jean-Marie Rouart, who is a famous French author and philosopher, and a member of the prestigious "Academie Francaise." In his book, *Ce Pays des Hommes sans Dieu*, he defends the thesis, that *laïcité* is wrongfully being used to combat the influence of the Islamic faith on the French civilization¹⁷ and promote a new atheistic national identity,¹⁸ and that a return to the Judeo-Christian roots is needed.

It is understandable that France does not desire to return to the Catholic past, with all of its problems, but this concern for identity and culture is also understandable in light of the growing Islamic presence in Europe and the recent terrorist events. The Catholic past left a scar in France, Sebastien Fath and other authors noted in their works that the Catholic Church, its hegemony, and its privileges were the target in the creation of *laïcité* in France.¹⁹ In the same time, authors also note how the Islamic growth in France and its cultural expression are central issues in the evolution of the concept of *laïcité*.²⁰

In his conclusion to a comparative study of four major works on the question of *laïcité*, Artaud de La Ferrière, a professor in sociology at the Royal Holloway College; University of London, explains that the works he had commented on and their combative tone had to be

¹⁷ Jean-Marie Rouart, *Ce pays des hommes sans Dieu* (Paris: Edition Bouquin, 2021), 149.

¹⁸ Ibid, 154.

¹⁹ Sebastien Fath, "Baptistes et Catholiques en France, le choc des differences 2: Appaisements de 1875 a la veille de Vatican II" *Revue d'Histoire du protestantisme* Vol 4, No 1 (Janvier-Fevrier-Mars 2019).

²⁰ Jeanne Prades, "Constructions and uses of *laïcité* (French secularism) in French public discourses," *Mathematical Population Studies*, Volume 27, No 2 (2020): 116.

understood in light of recent acts of terror.²¹ His conclusion on four works could very easily be applied to the shift of meaning that has been taking place on the topic of *laïcité*.

This restrictive definition can then be seen as a reaction to what is being perceived as a challenge or even an attack on the current French culture. This explains why most scholars agree that the change in the meaning of *laïcité* was prompted by Islam in France. Kazarian, scholar of the Orthodox church and active leader of inter-orthodox relations, wrote in his assessment of the situation from an Orthodox perspective that the debate had shifted from neutrality to security.²² Barras, professor at York University, in the society and law program, goes as far as stating that today faith and especially the Islamic faith is perceived as “the primary source of conflict threatening the cohesion of different spaces in French society.”²³ Carol Ferrara, an anthropologist from Emerson College, supports this view and describes in her article “Religious education in French private schools: Categories, conflations, and inequities,” how Islam is considered incompatible with the French values by a large segment of the population.²⁴

Tobias Cremer, a researcher on religion and former consultant for the German Parliament, attributes this change to the right-wing politicians that are manipulating the historical meaning of *laïcité* in order to gain votes off of the growing fear and resentment towards the Muslim population.²⁵ He is not alone since this position is not only a common one for left-wing

²¹ Alexis Artaud de La Ferrière, “*Laïcité* : le débat bat son plein” Archives de sciences sociales des religions, No. 192, *Bulletin Bibliographique* (octobre-décembre 2020): 58.

²² Nicolas Kazarian, “The Orthodox Church in France facing French secularism (*‘laïcité’*)” *Religion, State & Society*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (May 2015): 257.

²³ Amelie Barras, “Sacred *Laïcité* and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?” *Mediterranean Politics* Volume 18, Issue 2 (July 2013): 287.

²⁴ Carol Ferrara. “Religious Education in French Private Schools: Categories, Conflations, and Inequities,” *British Journal of Religious Education* (October 2022): 11.

²⁵ Tobias Cremer, “The Rise of the Post-religious Right: Christianity and Secularism in the French Rassemblement National,” *Party Politics* Vol. 29, (2023): 41.

politicians but it is also a common theme in many articles in academia and has the support of Jean Baubérot.²⁶ This culture war and identity crisis that lies behind the *laïcité* problem today is most notably exemplified by the way *laïcité* is used on the matter of Muslim headscarves says Rajeev Bhargava a noted professor in political theory.²⁷

Headscarves are the public expression of the inner faith that differentiates one from other faiths, and this is the problem in France. Today the concept of *laïcité* is being used to uniformize public spaces and remove these identity markers that are inappropriate for some in France.

Abdessamad Belhaj, a Muslim himself and a noted Arab scholar of political and social sciences, believes that unless things change radically in the Muslim population, there is an inevitable clash between *laïcité* and Islam over this question of public displays of faith.²⁸

But what about the law of 1905? It is a key element for the libertarians, which defend such public displays of faith. Eoin Daly, professor of law for the university of Galway School of Law, gives a clear analysis of what has happened to the interpretation of the 1905 law by stating that, “It has been re-packaged by the light of a more socially interventionist republican conception than that animating the 1905 law, which privatized religion at an institutional level.”²⁹ Daly believes that France is on a path to reinterpreting the law of 1905 because of an interventionist political agenda that is seeking to create public uniformity.

And the evidence pleads in favor of this analysis. An article written in 2020 by Le Cornec Ubertini, a professor in the science of information and communication at the

²⁶ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 14.

²⁷ Rajeev Bhargava, “How secular is European Secularism?” *European Societies* Vol 16, No 3 (2014): 335.

²⁸ Abdessamad Belhaj, “Secularism as Equality: French Islamic Discourses on *Laïcité*” *Institute of Religion and Society* (October 2022): 12.

²⁹ Eoin Daly, “The Ambiguous Reach of Constitutional Secularism in Republican France: Revisiting the Idea of *Laïcité* and Political Liberalism as Alternatives” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* Vol. 32, No. 3 (Autumn 2012): 586.

University of Brest, embodies this attempt to rewrite the 1905 law in a restrictive. She levels a strong accusation against the “*Conseil d’Etat*,” the highest national court for public law. In her article, Le Cornec Ubertini affirms that the “*Conseil d’Etat*” has not been faithful to the 1905 law and has created law, disregarding the 1905 law, through its court decisions in the stead of the legislator.³⁰ While one may justifiably be surprised by the legal expertise of a sociologist, it is nonetheless a prime example of the shift in the interpretation of the 1905 law that Daly has predicted.

But this shift in interpretation is not the only threat to the 1905 law and the libertarian definition of *laïcité* that flows from it. Indeed, not only is the 1905 law being reinterpreted, but it is also being discredited. Many are calling for a new law or at least flexibility in the application of the 1905 law. The reason seems to be that this 1905 law is too old and outdated compared to the current challenges. In a report written for the prime minister in 2013, Thierry Tuot, a judge of the aforementioned “*Conseil d’Etat*,” affirmed that it would be historical nonsense to apply the 1905 principles to twenty-first-century issues.³¹ While Thierry Tuot holds to a more flexible and libertarian definition of *laïcité*, it is nonetheless a jab at the 1905 law. Saly-Rousset, a professor of public law and an advocate of the libertarian definition of *laïcité*, advances that the main change that should motivate the legislator or at least the judge to act on a new basis is that the 1905 law was meant to deal with a homogenous religious society, and is no longer adapted to the pluralistic religious society that has emerged in France in the last fifty years.³² If there is much

³⁰ Anne-Hélène, Le Cornec Ubertini, “La communication publique du Conseil d’État sur la laïcité” *Sciences de la société* Vol. 106, (2020):12.

³¹ Thierry Tuot, “*La grande nation pour une société inclusive – Rapport au Premier ministre sur la refondation des politiques d’intégration*” (2013) [pour une societe inclusive refondation des politiques integration vie-publique.fr](http://pour-une-societe-inclusive.refondation-des-politiques-integration.vie-publique.fr), 63.

³² Olivier Saly-Rousset, “Florence Faberon (dir.), laïcité et pluralisme religieux” *Revue du droit des religions* (2019): 2.

dispute around the definition of *laïcité*, it is also difficult to find clarity when it comes to the practical implementations of *laïcité*.

Practical Implementations of *Laïcité*

Considering this thesis intends to cover how *laïcité* affects Christians, it is important for this researcher to place an emphasis on what the literature has to say on the practical implementations of *laïcité*. This examination of the literature on the topic will deal with the cultural and legal implementations of *laïcité*.

Cultural Implementation of *Laïcité*

If the definition of *laïcité* is the subject of fierce battles and is evolving, it is equally true that there is a great deal of change and disagreement on the way *laïcité* should be applied to everyday society. This is especially evident in France's public schools, public spaces, and the media.

Laïcité in School

The French public schools have served as a microcosm of French society and the cultural view of *laïcité*. It is important that the reader understand that the French public school system is considered to be an essential component of French society and a key element in the French understanding of its cultural and societal promotion, as well as the protection of said culture and society. Charlène Menard, a doctor in political studies at the University Lumière of Lyon II, supports this understanding in her article on *laïcité* and school, stating, "School *laïcité* is therefore a specific form of *laïcité* in France, as it takes place in an institution whose mission is to train future citizens. In this way, it refers to a comprehensive training program that includes

not only the transmission of knowledge, but also of standards and practices, as well as training in the exercise of national and European citizenship in relation to global issues.”³³

Almeida, a German professor cited earlier, Lizotte another expert already cited, and many other authors affirm that the French public school system is key in understanding the question of *laïcité*. When reading literature on *laïcité*, the public school system is one of the first topics to emerge. *Laïcité* in the schooling system has always been a subject of major concern. Kazarian explains that this is a historical concern as education was, historically, under the religious influence of the Catholic church, and the law of 1905 was the result of tensions arising on this public funding of Catholic education.³⁴

However, this was not the triumph of atheism or secularism, but the triumph of neutrality that was to enhance freedom. Daly insists on this point to support his libertarian definition of *laïcité*, by showing that the *laïcité* process in school had started in the 1880s with Jules Ferry, who famously said, “you are in no way the apostles of a new religion of secularism.”³⁵ Ferrara, in an article on religious education in France, explains that religious education was not removed from schools but that historically, schools in France taught religion from a purely historical perspective and did so in a way that would neither weaken nor strengthen a student’s faith.³⁶

³³ Charlene Ménard, “Laïcité scolaire et justice locale en France métropolitaine : hybridation des conceptions de la laïcité dans les pratiques enseignantes”, *Cahiers de la recherche sur l’éducation et les savoirs*, (2022) : 87.

³⁴ Nicolas Kazarian, “The Orthodox Church in France facing French Secularism (‘Laïcité’)” *Religion, State & Society* Vol. 43, No. 3 (May 2015): 248.

³⁵ Eoin Daly, “The Ambiguous Reach of Constitutional Secularism in Republican France: Revisiting the Idea of *Laïcité* and Political Liberalism as Alternatives” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* Vol. 32, No. 3 (Autumn 2012): 596.

³⁶ Carol Ferrara, “Religious Education in French Private Schools: Categories, Conflations, and Inequities,” *British Journal of Religious Education* (October 2022): 2.

Thus religion and faith were not discarded or ignored, and it could hardly be said that they were replaced by atheism or anti-religious sentiment.

However, this historical practice is contested today, and religion is becoming in some cases an enemy in public schools. Once again Islam is at the center of the debate with an incident in 1989 in a French high school in Creil when two girls were expelled from school for refusing to remove their headscarves.³⁷ This event and the rise of the far right led to the 2004 law banning religious signs in schools. This law is a prime example of the shift in the educational system in France which is now not only neutral but is involved in enforcing “neutrality” on its students.

In 2013 a charter for *laïcité* in school was published which states in its sixth article that *laïcité* in the French schooling system serves to protect students “from any proselytism and pressures that would prevent them from making their own choices.”³⁸ This article and the 2004 law give the general feeling that *laïcité* in school is no longer about neutrality but “protection.” Barras abounds in this protection narrative by describing French public schools as “protectors and diffusers of secular values.”³⁹

Lizotte sees in the application of *laïcité* in school, an example of the ever-growing reach of *laïcité* in the French society.⁴⁰ Why? Because Lizotte gives insight, “Rethinking *Laïcité* as a Geopolitical Concept,” explains how a new trend in geopolitics has caused politicians to view their actions as broader than simply maintaining borders and handling conflict. Now, say Lizotte,

³⁷ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 92.

³⁸ Ministère de l’Education Nationale, “*Charte de la laïcité à l’école*” 2013.

³⁹ Amelie Barras, “Sacred *Laïcité* and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?” *Mediterranean Politics* Volume 18, Issue 2 (July 2013): 282.

⁴⁰ Christopher Lizotte, “Rethinking *Laïcité* as a Geopolitical Concept,” *Modern and Contemporary France* (2023): 13.

geopolitics is also involved in the governance of “spatial imaginaries”⁴¹ such as the national identity which *laïcité* is supposed to protect. Thus, according to Lizotte, the schooling system serves as an outpost for the French national identity and acts as a safeguard and promoter of said national identity. This, in turn, leads “to a focus on infringements of *laïcité* policies within schools as a primary concern of monitoring and action”⁴² in the protection and promotion of the national identity.

In another article, Lizotte develops how the schooling system acts as a promoter and protector of French national identity. He first explains that there are three spatialities that direct public action towards Islam in the French schooling system.⁴³ This author believes that this is also true of various non-Catholic faiths. The first spatiality is the “imagining of the French Republic as a space of freedom in contrast to religious obscurantism and superstition.”⁴⁴ This is key in understanding the place of *laïcité* in the schooling system because it determines spatialities two and three. These remaining spatialities are to extract individuals from groups that are separated from the rest of the nation and that are separatist and represent alternative sovereignties.⁴⁵ And ostensible signs of those alternative sovereignties represent the third spatiality that the schooling system must combat as part of the nation’s geopolitical governing of all spatialities.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Lizotte, “Rethinking Laïcité as a Geopolitical Concept,” 12.

⁴² Ibid., 9.

⁴³ Christopher Lizotte, “The Prosaic Stateness of Secularism: Diversity, Incoherence and Divergence in the Application of Laïcité,” *Geopolitics* (2023): 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

Islam is at the core of this evolution, and many scholars argue that the identarian shift mentioned in the restrictive definition is visible in the schooling system. The schooling system today has become, according to Hauser, a professor of education at Cambridge University, a means of marginalization of Muslim students.⁴⁷ Ferhat, another education professor from the university of Paris-Nanterre, adds that schools have become the object of an illegitimate focus on Islamic violations of *laïcité*.⁴⁸

Lizotte concludes that “its evolution over time, has led the school to be treated as a highly visible microcosm of the health of French society more broadly. In it, identarian conflicts are taken as symptoms of a serious disease.”⁴⁹ This means that today schools are central in the implementation of *laïcité* and in the cultural context around *laïcité*. They are the protectors and promoters of a secular national identity, and *laïcité* is the illegitimate tool.

However, there is hope for the libertarian definition in the school system. While much is being theorized and done in schools to promote the restrictive view, the obvious contradictions between the libertarian law and the restrictive agenda are hurting the restrictive definition. In his study on the “day of *laïcité*” in French schools, Almeida focused on how this day was celebrated. His conclusion was that for most students, *laïcité* is still understood in what this author calls, “the libertarian view.”⁵⁰ While this might be perceived as good news for those who defend the libertarian view, it is also important to note that Almeida also concluded that there

⁴⁷ Jonathan Hauser, “Education, Secularism, and Illiberalism: Marginalisation of Muslims by the French State,” *French Cultural Studies* Vol 32 (2021): 157.

⁴⁸ Ismail Ferhat, “Quantified Secularism? Counting Religious Conflicts in French State Schools Since the 1980s,” *British Journal of Religious Education* Volume 44, Issue 3 (June 2021): 219.

⁴⁹ Christopher Lizotte, “*Laïcité* as Assimilation, *Laïcité* as Negotiation: Political Geographies of Secularism in the French Public School,” *Political Geography* 77 (2020): 5.

⁵⁰ Dimitri Almeida, “Doing Secularism: Commemorating the National Day of *Laïcité* in French Schools,” *Religion, State and Society* (2022): 218.

were marked “civil religious rituals”⁵¹ in the celebrations of the “day of *laïcité*” in schools. This is noteworthy because it confirms that there is an intentional ritualization meant to anchor in the participants’ minds this new civil secular identity.

Laïcité in Public

Laïcité’s cultural implementation is not only seen in schools and how they are evolving on the topic, but another important sector emerges from the literature as a crucial sphere of influence and that is public spaces. Kazarian explains that the “increasing visibility of Islam in society has led to reactions aimed at the protection of the public space.”⁵² Once again, just like with the schooling system, the term “protect” emerged.

This increase in visibility and the desire to protect public spaces has led to a new interpretation of what *laïcité* means in public spaces. Eion Daly explains that there is a trend in which *laïcité*’s object is “spilling over, increasingly from the institutional to the social.”⁵³ Barras, in her article on *laïcité* in France, supports this observation. She explains that today in France, *laïcité* has caused religious belief to shift away from public spaces and has been assigned to the private sphere, she explains that today religious freedom has become freedom to believe which shifts the right to exercise one’s freedom from the public sphere to the private sphere.⁵⁴

It is important however to note that this shift is a shift in the culture and the ideology, but it has not transferred into the law. A prime example of this is the charter of *laïcité* in the public

⁵¹ Almeida, “Doing Secularism: Commemorating the National Day of *Laïcité* in French Schools,” 218.

⁵² Nicolas Kazarian, “The Orthodox Church in France Facing French Secularism (*‘laïcité’*),” *Religion, State & Society* 43, 3 (May 2015): 249.

⁵³ Eoin Daly, “The Ambiguous Reach of Constitutional Secularism in Republican France: Revisiting the Idea of *Laïcité* and Political Liberalism as Alternatives,” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* Vol. 32, No. 3 (Autumn 2012): 587.

⁵⁴ Amelie Barras, “Sacred *Laïcité* and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?” *Mediterranean Politics* Vol 18, Issue 2 (July 2013): 287.

services in which it states, “All users are equal before the public service. They have the right to express their religious convictions within the limits of respect for the neutrality of the public service, its proper functioning and the requirements of public order, safety, health, and hygiene. Users must refrain from any form of proselytism.”⁵⁵ Although it does ask for citizens to refrain from proselytizing in public services, it does allow for the right to express one’s religious convictions. This is affirmed in both reports from the National Observatory of *laïcité* in 2016⁵⁶ and 2019,⁵⁷ which both affirm that *laïcité* is not an obstacle to the expression of religious belief in public spaces. In its 2019 report, the National Observatory of *laïcité* warns against the emerging ideology that threatens the legal model by stating that France must apply in practice its “current model of *laïcité*, so that this distinction between a “theoretical” *laïcité* considered as protective of the freedoms and a guarantee of national cohesion, and a *laïcité* misinterpreted on a daily basis, sometimes generating divisions within society.”⁵⁸

This “misinterpreted *laïcité*” stems from a culture and ideology shift that is motivated by a political push as Baubérot affirms in his book, *La laïcité falsifiée*. He explains that the *laïcité* that is emerging in France is a “new *laïcité*” that started with the “Front National,” a far-right party, and was relayed by the “UMP,” a moderate right-wing party and one of the leading parties in France.⁵⁹

However, Cremer explains that this shift in ideology is tempered by its own authors, the “Rassemblement National” (formerly “Front National”), in that they provide an exception for

⁵⁵ Comité Interministériel de la Laïcité “Charte de la Laïcité dans les Services Publics” (2022), 1.

⁵⁶ Observatoire de la Laïcité “RAPPORT ANNUEL de l’Observatoire de la Laïcité 2015–2016,” (2016), 20.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 45.

Catholic religious markers such as nativity scenes in public spaces paid by the mayor's office.⁶⁰ Thus emerges a strict *laïcité* in public spaces with an exception for Catholicism. This is coherent with what was explained in the definition shift mentioned earlier. In that *laïcité* had shifted from a political and state-church paradigm to an identarian paradigm, with Catholicism being a major element of French culture and identity. Thus, in public spaces, while it is still legal for one to express their religious views or beliefs, it is also clear that there is a growing political and cultural pressure on religious people (especially Muslims) to abstain from such public expressions of faith. This pressure is however not as strong when these expressions are Catholic.

There is therefore pressure on those who would attempt to express their faith publicly, especially if that faith is the Islamic faith. This indicates that this shift, as mentioned earlier is due to an identarian crisis or concern as it excludes religion from French identity especially if the religion has no historical roots in France. If this is the case, as many academics postulate, then the question one might ask is why should *laïcité* be limited to public spaces? Why not go further if national identity is the real motive?

One must keep in mind that the public expression of faith is still legal and protected by the law and the European Union. However, social pressure and political rhetoric have their effects on society at large and this ideological shift is pushing further and further into the private spheres of life and are causing a blurring of the public/private dichotomy. This in turn leads one to ask, where does the public space begin and where does it end?

One might think there is a straightforward answer. Indeed, if one is “outside” of home then one is in public, and anytime one is at home they are in a private sphere. This delimitation

⁶⁰ Tobias Cremer, “The Rise of the Post-religious Right: Christianity and Secularism in the French Rassemblement National,” *Party Politics* Vol. 29, (2023): 41.

was blurred with the “Baby Loup” affair in 2008. As mentioned earlier, the legal framework for *laïcité* to be enforced is rather tight and limited in order to guarantee religious freedom and freedom of speech. But the restrictive redefinition of *laïcité* in French society has pushed the private business world to become more aggressive on the matter. This led to companies prohibiting religious expression on the workplace with a major revision the law in 2016 allowing them to do so. This was due to the aforementioned “Baby Loup” affair, in which a veiled woman ran a nursery in her house and got into a legal dispute with local authorities which caused a great deal of turmoil and media coverage. Daly viewed the treatment of this affair as a challenge to “the traditional demarcation between a liberal reading of *laïcité* usually upheld by courts and an increasingly restrictive interpretation in certain segments of the political landscape.”⁶¹ Almeida, determined in his work on the matter that this evolution exemplified how there is an attempt to push *laïcité* into the private sphere and increase the spatial reach of *laïcité*.⁶²

In addition, it is important to recall Lizotte’s theory on spatial imaginaries and their geopolitical governance⁶³ in the previous section on *laïcité*’s implementation in the schooling system. His understanding of the geopolitical approach to the matter of *laïcité* as a political tool for the promotion and protection of a national identity is incredibly valuable here. For if he is correct, then it is difficult to see how this geopolitical understanding of *laïcité* will not cause the boundaries of private and public spheres to be moved and blurred. And France has already seen it happen once with the “Baby Loup” affair and the work code. This understanding of geopolitics

⁶¹ Eion Daly, “Laïcité in the Private Sphere? French Religious Liberty after the Baby-Loup Affair” *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* Vol. 5, (2016): 211–29.

⁶² Dimitri Almeida, “Space and Secularism: Laïcité, Spatial Governmentality, and Exclusion in French Hijab Storie” *Social Compass*, Vol. 70 (2023): 8.

⁶³ Christopher Lizotte, “Rethinking Laïcité as a Geopolitical Concept” *Modern and Contemporary France*, (2023): 13.

and *laïcité*, if correct, represents a major support for the claim that the redefinition of *laïcité* is motivated by identarian concerns.

This question is of great importance not only because it defines how and where individuals can express their faith, but it also creates a sense of separation for religious people from the national *laïque* identity which promotes no religion and fosters separation. Barras notes that this attack on spatiality is “setting spaces (and citizens) apart from others”⁶⁴ and is thus causing the separation it was initially meant to prevent.

Public spaces are therefore becoming a religion-free zone as well as a believer-free zone, and this process is amplified by the persisting advance of *laïcité* into the private and social life of French religious people.

Laïcité in the Media

Today the media has become a major proponent of culture and is perhaps the most powerful influencer in our age. When it comes to the subject matter of *laïcité*, the media has become what Jean Baubérot calls a “Monstre doux” which means a soft monster.⁶⁵ Baubérot explains that in today’s TV society, the topic of *laïcité* is a money maker that has caused its meaning to change more than the political influence has. Indeed politicians react to what the media feed the population, and for Baubérot, the scary message of a cultural and religious invasion by Muslims is a major selling theme for the media which is because of its greed changing the way people perceive *laïcité*.⁶⁶ If Baubérot is right, then the media is the real

⁶⁴ Amelie Barras, “Sacred *Laïcité* and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?” *Mediterranean Politics* Volume 18, Issue 2 (July 2013) :280.

⁶⁵ Baubérot *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 105.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 108.

authority on *laïcité* and politicians who are concerned with public opinion and their next term will adjust their political views to match that of the media.

Baubérot is not alone in this opinion, Ferhat relays this view in an article where he accuses the media of giving undue attention to some isolated cases of *laïcité* encroachments following the “Charlie Hebdo attacks” in 2015.⁶⁷ Ferhat even cites the “Observatoire de la *laïcité*” to support his position that the media are giving too much attention to supposed encroachments to *laïcité* and because of this is impacting the public opinion and perception of a relatively small problem.⁶⁸

Another important work on the matter was written by Véronica Thiéry-Riboulot in 2022 and shows how the written media has influenced the perception of *laïcité* in the French society. Thiéry-Riboulot is an expert on the linguistic evolution of the term *laïcité*, and in her book, *Usage, Abus et Usure du Mot Laïcité*, she shows how the famous French journal *Le Monde* handles the term *laïcité* in its publications, especially during the aftermath of a terrorist attack. She notes that since the “Charlie Hebdo attack” in January 2015, the journal *Le Monde* increased its publication of articles on *laïcité* and its use of the term when writing on terrorist attacks. Thiéry-Riboulot states that “Every attack committed in France by a Muslim is accompanied by a resurgence of the use of the word *laïcité* and one immediately associates the notion with the terrorist event without considering whether there is an objective link.”⁶⁹ Ait Abedslam, a Moroccan professor in English studies, led a study of the semantics in two major written journal outlets. His conclusion was that there is a uniformization of Islam and Muslims in the language

⁶⁷ Ismail Ferhat “Quantified Secularism? Counting Religious Conflicts in French State Schools Since the 1980s” *British Journal of Religious Education*, Volume 44, Issue 3 (June 2021): 219.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Veronica Thiéry-Riboulot, *Usage, abus et usure du mot laïcité* (Paris: Publications de l’École Pratique des Hautes Études, 2022), 98

in France and that this association of terrorist attacks to these groups.⁷⁰ The link between Islamic terrorism in France and Islam is obvious, but the fact that major news outlets are not dissociating French Muslims from terrorist attacks is concerning. It is concerning because these same media outlets are affirming that *laïcité* is the appropriate tool to respond to these events. The combination of what Ait Abdeslam and Thiery-Riboulot say is of great importance when one tries to understand the influence of the media on the meaning of *laïcité*.

What this shows is that there is a clear bias in the media towards religion. This misuse of the term *laïcité* causes the everyday reader to associate violent radical religion with a failure or breakdown in *laïcité*. While this bias is essentially directed toward the Islamic faith, it is evident that the implications of the changing of the meaning of *laïcité* in the broad society will impact Christians in their freedom to share and express their faith publicly with a negative social pressure.

Support for Baubérot's view does not only come from the academic world with people like Ferhat and Thiéry-Riboulot, it also comes from the "Observatoire de la *laïcité*." Indeed, in the 2019 report, the "Observatoire de la *laïcité*" published an open letter written by the president of the observatory Jean-Louis Bianco and the "general rapporteur" Nicolas Cadene. This letter was addressed to the media outlets cautioning them to be wise and careful in their treatment of *laïcité*.⁷¹ While this may not seem like a formal accusation, it is a careful warning sign given by a government agency that is trying to warn journalists of their wrongdoing without pressuring them. Upon reading this open letter one will see that the "Observatoire de la *laïcité*" is concerned and is aware of the danger this erroneous use of *laïcité* in the media might cause.

⁷⁰ Abderrahim Ait Abdeslam, "The Representation of Islam and Muslims in French Print Media Discourse: *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro* as Case Studies," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (2019): 579.

⁷¹ Observatoire de la *laïcité* "RAPPORT ANNUEL de l'Observatoire de la *laïcité* 2018–2019" (2019): 61.

However, one can also sense the difficulty with which this government agency cautions media outlets fearful of being accused of pressuring journalism. Because of this, it is also noteworthy to see that in its report, the “Observatoire de la *laïcité*” also conducted many interviews of religious groups and political associations. Two of them accuse the media of fostering an unhealthy view of *laïcité*. Etienne Lhermenault, the president of the National Council of Evangelicals in France at the time of the report,⁷² and Malik Salemkour, the president of the human rights defense league,⁷³ each expressed their concern over this growing disinformation in the media on the topic of *laïcité*.

In Summation

It appears obvious upon the reading of the literature that there is a clear divide between those who hold to a libertarian view and those who hold to a restrictive view. This divide seems to be motivated by an identity crisis related to the growing Muslim influence and presence. It is also clear that there is a divide between the law and the social and cultural interpretation of the concept of *laïcité*. *Laïcité* is not a law, it is a principle rooted in laws, notably the 1905 law, and because of this reality, it is obvious that there is a battle between ideologies that are trying to capture *laïcité* and impose either a libertarian or a restrictive application of *laïcité*. While the law favors a libertarian understanding, it is also true that the culture favors the restrictive view causing a great deal of misunderstanding, resentment and frustration over an issue that ultimately relates to identity and community. While one cannot determine a winner in this battle, it is obvious that there are plenty of losers that are suffering from this battle and are angered over its potential outcome and everyday effects. This battle and the social pressures on believers of all

⁷² Observatoire de la laïcité “RAPPORT ANNUEL de l’Observatoire de la laïcité 2018–2019” (2019): 443.

⁷³ Ibid., 513.

faiths is causing many issues as believers of all faiths are being pressured to change their religious practices. They are “asked to transform their relation to their faith, so that it becomes ‘modern,’ ‘compatible’ with Republican values, a process that ultimately leads to the homogenization of faiths, and of alternate ways of living and being religious,”⁷⁴ says Barras. This is exactly the opposite of what religion and faith bring. Rather than softening positions and denying truth, faith calls for a strong stance on truth and a refusal to compromise.

Theological Foundations

This project was undertaken to create a response to the hindrances *laïcité* can create for evangelism. *Laïcité* is at its core a concept that serves to regulate the relations between state and faith. Even though there is a battle for it to extend beyond that into public displays of faith, *laïcité* remains a concept akin to the doctrine of separation of church and state. Thus, if this author seeks to assist believers in facing *laïcité*, it is important that he frame the doctrine of separation of church and state in biblical terms.

Kevin Bauder explains that this doctrine is a Baptist distinctive, that emerged in the post-reformation period with Anabaptists first and Baptists later.⁷⁵ However, Bauder affirms that this doctrine found its roots in the New Testament example that had therefore first established and practiced the doctrine.⁷⁶ This New Testament support of such a doctrine is especially important in France. Indeed, Baptists are such a small minority in France so appealing to Baptist heritage for support would be of little use. It would be useful for the believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan to be able to defend their definition of *laïcité* with the doctrine of the

⁷⁴ Amelie Barras, “Sacred Laïcité and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?” *Mediterranean Politics*, Volume 18, Issue 2 (July 2013): 288.

⁷⁵ Bauder, *Baptist Distinctives*, 130.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 133.

separation of church and state being rooted in the Bible rather than a Baptist confession or creed. The French have a long history with Christianity (i.e., the Roman Catholic Church) arbitrarily forcing its traditions and doctrines on the nation and would see this Baptist tradition as an ad hoc creation added to improve their image with just one more tradition to the pantheon of traditions and confessions they have already seen. Thus, this author will endeavor to offer a biblical defense of the doctrine of separation of church and state to use this doctrine as a tool to define *laïcité* for Christians and offer evangelism training coherent with this doctrine.

Christ's Kingdom in His First Coming

If one reads attentively the scriptures, it is this author's conviction that Christ does not view His ministry on earth as that of a conquering general or an earthly ruler. His servant attitude and sacrificial life indicate quite the opposite. However, many could reject a doctrine drawn from a perception of Christ's attitude, but if the doctrine is drawn from His teaching and His Word, then the doctrine is biblically established and authoritative to those who follow God and His Word.

Christ taught throughout His ministry, that He had not presently come to claim an earthly kingdom contrary to what many Jews had hoped the Messiah would do. Christ's ministry was not marked by revolutionary overtones as He did not encourage sedition or revolt, despite the tricky questions that the Pharisees had asked Him in hopes that He would. In fact, on one such occasion, Christ supported the civil authorities when in Mark 12, He was asked if it was lawful to pay tribute to Cesar, to which Christ answered that it was indeed lawful with the famous "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17, NKJV). This trap was not the first nor would it be the last one that Christ would have to face. In fact, the Pharisees who did not have the authority to execute the death penalty would

bring Jesus before Pilate on trumped-up charges of sedition. D. A. Carson affirms that this is evident by the fact that Pilate is reported to ask Christ if He is the king of the Jews in all four Gospels which would indicate that this was the charge made against Jesus by the Sanhedrin.⁷⁷ Christ's answer is once again an example of divine wisdom as He avoids the trap set by the Sanhedrin. Christ's answer in John 18: 36 does not deny His royal status. Christ is indeed a king, and more than the king of the Jews for that matter, but His kingdom is not of this world, for if it had been He would not be standing before him peaceably. Pilate had most certainly heard of the arrest, and how Jesus had prevented Peter from fighting for Him during the arrest (Matt 26:51–56), but even if he had not been made aware of this fact, Pilate knew that there had been no fighting around the arrest and judgment of this popular man that stood before him. If he had been a king, Carson suggests that he would have marshaled his followers to fight and protect him from arrest.⁷⁸ Jesus answers in a way that reconciles His kingship and Pilate and Rome's civil authority on earth and the ensuing exchange in John 18:37 only confirms this initial answer. This answer convinced Pilate that Jesus was not a political threat to the Roman power and control over the region.⁷⁹

It appears clear that Jesus never considered Himself to be the leader of a rebellion or an earthly king, but rather that He submitted to the civil authorities, never fighting, or protesting and this is most notably exemplified in His final discussion with Pilate in John 19 when He tells Pilate that he holds his authority from God (cf. 19:11) and shows utter submission to the civil authorities. If Christians are to be followers and disciples of Jesus Christ, it is clear from His

⁷⁷ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 592.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 594.

⁷⁹ Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12–21*, vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 244.

earthly ministry that He never sought political power and that they should not seek in His name to seek political power either. Thus, the doctrine of the separation of church and state is founded on Christ's own actions toward political authorities.

Christ's Kingdom in His Second Coming

If Christ never made a political claim on an earthly kingdom during His life, it is important to note that one day He will. This is another proof that there should be a separation of church and state, as the Scriptures teach that one day there will be no separation. Thus, we are following Christ in His earthly example found in the Gospels because we know that this example will not be abolished until He sets a new example for our interactions with civil authorities in the book of Revelation.

It is important to note that the same John that wrote the account of the arrest and trial of Jesus is the author of the book of Revelation which reports the return and earthly reign of Christ. This return and physical reign of Christ and His followers is made clear in Revelation 20:4–6. Upon reading these verses, one sees clearly that Christ and the martyrs will reign with Him on earth, reminding us of His promise made to His disciples that they would reign over the twelve tribes one day (Luke 22:29–30). Much controversy arose around this verse, as with many eschatological questions. It is important for this author to address the question of the physical resurrection in this text, as it is relevant to the point of this subheading.

Indeed, if the Lord and the saints do not physically reign on earth, then this point is useless to the argument made for the separation of church and state, but if it is a physical reign, then that implies that He has not asked us to reign on this earth in His name yet, as He will do that one day. Alan Johnson believes that the physicality of the resurrection of the saints and thus of their reign is proven by using the verb *ezēsan* (“came to life,” from *zaō*) that is used in

Revelation 20:4, of the martyrs.⁸⁰ According to Johnson, this is important because this verb is usually used in the NT for physical resurrection: “When the context is that of bodily death, *ezēsan* is used in the NT to connote physical resurrection (John 11:25; Acts 1:3, 9:41), though the normal word is *egeirō* (“raise up”). More importantly, Revelation clearly uses *zaō* (“live”) for the resurrection of Christ (1:18, 2:8).”⁸¹ Johnson is not the only one to hold to the physical reign of Jesus Christ and the saints in the millennium kingdom, David Brown also holds to this position, and affirms that verse 5 proves that this reign is physical because the verse states that this is the first resurrection and that the rest of the dead did not rise. For him, if the second resurrection refers to a “*bodily* general resurrection, so must *the first resurrection* refer to the body.”⁸²

If the Lord did not advocate a physical earthly reign during His life and instead exemplified submission and respect towards authorities, never seeking to instore a physical kingdom, and if believers are informed of a future physical earthly reign that is to come, then one can conclude that believers are to live their Christian lives in submission to authorities as they await the physical reign of their Lord upon His return.

The Testimony of the Apostles

If there were a need for additional proof that church and state should be separate, it is furnished through the teaching of the apostles as they offer us through their writings a body of proof for the doctrine of the separation of church and state.

⁸⁰ Alan F. Johnson, “Revelation,” vol. 12 *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Hebrews through Revelation*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 584.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 598.

Christian Submission

If it appears clear that Jesus taught separation of church and state until His second return, it is also clear that the apostles reiterated this in their teachings. Paul is certainly a prime example of this as he calls for Christian submission to authorities in Romans chapter 13. The first seven verses of this chapter are a defense of Christian submission to authorities as the representatives of God's justice. F. F. Bruce in the Tyndale commentary states that for Paul, God is the "fount of all authority."⁸³ This is a strong argument for the separation of church and state, since it places God as sovereign over all authorities, even those secular authorities that reject Him. This means, therefore, that Christians do not need to conquer power in the name of Jesus, nor do they need to oppose power in the name of Jesus, for God is already in control and He does not need our assistance in ruling the world, nor does He need our rebellion to the authorities He has placed. This does not mean that Christians should never disobey authorities (there is biblical warrant for such disobedience), nor does it mean that believers should not be involved in the political life of the city. It simply means that Christ is not the motive of our doing so for He is already sovereign and will one day rule on earth and that day has not come yet.

Christian Civil Disobedience

If the New Testament is clear that Christians are to submit to authorities and hence not rule over them in the name of Christ, the New Testament is equally clear that when authorities demand of Christians that they act in a way that is contrary to God's commands, they should not obey. This Christian civil disobedience is exemplified in many cases with the apostles or with various Christians throughout the Scriptures.

⁸³ F. F. Bruce, *Romans: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 6, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 232.

One of the most well-known, if not the most well-known, case of such Christian civil disobedience has to do with evangelism and occurs early in the life of the Christian movement in Acts 5. This is important for our study, as this study has for a basis the fact that believers are influenced by *laïcité* in their evangelism specifically.

In Acts 5, Peter and the other apostles are facing the Sanhedrin for having preached the gospel and are, once again, ordered not to preach about Christ anymore. Peter provides them with a similar answer to the one he gave them in Acts 4:19 when they had made the same injunction. John Polhill states that this response was a “witness,”⁸⁴ and Richard Longenecker, a “reiteration of their position.”⁸⁵ Thus, in both cases, Peter and the apostles are boldly opposing the Sanhedrin by stating that they will continue, and by witnessing to the Sanhedrin itself. The motive behind this bold affront is given in verse 29, where Peter states that obedience to God is preferable to obedience to man.

As Polhill explains, this sets precedence for the thousands of martyrs and persecuted Christians through the ages⁸⁶ that echo Peter’s question to the Sanhedrin and respond with a resounding cry to obey God over man. This example is surely not the only one the apostles have to offer in their lifetime, and many more texts could be brought up to support the case for Christian civil disobedience. However, there is one more text that this author believes is useful for the reader to consider on this question of Christian civil disobedience. This example is found in the book of Revelation chapter 13, where the saints refuse to worship the image of the beast

⁸⁴ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 169.

⁸⁵ Richard N. Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles” in *John and Acts*, vol. 9, The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 320.

⁸⁶ Polhill, *Acts*, 169.

and are killed for it. Once again, here John reports what this prophetic vision announces, and that is that believers in those days will refuse to worship the image, thus disobey the authorities, and be killed because of their disobedience. Interestingly, these martyrs are called blessed in Rev 14:13.

Therefore, it is important that although the Scriptures teach submission to authorities, there is also biblical support for disobedience to the same authorities and more importantly, this is an example of the doctrine of separation of church and state, as in this case, the state is not to intervene in the church.

Separation of Church and State as a Prerequisite to Evangelism

This section on theological foundations would be incomplete if this author did not address the question of evangelism as the obvious impetus for Christian civil disobedience and the matter of concern in the study at hand. Indeed, the separation of church and state is essential as it is motivated by the foundational concern of freedom of conscience and religion. It is also clear that for Evangelicals, evangelism is predicated on said freedoms as salvation is only available for those who truly and sincerely believe.

While not an Evangelical, the eminent political thinker John Locke in his *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, rightly captured the matter by saying that “the care of souls is not committed to the civil magistrate any more than it is to other men. It isn’t committed to him by God, because it seems that God hasn’t ever given any man the authority to compel someone else to join his religion.”⁸⁷ This truth is not solely found in political or philosophical thought, it finds its roots in the Word of God itself. One famous scripture, that many Christians know as a key

⁸⁷ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (London: J. Brook, 1796), 11.

text in the famous “Romans Road,” supports the previously mentioned facts. Romans 10:9 is a fascinating text as it plainly lays the scriptures out and focuses on the inward heart centered belief. Mounce, in his commentary on Romans, explains that “outward confession stems from a profound inward conviction”⁸⁸ and Morris adds that “No one is saved by the merely outward; the state of the heart is important.”⁸⁹ Thus emerges a simple truth regarding salvation and the gospel, and that is that sincerity is key. This sincerity is therefore the goal of evangelism as the believer preaches the gospel with the purpose of seeing the recipient sincerely believe unto salvation. Therefore, there cannot be any coercion in salvation that encourages and supports the doctrine of separation of church and state as a facilitator of evangelism.

The doctrine of separation of church and state is essential in assuring that the church does not pressure people into an insincere faith and therefore inefficacious faith. However, it is also essential that one consider that the state might at times pressure people not to believe which is more likely in a country like France. In these situations, the Christian civil disobedience mentioned earlier is called for and justified. This is clearly justified by the example of the apostles that was given earlier in this theological foundation section. The only addition that needs to be made to the previous section is that the specific act of evangelism is often the motive of the said disobedience. While Christian civil disobedience is not only appropriate when evangelism is at stake, it is more frequently exemplified in the scriptures than other motive, and is therefore a legitimate and supported course of action.

⁸⁸ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 209.

⁸⁹ Leon Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1988), 384.

Theoretical Foundations

Jesus left His disciples with a mission that everyone knows today as the Great Commission (Matt 28:19–20). It is essential that Christians at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan fulfill it by evangelizing, therefore, it is important for the people at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste to overcome the obstacles that the “*laïcité* culture” is bringing to them. To do this, this researcher will implement a six–week training seminar partly based on concepts drawn from three major works that seek to assist believers in evangelism and in counteracting cultural influences.

These works offer this researcher multiple concepts that will be implemented in this research. These concepts cross a variety of disciplines and will focus on the concepts of cultural transformation through faith, the effectiveness of small group models, constructivism, accountability, and storytelling.

Faith Transforming the Culture

In *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development*, Estep, a professor in Christian education, and Kim, an expert in the interactions between discipleship and education and psychology, develop a guide to Christian formation. In their guide, they seek to assist pastors and researchers in their work of discipleship and Christian formation. In their ninth Chapter, Kim addresses the issue of culture and the Christian faith and offers a quick glance over Niehbur’s five-part typology of interaction between culture and Christianity.⁹⁰ He asserts that the

⁹⁰ James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2010), 217.

fifth type is the one Christians should emulate.⁹¹ This type is that of a Christian influence on culture, a means by which faith transforms culture rather than culture transforming faith.

This is central to this research as this thesis is based on the fact that *laïcité* is influencing Christian faith and praxis by hindering believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan from significantly engaging in evangelism. Thus, if Kim is right, as this author believes, it is essential that the solution include a vision casting of Christian faith influencing the culture rather than the opposite. This is exactly what is intended with the biblical definition of *laïcité*, it is an example of how faith can transform culture if the believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan adopt this definition and use it. They will no longer be passive before *laïcité* and accept whatever they are told, but they will offer a different narrative and actively engage in the transformation of culture by faith. Thus, the believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan will become the “primary agents of cultural renewal.”⁹²

It is also important that the individuals involved in this process catch on to this vision and do become those agents of renewal. For this to happen, Kim advocates that in the individualistic culture of the West, the process be centered around “the I-consciousness and use of the cognitive-oriented language/behavior,”⁹³ meaning that Western individualistic Christians will respond better to a position that is centered on rights, freedom, and expression, and they will also respond better if the argumentation is rational. This means that for this group to catch on and embody the biblical *laïcité*, it must be presented to them with a rational argumentation that supports it, as well as with the promotion of this biblical *laïcité* as a guarantor of freedom and rights. This is exactly what a biblical *laïcité* will do as it will be based on the doctrine of

⁹¹ Estep and Kim, *Christian Formation*, 216.

⁹² Ibid., 217.

⁹³ Ibid., 214.

separation of church and state which is as was demonstrated earlier, a defense of the rights for believers to transgress to express their faith as well as a defense of an ordered society with freedoms and rights on religious matters.

Training for Trainers (T4T)

Kim and Estep offer many pointers to assist pastors in the discipleship of their flocks, there is, however, a need for a practical example to follow. This author believes that Training for Trainers (T4T) is the practical example. It offers an effective method that will have a great impact on the lives of those that are involved in it. T4T's model is developed for believers to not only be active evangelists, but also active evangelist makers.

Its evangelistic focus and small group setting offers participants what they need to engage in evangelism. The T4T model rests upon a do-it-yourself (DIY) model, where participants are brought together in a group, challenged to evangelism, given training, and a goal to reach.⁹⁴ Once this first session is complete, the group must reconvene after a reasonable amount of time that will have left them time to meet their goals.⁹⁵ The second session starts with a time to share the results of their efforts and will lead to a loving accountability time, followed by some additional training and teaching time to assist them in their efforts.⁹⁶ This researcher finds this model to be very fitting for the study at hand. T4T's small group, accountability and DIY components are three major components that this author will draw from.

⁹⁴ Steve Smith, and Ying Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution* (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2011), 94–102.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 103–04.

Small Groups

This author believes small groups are useful for Christian formation and discipleship. A small group setting should offer the group a place to be honest with each other, pray for each other, and be held accountable. In fact, this small group model is similar to what Jesus and His disciples had in their teacher/disciple relationship.

Atkinson and Rose believe that there are many benefits for discipleship in a small group context and affirm that “in societies that are becoming increasingly hostile to Christian values and beliefs, believers will need to experience a deeper level of community and solidarity with people of like-minded ideals.”⁹⁷ This author believes this is key for the believers of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste. This is important because the mission of evangelism is never an easy task to carry out. This is especially true in a country with a hostile environment fostered by the cultural *laïcité* which will surely cause believers to be discouraged and feel lonely. Thus, the small group setting in the intervention plan will be necessary to encourage the individuals in their evangelistic efforts and growth.

Not only is the small group a place for believers to connect and support each other in a difficult context, but it is also a place that helps believers develop their ministry skills and gifts.⁹⁸ Howard explains that research shows that small groups are most effective for discipleship because it is essential that the individuals taking part in the group feel like they have something

⁹⁷ Harley Atkinson, Joshua Rose, “The Small-Group Ministry Movement of the Last Four Decades” *Christian Education Journal*, Volume 17, Issue 3 (2020): 557.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 557.

to bring to the group.⁹⁹ This brings this researcher to the second element developed in the T4T model that is key for this intervention plan.

DIY or Constructivism

In T4T the authors use a participatory model, a system based on a do-it-yourself idea that encourages the participants to be actively involved in the acquisition of knowledge and transformation of the individual in his everyday life. Their model promotes this participatory learning through many aspects, but mainly through the “how” time they offer to the participants.¹⁰⁰ In these “how” times, the participants must write and share their own testimonies as well as a gospel presentation with the purpose of seeing the individuals acquire the gospel-sharing skills and knowledge necessary for their evangelistic outreach.

This DIY method can be associated with what scholars call constructivism. However, it is important that this author points out that he does not subscribe to the extension of constructivist theories beyond pedagogy. Indeed, this author agrees with Nola and Irzik, who divide constructivist theory into four areas and retain only “cognitive constructivism” as a valid theory.¹⁰¹ They reject constructivist epistemology, ontology and semantics as these theories question the capacity of one to determine truth and access reality.¹⁰² This author agrees with this rejection of social constructivism as he believes that there is an objective reality that is accessible through special revelation and general revelation. Therefore, when speaking of the constructivist theory as a foundation in this intervention, this researcher desires to only focus on constructivist

⁹⁹ Jacob S. Howard, “Changing an Individualistic Cultural Identity into a Christocentric Identity at Community Alliance Church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Towanda, Pennsylvania” (Dmin Diss., Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2023), 62, ProQuest.

¹⁰⁰ Smith and Kai, *T4T: a Discipleship ReRevolution*, 100–01.

¹⁰¹ Robert Nola, Gürol Irzik, *Philosophy, Science, Education and Culture* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 149.

¹⁰² Ibid.

pedagogy. Atkinson and Rose in their study on the small groups model, tied small groups and constructivism together as they are frequently associated noting however the danger of constructivism past its pedagogical application.¹⁰³ Small groups and constructivist pedagogy go hand in hand and this author believes that they are necessary tools for Christian formation.

Constructivist pedagogy relies on the idea that individuals learn better when they are asked to take part and figure things out through collaboration, and trial and error.¹⁰⁴ This model is not to be left unguided though. Just like in the T4T model, students will not be left alone to “figure things out.” Indeed, in the T4T model, authors include at the beginning of the session, a “why” time, where the teacher is to transmit knowledge, and cast a vision, as well as to assist them in their learning with the Word of God.¹⁰⁵

Wilkerson sums it up quite well in her article “Constructivist Curriculum for Christian Transformation,” where she writes that “for transformational learning to shape students through sanctification into Christ’s likeness, they must be led by lessons designed to explore the perspective of Jesus. More than seeking pieces of information to understand the Christian faith, we must engage students by challenging and confronting their current life in comparison to the desired life of Christ.”¹⁰⁶

Thus, this author believes it is necessary to provide a blend of the transmission model of teaching as well as the constructivist model in various parts of the intervention. This author’s intervention design has these “how” times in each session of the intervention plan and offers the

¹⁰³ Harley Atkinson, Joshua Rose, “The Small-Group Ministry Movement of the Last Four Decades,” *Christian Education Journal* Volume 17, Issue 3 (2020): 555.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Nola, Gürol Irzik, *Philosophy, Science, Education and Culture* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 175.

¹⁰⁵ Smith and Kai, *T4T: a Discipleship ReRevolution*, 189.

¹⁰⁶ Lindsey Wilkerson, “Constructivist Curriculum for Christian Transformation,” *Christian Education Journal* (2021): 34.

participants the time necessary for the constructive development of their skills and knowledge as it relates to evangelism in the *laïcité* culture.

Accountability

The last major element drawn from the T4T model is that of accountability. In T4T the authors promote accountability as a key element in their methodology, which calls to action and encourages the individual in his obedience and love for the Lord Jesus in the evangelistic effort.¹⁰⁷

Accountability is defined in various ways by Torrance in an article entitled “Accountability as a Virtue,” and this author has chosen the following definition, “the disposition of someone who embraces a relationship to a person who holds them to an account of who they are and should be.”¹⁰⁸ The accountability relationship serves then as an opportunity for individuals who are confronted with the same difficulties to be able to share in victories, share experiences, and encourage each other in becoming evangelists in a common environment.

With a time of accountability, prayer, and encouragement, this researcher hopes to see those individuals seize their roles in this group and become co-workers and teammates in the work of evangelism. Torrance explains that this relationship is biblical because it reflects a mutual dependency and mutual respect that are characteristic of the loving relationship Paul advocates in 1 Corinthians 13.¹⁰⁹ This loving relationship is essential as it reinforces the needed sense of community mentioned earlier in the small group model. In his doctoral thesis, Howard

¹⁰⁷ Smith and Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution*, 131–33.

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Torrance, “Accountability as a Virtue,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* Vol. 34 (2021): 314.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

concluded that accountability was a key impactful element in the development of the participants in his research and that many noted accountability as a powerful tool for change in their lives.¹¹⁰

The T4T model offers this researcher a concept of a solid framework to organize the sessions in which he will insert his material and adapt the sessions to the specificities of *laïcité*. It offers a small group model with a constructivist pedagogy and an accountability framework that is meant to offer the participants an environment that fosters growth and solidarity. These elements are essential in the face of a hostile environment that hinders the believer from becoming an evangelist.

A Story to Tell

In *Evangelism in a Skeptical World*, Sam Chan argues that the best way for Western believers to reach their peers and the overall population in the West is through storytelling.¹¹¹ This is exactly how this researcher seeks to encourage the group to share the gospel. The T4T model centers evangelism around the personal salvation testimony of each individual.¹¹² The salvation testimony of an individual is a powerful tool in the hands of each believer and a fantastic *laïcité* bridge. Indeed, many will view a testimony in a different way than they will view a theological or religious talk. Sam Chan confirms this by stating that a testimony is something that this society is more open to because the post-modern society is open to feelings, traditions, emotions, and stories.¹¹³ Sam Chan is not the only one that advocates storytelling in gospel sharing as this method has been advocated by many who see the parables as a prime

¹¹⁰ Jacob S. Howard, “Changing an Individualistic Cultural Identity Into a Christocentric Identity At Community Alliance Church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Towanda, Pennsylvania” (Dmin Diss., Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2023), 145, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

¹¹¹ Sam Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018.), 174.

¹¹² Smith and Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution*, 99.

¹¹³ Sam Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 113.

example of this method. Os Guinness in *Fool's Talk* confirms this by stating that “stories have a further strength. They are indirect, involving, and imaginative. Imagination is our most powerful human faculty.”¹¹⁴ Alister McGrath in *Narrative Apologetics* develops this point all throughout his book and especially in his introduction in defense of using storytelling in gospel preaching and apologetics to tap into the imagination of the hearers for a greater impact.¹¹⁵

Therefore, if everyone in the group develops their salvation testimony into a short story of how they came to know Christ, this author is convinced that they will be able to share the gospel with more ease in a *laïcité* society as it will seem less of a breach if it is just the story of their life.

Thus, not only will their testimony fall into the more effective storytelling method advocated by Sam Chan, but it will also be a more accommodating way to lead into gospel talks for a society that embraces a more restrictive view of *laïcité*.

Conclusion

It is abundantly clear that the topic of *laïcité* is a divisive one in the French political, religious, and academic landscape. France is at a turning point on this matter of *laïcité*, and the media is tipping the scales in favor of a more restrictive view of *laïcité*. Christians are raised in a school system that prepares them for life by teaching them that they should refrain from sharing their religious belief and that they are not allowed to wear anything that displays their faith while in school. This hush-hush attitude towards faith in school is only exacerbated by the pressures surrounding displays of faith in public spaces when they enter adulthood. If they were not pressured enough and molded into perfect followers of this new *laïcité*, the media assures that

¹¹⁴ Os Guinness, *Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 165.

¹¹⁵ Alister McGrath, *Narrative Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2019), 15.

they will always have *laïcité* before their eyes and on their minds. Thus, believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan are ill-equipped to face this powerful challenge and negative cultural influence on their evangelistic zeal.

However, if believers seize the opportunity to redefine *laïcité* from a biblical standpoint by using the doctrine of separation of church and state and engage in evangelism with that biblical worldview then they will be equipped with a new tool to use in their defense and proclamation of their faith. If in addition, they are encouraged through a small group six-week training course to share the gospel through their testimonies by building a testimony story for them to share, a strategy for them to implement their evangelistic efforts and by being a part of an accountability and prayer effort to assist one another in this endeavor, then they will be able to cross the *laïcité* barrier and evangelize their peers.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The previous two chapters demonstrate the need for a seminar training to equip Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan in the battle for evangelism against the pressure of the restrictive view of *laïcité*. Chapter 1 affirmed the need for the believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan, and Chapter 2 demonstrated that there is a battle on the topic of *laïcité* and how believers can rely on the doctrine of the separation of church and state to evangelize. Therefore, this researcher has developed an “Evangelistic *laïcité* seminar” to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a six-week seminar with a biblical *laïcité*. The full implementation of this intervention will be done through a 13-step process presented in this chapter.

Intervention Design

This researcher created a 6-week seminar to assist Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan in their duty of evangelism in the context of *laïcité*. During this 6-week seminar, believers will receive a handbook and work in small groups to prepare and equip them to evangelize in the context of *laïcité*. This six-week intervention plan was a blend of theoretical content and practical exercises that aimed to create evangelistic momentum in the participants’ lives and equip them with a better understanding of *laïcité* and evangelism and how to evangelize in the context of *laïcité*. Each session had teaching and practical times to offer the participants time to practice and prepare for their evangelistic endeavors. The sessions also had times of accountability with the “sharing times” and “commitment times” in some of the sessions

that were meant to encourage and exemplify evangelism in the group. These elements were incorporated into the intervention design as they were demonstrated as useful and pertinent tools in the theoretical section.

Research Methodology

This seminar is based on an action research methodology that aims to integrate the participants in the research project.¹ Participants will be asked to provide the researcher with data through interviews and questionnaires meant to give the researcher data about the preparedness of the participants to evangelize in the context of *laïcité* before and after the intervention. Thus, they will provide the starting data, and through their participation in the seminar and answers to the same questions after the seminar, they will also provide the data necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the seminar, its strengths, and areas of improvement.² Action research interventions like this seminar are meant to address issues practically and measurably, as Michael Patton puts it, research action “aims at solving specific problems within a program, organization, or community...action research explicitly and purposefully becomes part of the change process by engaging the people in the program or organization in studying their problems to solve the problems.”³

The researcher’s community in this seminar is Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. The problem is that believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan are ill-equipped to evangelize in the *laïcité* context. This seminar was “explicitly and purposefully”

¹ Ernest T. Stringer, *Action Research 4th Edition* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2014), 6.

² Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 70.

³ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002), 185.

part of the change process by engaging the participants in various ways to study the issues with the lesson times of each session and solve the problems with practical exercises for evangelism.

Data Collection

In this action research leveraged multiple tools to evaluate the seminar's effectiveness. Data collection was done through three different methods to allow the researcher to have solid and reliable data. The three tools used to collect data were a pre-study Likert questionnaire that was compared to an identical post-study Likert questionnaire and a pre-study interview that was also compared to an identical post-study interview. The post-study interview differed little from the pre-study interview. The researcher asked participants when answering questions three and four to factor in the legal aspect as well as the cultural aspects of society. The researcher also asked participants to skip over question eight as it was a question that the intervention would not have an impact. In this final interview, participants were also asked in the eleventh question which was "Do you have any other thoughts?" to not only share thoughts about *laïcité* but also to share any thoughts they had about the intervention. Finally, this researcher used the sessions as focus groups that allowed each participant to ask questions and exchange during the lesson time and through the practical sections of each session meant to encourage exchange. Each session was recorded for the researcher to have the exact words of the participants when collecting the data. Interviews were also recorded in order to have precise data.

Learning Outcome

This intervention design is as mentioned earlier, meant to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a six-week seminar with a "biblical *laïcité*."

This equipping of the participants was supposed to impact the participants in three key areas that will be used to determine the effectiveness of the intervention: understanding of *Laïcité*, understanding of evangelism, and the practice of evangelism in the context of *Laïcité*

Permissions

Before the intervention began, the project designer requested the permission of the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received authorization from the IRB (see Institutional Review Board letter). Then the researcher sought the approval of the pastor of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan (see Appendix A) and received said approval from the pastor before the intervention began (see Appendix B). Finally, all participants had to sign consent forms prior to their participation in the seminar (Appendix G and H). The researcher is the assistant pastor at the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan and therefore, was necessary that the researcher inform the participants that they were entirely free to participate or not and that their information would not be used against them or shared with others from the church.

Participants

The researcher aimed for a group of 10 individuals to partake in the seminar, and this was exceeded with a group of 11 participants. All participants were 18 and over as to avoid inaccurate results due to the increased likelihood of caving to peer pressure for these younger individuals. The group was composed of five men and six women, who gave the researcher a balanced gender divide in the group, which is important as men and women tend to have different perspectives. In addition, 5 of the 11 participants were relatively new believers with 5 years or less of new life in Christ and with for all 5, 3 years or less since their baptisms. This was

important for the researcher as these individuals were at higher risk than older believers of having misconceptions about *laïcité* that would affect their evangelism. Thus, the group had 45% of its constituency that would be considered young believers and 55% more mature believers giving the researcher a great snapshot of how *laïcité* affects believers across the board in their evangelism.

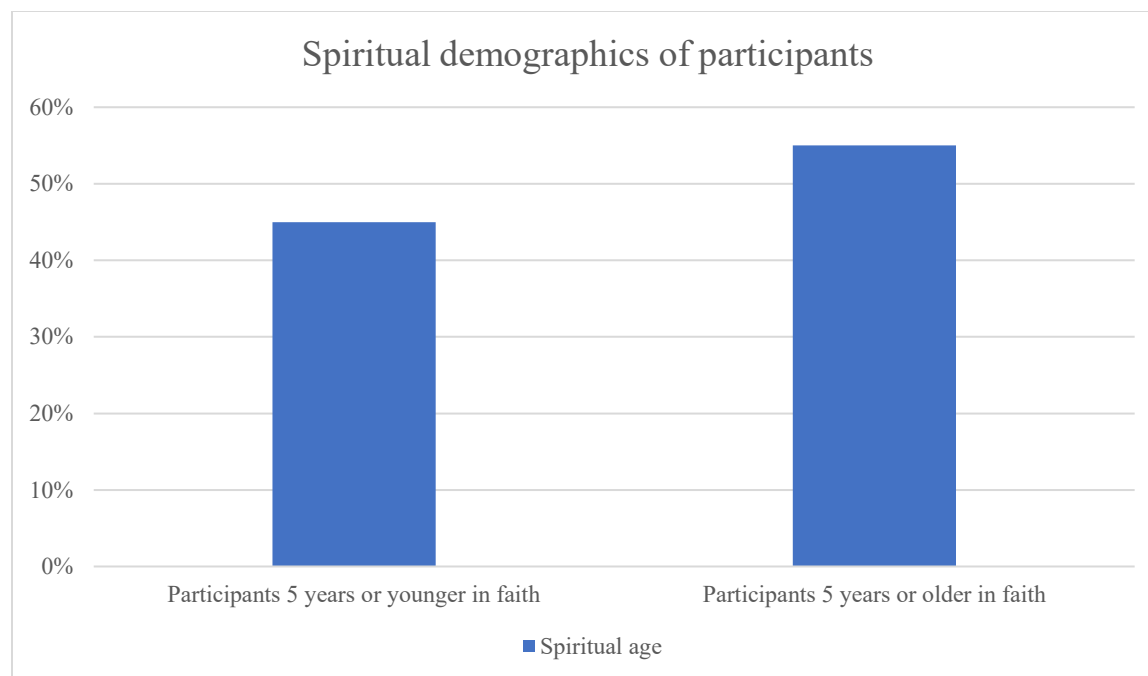


Figure 3.1 Spiritual demographics of participants

Stage 1: Steps 1–5

These first five steps represent the initial work that must take place before the six-week seminar can start. They serve to lay the foundation and prepare the seminar to run smoothly and effectively. Step one consisted in the preparation of the handbook that served as the main support through the six sessions (see Appendix C). This handbook was the material support for the participants during the sessions and the material the leader used to teach the lessons and lead through the sessions. This handbook had the content of the lessons in a clear bullet-point layout

that made it easy to follow. Only the first three lessons were written before the beginning of the seminar, and sessions 4 and 5 were written during the first week. The final session was not written until later on in the seminar as it was a recap session. This gave the researcher freedom and flexibility to focus on what he saw as needing the most a recap in this final session.

Step two was the preparation of the interview questions, as well as the survey that was given at the beginning and the end of the seminar. The interview questions (see Appendix D) were designed to leave a good amount of freedom for the participants to answer and explain how they perceived *laïcité* and how they perceived evangelism in this context. The purpose of this interview time was to give the researcher an in-depth snapshot of what the participants thought and where they stood in relation to the matter at hand. The interviews were to be done by the participants before the first session. The same interviews were led after the last session as a point of comparison for the researcher. As for the survey, the researcher prepared a survey with questions that were used for a statistical analysis of the before and after intervention results to the survey. This survey was a Likert survey (see Appendix E) and was aimed at seeing how the participants perceived their evangelistic output considering *laïcité*.

Step three was focused on the recruiting of the participants. This step required the researcher to inform the church congregation of the need for ten volunteers to participate in this research. The informing of the congregation began with a short word during the announcement time at the end of the church service for two weeks. During these two weeks, the researcher also engaged in verbal recruitment with potential participants in person and through messages.⁴ Eligible participants were individuals over 18 that attended at least 16% of the meetings at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignana and who professed to be born-again believers. In

⁴ See Appendix F for verbal recruitment sheet.

addition, as noted in the delimitations in Chapter one, this researcher focused on individuals who are French nationals or who have spent most of their life in France as they were the ones prone to being influenced by *laïcité*. This recruitment took place at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan around services and in church activities. Once individuals expressed interest and met the criteria for eligibility, the researcher handed each one of them a consent form (see Appendix G) and a GDPR consent form (see Appendix H). Once these had been filled and signed, the researcher collected the consent forms at the start of the first session. In addition to the consent forms, the researcher provided the participants with the initial survey (fourth step). Participants could sign the consent forms the same day if they wished, but all waited till the week of the first session to provide the researcher with the forms needed.

Step five consisted in conducting the interviews and collecting the completed surveys. The interviews were either done in person or over the WhatsApp messaging service as some were unavailable for in-person interviews. The researcher asked open-ended questions during the interviews, which was meant to offer the participants freedom in answering and thus offered the researcher much data to process. The interviews were all recorded for a precise collection of the data. The researcher asked follow-up questions or clarifying questions when the response was unclear, led to another question, or topic of interest. All surveys were returned with the consent forms at the start of the first session.

Stage 2: Steps 6–9

Stage two kicked off the seminar portion of the intervention plan. This seminar portion consisted of six group sessions once a week that lasted a minimum of 75 minutes each. Every session was conducted at the house of the researcher. The first three sessions focused on

preparing the participants by providing them with a theoretical foundation and a tool to evangelize in the *laïcité* context.

Step six was the first session out of six. It began with the researcher leading the group through the first lesson in the handbook. This handbook started with a presentation on *laïcité* in France and on the biblical imperative of evangelism. The presentation on *laïcité* in France was meant to inform the participants of what the French law says about *laïcité* and what *laïcité* is. This was done in contrast of what is said in the media and by politicians. This provided them with a legal frame to reassure them and assert their rights. This first lesson also had a challenge to evangelism, so the group was encouraged to take advantage of their rights and go and share the gospel based on the biblical command and legal rights. After this, the first session had a “how to” part was taught in their handbook. During this part, participants had to write a short presentation of their testimony. The handbook had an open page for them to take notes and write down their short testimony presentation. This testimony had to be brief and sharable in less than a couple of minutes, and the gospel had to be found within it. This “How to” time was a time of freedom for the participants to work on their gospel presentation through their testimony. The participants were then offered the opportunity to share this abbreviated testimony presentation around a meal that the researcher provided for the group. Meals are essential in the French culture, and learning to create the opportunity around a meal to share their testimony is key. This “how to” section ended the first session.

Step seven consisted of the second group session out of six. Like the previous session, the researcher led the group through the second lesson in the handbook. The second lesson in this handbook was on the biblical definition of *laïcité*. This lesson was meant to challenge the dominant cultural view of *laïcité* with a biblical view that closely matches the true legal and

historical *laïcité*. This was supposed to reaffirm the previous session and anchor truth in the hearts of the participants against the aggressive *laïcité* narrative that they are fed in the media and in their society. Equipped with this biblical definition of *laïcité* and with their knowledge of the legal and historical definition of *laïcité* that closely matches the biblical definition they were given; they were given a solid defense of evangelism in the *laïcité* context. Similarly, to the previous session, this session also had a “how to” period, during which individuals reworked their testimony presentation and were invited to practice sharing it with the group, once again around a meal.

Step eight led into the third group session which began with a presentation through the handbook on “why sharing your testimony is better.” Just like with the previous session, the group was invited to interact around a meal and practice sharing their testimonies. This was meant to show the participants that sharing their testimony is never crossing the line with *laïcité* even in its restrictive definition and that it is a powerful tool in our society for evangelism. The veracity of the previous statement is based on the distinction that French law and society make between proselytism and sharing your faith (evangelism) which was taught in this lesson. Therefore, participants had the theoretical foundation that gave them the impetus to share the testimonies they had been working on in the past two weeks. Following this, the group went into a who, when, and where part of the session. This section of the third session was in their handbooks as well and was a time when the group discussed who, when, and where to share their testimonies with. The result is that they determined based on the first three sessions and their experience and opinions who, when, and where to share their testimonies with. This was a means for them to control and intentionally plan their evangelism in a *laïcité* friendly way. The researcher then led them into a commitment time in which each individual wrote down the name

of a person they wanted to share their testimony with and when and where they would purposefully attempt to do so.

Stage 3: Steps 9–11

Stage three intervened halfway through the six-week seminar. It was a pivotal point in the seminar as the focus shifted towards a more practical aspect and focused on accountability. Once they left the group after session three, they were asked to commit to share the gospel every week, and participants were asked to share how their evangelism efforts went during the previous week at the beginning of every session. The previous sessions offered the group training time in the sessions themselves and meals that allowed the group to practice sharing their testimonies.

Step nine was the fourth session out of six. Each of the following sessions began with a “sharing time.” The participants were given time to share their successes or failures with the group. During these times individuals were never judged and always encouraged and assured of the prayers of the group for each one of the individuals involved. After this sharing time, the researcher moved through the handbook into lesson four. Lesson four dealt with common concerns and objections on evangelism and *laïcité*. Though most of these were dealt with in Chapters 1, 2, and 3, Chapter 4 sought to address the miscellaneous arguments that might support a restrictive view of *laïcité* from philosophical perspectives or even arguments used to excuse a lack of involvement in evangelism. This session ended with a “commitment time” that was supposed to draw on the shared experience of the group and commit once again with a who, when, and where approach.

Step ten or session five began like session four with a “sharing time” that was supposed to be the same as the previous “sharing time.” The researcher then moved forward in the handbook with a lesson on spontaneity in evangelism. In this lesson, the researcher continued to

encourage the intentional planning of the who, when, and, where approach but also encouraged spontaneous evangelistic interactions. This was followed by a how-to time during which participants could share their experiences or opinions on how conversations can transition into a *laïcité* friendly testimony-sharing time. Once again participants ended the session with a “commitment time” still committing to a who, when, and where but also committing to trying to spontaneously share during the week.

Session six began with a sharing time not unlike the other sharing time sections they had already engaged in, the group shared their successes and failures over the week. After this sharing time, the group was invited to reflect on what they had learned in these 6 sessions. This summary time was meant to provide the participants with a time to share their thoughts, victories, and failures, what they learned, and what they still need to learn. It served as a recap time and a time to encourage each other. This final session ended with a “commitment time” which was a commitment to the rest of the group to continue in the evangelistic effort that was started in this seminar. This final session was our eleventh step in this intervention plan.

Stage 4: Steps 12 and 13

The final two steps consisted of distributing the end surveys and collecting them once completed by the participants as well as conducting the exit interview. The interviews were either led in person or via the WhatsApp messaging system for those who were unavailable for an in-person interview. The researcher then used both the survey and the interview questions as points of comparison with the initial surveys and interviews. This fourth stage was the time during which the researcher concluded the intervention.

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| Research Project Overview and Design | |
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| | Stage 1 |
| Step 1 | Prepare 6 separate lesson plans that will be found in the handbook as a guide through the group sessions. |
| Step 2 | Prepare interview questions and surveys. |
| Step 3 | Inform and recruit participants for the study. |
| Step 4 | Collect participant consent forms and give surveys. |
| Step 5 | Conduct initial interviews with participants and collect initial survey questions. |
| | Stage 2 |
| Step 6 | Conduct the first session: Provide the handbook to the participants. Walk through handbook section on <i>laïcité</i> in French law and evangelism as a mandate. Lead in the how-to section of the first session. |
| Step 7 | Conduct session two: Walk through handbook section on “A Biblical definition of <i>laïcité</i> .” Lead in the how to section of the second session. |
| Step 8 | Conduct session three: Walk through handbook section on why sharing your testimony is better. Lead in the who, when, and where part of the session followed by a commitment time. |
| | Stage 3 |
| Step 9 | Conduct session four: Open with a sharing time. Walk through handbook section on “common concerns and objections on evangelism and <i>laïcité</i> .” Finish with a “commitment time.” |
| Step 10 | Conduct session five: Open with a sharing time. Walk through handbook section on “spontaneity.” Lead through a “how to” and end with a “commitment time.” |
| Step 11 | Conduct session six: Open with a sharing time followed by a summary time that will lead into a commitment time. |
| | Stage 4 |
| Step 12 | Distribute the end survey. And conduct exit interviews. |
| Step 13 | Collect the end survey. |

Figure 3.2 Research project overview and design

Implementation of the intervention

Session 1

The first session began around 6:20 p.m. at the researcher’s home with a group of 9 out of the 11 participants which was expected as the missing participants had warned upon their approval to participate that they could not attend this first session due to work and family commitments that day. The two individuals who missed the first session received the notes for

the session as well as the audio recording of the session. The researcher also provided the missing participants with the guidance necessary to complete the “How to” section of the session and answered any questions the missing participants had. This first session began with the researcher leading the group through the first lesson in the handbook. This handbook began with a presentation on the biblical imperative of evangelism and then on *laïcité* in France. This first lesson also had a challenge to evangelism, meant for the group to be encouraged to take advantage of their rights and go and share the gospel on the basis of the biblical command and the legal right they have.

During the teaching time, the group remained silent and attentive. However, towards the end through the researchers’ prompting and especially when the topic of *laïcité* was addressed head-on the group started to ask questions. Many comments and questions were geared toward two topics: Islam and schools. As the discussion continued, it became obvious that there was a tension in the minds of some of the individuals in this group between the cultural and historical considerations and the legal and institutional ones. This was outlined in the lesson itself and was illustrated during the conversation, which was interesting for the researcher as it demonstrated the tension between the libertarian and restrictive views of *laïcité* in France. Comments on the feeling that the Christian heritage is being removed and erased from France and that Islam is filling the void and growing in influence. This is interesting as it displayed the sentiment that Islam has rights that Christianity does not have and paradoxically encouraged a restrictive view of *laïcité* towards Islam, all the while bemoaning the same restrictive *laïcité* towards Christianity.

The discussion also covered the specific case of the French public schooling system and the 2004 law banning “public displays of faith” in schools. The group’s general confusion on the

matter was obvious as they did not understand why the legal *laïcité* that they were learning about in the day's lesson was a libertarian and permissive one and yet it was also the motive behind the law in 2004 that forbids public displays of faith in school. This was addressed by the researcher and the group was satisfied by the answer. The group agreed unanimously on the statement that Christians should engage in an evangelistic methodology that is respectful of the cultural understanding of *laïcité* and not just of the law.

After this, the first session ended with a how-to time that was included in their handbook and that the researcher explained and demonstrated. During this part, participants had to write out a short presentation of their testimony. The participants were then offered the opportunity to share this abbreviated testimony presentation with a partner in the group. After pairing up with another participant, each participant had to practice sharing their testimony and give advice on how their partner could improve their testimony. The researcher encouraged the group to continue working on their testimony during the week. After this, a meal was served, and participants were encouraged to share their testimony or discuss the day's session around a meal that the researcher provided for the group. This marked the end of the first session.

Session 2

Like the previous session, the researcher had all participants meet at his home around 6:20 p.m. Again, two participants were absent. One was the same woman who could not attend the first session, she was unable to attend due to Covid, and the second participant that was absent was present at the first session and his absence was planned as he had warned the researcher upon his approval that he would miss this one session. The same procedure was done with these two individuals as with the previous two, they received the notes and the audio

recording of the session, as well as instructions for the how-to section, and provided answers to any questions they had.

The researcher led the group through the second lesson in the handbook. The second lesson in this handbook was entitled “The Biblical Definition of *laïcité*.” This lesson was meant to challenge the dominant cultural view of *laïcité* with a biblical view that closely matches the true legal and historical *laïcité*. Similarly, to the previous session, the lesson time was followed very attentively, and a conversation started again after the researcher offered the group to ask questions. Some questions arose on the nature of *laïcité* and how it relates to the doctrine of separation of church and state. The project leader then explained how this doctrine was a solid biblical doctrine, as demonstrated in the first part of the lesson, and that this doctrine was in accord with the original *laïcité*. The researcher explained how he believed that the doctrine of separation of church and state was a doctrine that Christians should uphold and promote as a validation of the true *laïcité*. Xy This led to a conversation with the group and one of the participants in particular on the doctrine of the separation of church and state itself. During this conversation, the researcher noticed that the individual’s confusion lay in a confusion between the separation of church and state, and the separation of the Christian and the state. The researcher clarified the matter and reaffirmed that believers could imitate men like William Wilberforce who acted politically with Christian motives for the end of slavery in Great Britain. However, the researcher also reaffirmed that this was to remain the work and effort of individuals who politically influence society with their opinions and beliefs, but not the work of the churches who are called to worship and serve God, lead souls to Christ, and preach the Word, and are not called to become political centers or act as policymakers. This seemed to answer all the questions and receive the approval of the group.

The project author finished the teaching session by talking about Christian civil disobedience. The meeting was highly constructive, and the researcher believes that the group understood the doctrine of separation of Church and state and how it is tied to the original *laïcité*. This session also had a how-to period, during which individuals were given time to rework their testimony presentation and practice sharing it with a partner in the group. Once again, a meal was provided by the researcher and individuals were encouraged to share their testimonies or continue discussing the matter around the meal.

Session 3

Session 3 was the first session with all eleven participants. The session started around 6:20 p.m. Before the lesson started, the researcher shared a story that one of the participants had shared with him that happened during the week. She was doing outreach with some people from the church in a public park, engaging individuals and giving tracts out when she was challenged by a man about what she was doing. The man stated that she was not allowed to do this and that it was wrong of her to do this. The man was partially correct as he was a teacher with his students during school time, but the students were not grouped together and were sitting in the park. This is common in the park as many young people go there. The participant who faced this situation said that she told the man that she was within her rights and that *laïcité* guaranteed her the freedom to do this but did not insist because the man was angry. She then shared with the group how she felt more confident in her evangelism because of the seminar and faced the situation with confidence. The third session's teaching time was a presentation through the handbook on "why sharing your testimony is better." This was meant to show the participants that sharing their testimony is never crossing the line with *laïcité* even in its restrictive definition and that it is a powerful tool in our society for evangelism. The veracity of the previous

statement is based on the distinction that French law and society make between proselytism and sharing your faith (evangelism) which was taught in this lesson.

The lesson went smoothly, the group seemed to enjoy this lesson which was quite different from the first two. During the teaching time, the group was very attentive and engaged, some questions were asked regarding the idea of proselytism and minors. The question was on the fact that the participants were learning that proselytism in France is ill-perceived and illegal in some instances as it seeks to recruit or convert people by all possible means and by pressuring them. The group wondered if it was possible to evangelize (i.e., sharing the gospel without this pressuring or argumentative approach) when speaking to minors, as they are easily impressionable and influenceable without falling into the pitfall of proselytism. The researcher explained that this was the exact line of thinking of the government in 2004 when they forbade public school kids from displaying any religious signs at school. The researcher explained that this ideology promotes atheism. Indeed, atheism is by its nature the absence of God. If one decides that he cannot share the gospel with minors then one is leaving them no choice, and instead of offering them freedom, he is shutting them out into the default influence of an atheistic society. Therefore, one is not pressuring them, rather he is offering them the freedom to make up their own mind. Of course, this researcher also explained that discernment was necessary as this researcher would abstain from approaching minors who aren't teenagers without parental approval. When minors have questions, believers have the responsibility to share the gospel with them, when it comes to us going towards people, then one should use discernment.

The researcher led the group into two new elements of the session: the who, when and where questions and the commitment time. During these times, the group was very responsive. During the who, when and where time, the group had to think about a place, time, and person to

share their testimony with. During the commitment time, 6 out of the 11 individuals already had a plan to share their testimony with someone specific. The 5 others were still unsure of whom they would be sharing their testimony with but were willing to think about it and try to share their testimony with an unbeliever during the week. The researcher noted that perhaps it would have been beneficial if the group had done the who, when and where time a week before the first commitment time. The session ended and the group had pizza together as every other week and was encouraged to help one another in planning their testimony sharing. The researcher also talked with some of the 5 participants to help them build a who, when and where strategy for this week.

Session 4

Session 4 began around 6:20 p.m. as the other sessions and a group of 10 individuals out of the 11 participants gathered. This one absence was of a lady who had been present at all the sessions up to now. She had a last-minute trip and could not come to the meeting. The same procedure was followed with her as with all the other individuals absent in the previous sessions.

This fourth session was different as it began with a sharing time that was a new component of the sessions. This sharing time was meant to let the participants share with the group how they carried out their commitment to share the gospel with someone during the week. The researcher was pleased as nine out of the ten participants present had carried out their commitment to share the gospel during the week. Five of the ten individuals shared the gospel with the person they had committed to sharing the gospel with during the previous session. The four other participants were not able to share the gospel with the person they planned to share the gospel with but seized opportunities with others during the week. Another important element was that six of the ten participants present mentioned how they shared their testimonies during these

gospel conversations. Three of those testimonies seized opportunities to share how God helped them during times of personal loss because the individuals they were conversing with had recently experienced loss. This sharing time was an edifying time that was encouraging and exciting for each participant who saw how God worked with everyone during the week.

The session moved to the next element of session 4, which was the teaching time section. This session's lesson was a response to various objections towards evangelism. The group was very attentive and asked pertinent questions. Questions were asked about Calvinism, and the researcher gave a short explanation without engaging further, as the topic of Calvinism was not the main subject of study. Questions were also asked about how believers can avoid being perceived as arrogant when sharing the gospel. The researcher explained that this is impossible to a degree, but the best way to avoid or lessen that perception is to share the gospel through a personal testimony as it is perceived as a less confrontational proclamation of a truth claim. There was also a discussion on using pedagogy, and believers knowing their faith so that they can explain it and not simply proclaim without being sensitive to the unbelievers' questions. The researcher finished the teaching portion of the session, and participants were invited to think about whom they might share the gospel with the following week. This was the who, when, and where section of the session, and the researcher emphasized that the participants were encouraged to find a new person with whom to share the gospel, but that they also had the opportunity to use this planning time to think about a follow-up opportunity with the person they shared the gospel with during the previous week.

The group was then led into the commitment time where everyone committed to sharing the gospel with someone during the week, five individuals decided to focus on a follow-up of the previous week's evangelistic conversion, and the rest either committed to trying again with the

same person as planned two weeks prior, or had nobody in particular in mind yet but were committing to trying to share the gospel by putting themselves in situations where opportunities may arise. The session ended in prayer and the group was invited to stay and discuss with one another what they had just learned around a meal.

Session 5

Session 5 started at 6:20 p.m. with all the eleven participants in attendance, with only one participant arriving 15 minutes late. Like the previous session, session 5 began with a “sharing time” practical exercise. This time was encouraging, just as it was during the previous session. Although there were more participants who did not manage to honor their commitment, it was still a great time for all the participants to hear what each other did. Three were able to share their testimony and have gospel conversations with the person they had committed to try to share the gospel with. A few had committed during the previous week to going on street evangelism to try to share their testimony. These three individuals had different experiences, two of them had great difficulty and, although they tried, did not manage to share the gospel with anyone. They did give tracts however and put themselves in a situation of discomfort with the intention to share the gospel, which the researcher pointed out and encouraged them to continue. This was underlined several times in the session to encourage the participants to continue their efforts as they are not responsible for the response or willingness of the interlocutor, but they are responsible for their own efforts. The third participant who committed to go out on street evangelism had a great interaction with a lady whom she had already met in the past and she was able to share her testimony as they had similar life experiences. Unlike the two participants who struggled during street evangelism, two others had committed to sharing the gospel, one with a friend and one with a customer at work, and both experienced rejection, but the researcher

encouraged them to persevere. Two other participants had no interactions or attempts to interact during the week, one had committed to trying with a co-worker, and another had not committed the previous week because she had no idea. Finally, one participant was not present during the previous session, however, she did try to share the gospel with friends during the week but had like others delt with closed hearts. This was a little bit of a theme during this sharing time, but it still was a positive time as the group had tried to be faithful during the week. This was interesting as session 4 was about evangelism and proselytism and how evangelism is making an offer, and proselytism is more aggressive and seeks to pressure people into engaging in a gospel conversation. This week was difficult in the results the group felt they saw and was also a practical implementation of the lesson they learned during session 4.

The researcher then led the group into a lesson time as with other sessions. This lesson was about spontaneity and how to be always ready to share their testimony and engage in gospel conversations. The lesson was very well received as during the session, the researcher observed many heads nodding and comments made during the lesson that indicated the participants' agreement. The lesson was significantly shorter than previous lessons and was well received by the group, with individuals who indicated in various comments how they had experienced what the researcher was talking about. The researcher also pointed out how in many ways, the participants were already engaging in spontaneous gospel and testimony sharing.

The researcher then led the group into a who, when, and how-to section, which was meant to give the participants, like in previous sessions an opportunity to think about a strategy to share with a specific individual. In this week's session, the researcher also encouraged the group to plan spontaneous gospel-sharing opportunities by creating situations in which these opportunities might arise. The group exchanged ideas on how to do this. This was then done

more thoroughly in the how-to section of the session when the group was invited to share ideas on how to share the gospel spontaneously and what are possible triggers for the believer to seize an opportunity. Ideas such as sharing the gospel with homeless people after having given them food, other ideas like listening for elements that resemble our testimony in a conversation with a person, noticing religious signs that people have on their apparel, purposefully placing literature or Bibles and Bible verses in their house when people come over, wearing Christian apparel, helping someone in need of assistance and seizing that opportunity to share the love of Christ in the gospel, and even when seeing a beautiful sight in creation and bringing glory to God as a conversation opener for a gospel conversation. The researcher remarked that perhaps the “who, when, and where” section should have been placed after the “how to” section that followed as during this how-to section much of the work had already been done in the “who, when and where” section. In both sections, the group was interested and participated in the conversation.

Finally, the leader led the group into the session's last section, a “time of commitment.” As with the previous weeks, the leader asked each participant to commit to trying to share the gospel or their testimony with someone during the week. Five participants committed to following up with the people they had been sharing the gospel and their testimonies within the past week or weeks. Two committed to going on street evangelism during the week to attempt to share the gospel. One said he would continue to attempt to share with customers at work and the remaining three had no particular plan in mind but were willing to try to seize opportunities when they came. The session ended once more with a meal and participants were encouraged to continue to share ideas in their conversations.

Session 6

Session 6, like previous sessions, started around 6:20 p.m. Ten participants were in attendance, nine in person, and one participant was in attendance via a video call. The same procedure was followed with the missing participant, who was missing her first session and received a link with the audio recording of the course as well as the written notes for the session.

The session started with a sharing time, as the previous two sessions had. In this session, the evangelistic efforts were different from the previous weeks. This week, participants were asked to share the gospel spontaneously and seize opportunities as they came. However, participants were also given the opportunity to continue with the planned model they had been using during the previous weeks and work to share the gospel with the person they intended to share it with. In this week's session, only one out of the ten participants in attendance did not share or attempt to share the gospel with anyone, even though the participants said they had tried to look for opportunities. Seven out of the ten participants could share the gospel during the week. Three participants shared the gospel with the person they had committed to trying to share it with during the previous session. Two of those three participants continued working with the same person since the first commitment time. One participant out of those three also seized an opportunity for evangelism during the week. In addition, three participants, the same as in the previous week decided to do street evangelism and all three had opportunities that they seized in that specific context. One of the three participants was able to share his testimony with someone during that time. The seventh participant to share the gospel during the week seized two opportunities during her week and was able to share her testimony and the gospel with two individuals. She was excited to share that the husband of one of the individuals she had shared within the previous weeks contacted her with questions. Finally, two participants tried to seize

opportunities without success, one with a homeless lady and one with a man at work in a conversation on the situation in the Gaza Strip.

The researcher then led the group through the last lesson of the seminar. This was a recap lesson with the researcher summarizing each session and asking participants to share thoughts, questions, and remarks on how the session helped them. This lesson time was, therefore mostly used as a recap and discussion time. After the recap of each session, participants shared how the session had helped them, and the researcher did not have any participants ask questions. This was a very encouraging time for the researcher as well as for the group as everyone saw how others progressed and how the Lord worked in each participant.

The session ended with a final commitment time. This commitment time was not like the other weeks, a commitment to share during the following week, but a commitment to try to share the gospel in their everyday lives, not just for a week but for the rest of their walk with the Lord. It was also a time of commitment for the group to continue to pray and encourage each other in this mission as well as share the victories and difficulties they encounter with the other participants.

Implementation of Data collection and analysis

The data gathered during this intervention came from various sources and data collection methods. As mentioned earlier, the researcher relied on three main tools of data collection to have a solid foundation for the analysis of the results and the conclusion of the effectiveness of the intervention. The researcher collected the pre-study Likert questionnaires that were then compared to identical post-study Likert questionnaires, and the pre-study interviews were also compared to identical post-study interviews. It was also in the sessions themselves that the

researcher collected much precious data. This in-session data was expected as the researcher saw them as focus groups with great freedom of speech given to the participants, which in turn gave the researcher much data to collect through the various comments, discussions, and questions the group had during the sessions. However, the collected in-session data was not limited to these conversations. All this in-session data was collected via audio recordings. The very practical elements incorporated in the seminar and in the last three sessions with “commitment times” and “sharing times” gave the researcher data to analyze. Indeed, during the last half of the seminar, participants had to put what they were learning into practice. This was then reported in the sharing time and gave the researcher opportunities to observe if the seminar was bearing the fruit intended and meeting its goals. All this data was then analyzed in light of the seminar’s purpose to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*. This was done by determining the effectiveness of the research in three main areas. First, the data measured how the participants understood *laïcité*, how they perceived *laïcité*, their rights, and what the scriptures teach. Secondly, the data measured how the participants understood evangelism, their obligation to evangelize, how to evangelize, and what to say. Finally, the third area of analysis was the practice of evangelism in the participants’ lives, their perception of their readiness to evangelize, and their feeling that they are equipped to do so.

This data collection sequence was chosen as it offers the researcher a before and after snapshot of the participants’ entry data and exit data on the matters at hand in the study. The in-session data provided the researcher with practical data on how the participants were perceiving the matters at hand, understanding them, and applying them in their lives with practical personal evangelism being a main point of data collection in the study through the commitment times and sharing times.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Collective Results

This chapter will present the analysis of the data collected from the intervention and analyze the results of the intervention. The researcher anticipated that the results would support his initial hypothesis and demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention plan. The problem was that believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan were ill-equipped to evangelize in the *laïcité* context. This problem was very serious as it affected the evangelistic efforts of the believers because they felt pressured not to share and unprepared to share effectively in these situations. The purpose of this DMIN action research project was to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*. This researcher believed that this could be done if believers were equipped to face *laïcité* through an “Evangelistic *Laïcité*” seminar, then they would adjust their understanding to overcome the obstacles of *laïcité* to evangelism.

To determine the effectiveness of the intervention, the data collected during the intervention was analyzed to determine growth in this study’s three key areas of concern. The three main areas the researcher sought to impact were mentioned in Chapter 3. The first key area of study and data collecting that was measured was how the participants understood *laïcité*. In other words, how they perceived *laïcité*, their rights, and what the scriptures teach on the doctrine of separation of church and state. Secondly, the data measured how the participants understood evangelism. That is to say, their obligation to evangelize, how to evangelize, and what to say. Finally, the third key area of analysis was the practice of evangelism in the

participants' lives, their perception of their readiness to evangelize, and their feeling that they are equipped to do so.

Data Analysis

Key Area #1 Participant Understanding of *Laïcité*

Likert questionnaire

Likert surveys were distributed to each participant a week before the first session and were returned completed to the researcher upon entry in the first session of the seminar. The same questionnaire was given after the last session of the seminar for data comparison. Each survey was comprised of 12 questions on the matters of evangelism and *laïcité*.

The perception of what *laïcité* is, was central to the study as it partially determined how participants understood evangelism, the doctrine of the separation of church and state, Christian disobedience to the law, and obedience to God. These were important elements of the study, and the following questions show what the participants thought about these matters before participating in the seminar. Participants were asked to share how they perceived the impact of *laïcité* on religion, whether in a positive way, neutral way, or negative way. These were more general questions on *laïcité* and not specifically aimed at evangelism and *laïcité*.

The answers given were evenly distributed, with 18% answering they strongly agree, 27% answering they agree, 18% answering neither, 18% answering they disagree and 18% answering they strongly disagreed with the statement that *laïcité* is beneficial to religion. Answers given to the opposite statement were similar, again 18% answered they strongly agreed, 18% they agreed, and 27% neither, which is surprising considering the previous answers, 18% again answered they disagreed, and 18% they strongly disagreed.

Finally, participants were offered the same statement as the previous two but placed *laïcité* as neutral towards religion. Again, results were varied, 9% strongly agreed, 27% agreed, 18% neither agreed or disagreed, 27% disagreed and 18% answered they strongly disagreed. The answers given to all three questions show a variety of opinions and illustrate the literature's conclusion that there is confusion over the term (See figure 4.1)¹

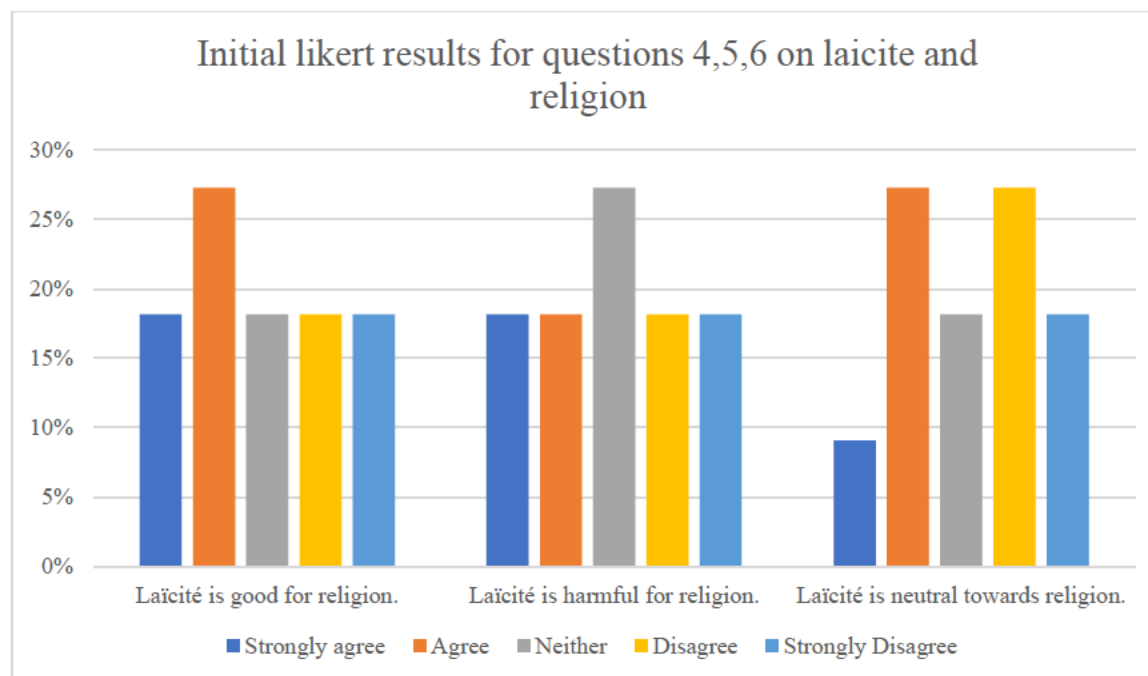


Figure 4.1 Initial Likert results for questions 4, 5, and 6 on *laïcité* and religion

After the seminar, participants were asked to share once more how they perceived the impact of *laïcité* on religion, whether in a positive way, neutral way, or negative way. The answers to the same questions showed a clear change of opinion and understanding of *laïcité*. They were going from answers evenly distributed across the board to 63% strongly agreeing that *laïcité* is beneficial to religion, 9% agreeing, 9% strongly disagreeing, and 18% neither agreeing

¹ Christopher Lizotte, "Laïcité as Assimilation, *Laïcité* as Negotiation: Political Geographies of Secularism in the French Public School," *Political Geography* 77 (2020): 1

nor disagreeing with the statement. Answers given to the negative rendering of the question were coherent with the previous results shared and were thus largely negative, with 45% strongly disagreeing, 36% disagreeing, and only 9% neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the statement. This again shows that participants understood and assimilated the teaching on *laïcité*. This is to be seen in the clear change of answers that is seen between the first set of answers, which showed a variety of opinions on *laïcité* effects on religion and the second set of answers, which shows a unity on the perception of *laïcité*. This is a major change as the researcher sought to teach participants that *laïcité* in the law and its historical understanding is akin to the biblical doctrine of the separation of church and state.

Answers to the neutral version of the statement were more diverse and did not necessarily follow the pattern of the previous two questions. This researcher believes that this is partly due to the nature of the question that was confusing for participants who clearly saw *laïcité* as a good thing for religion but seemed unsure on how to answer on its neutrality to religion. This researcher had neither answer as the best answer possible in mind. Still, it is understandable that participants who saw *laïcité* as a good thing for religion would say that it is not neutral but beneficial. It is also understandable that participants who saw *laïcité* as beneficial for religion would agree, as *laïcité* was defined in the lesson as a concept that ensures the neutrality of the state. Thus, this researcher believes this question was not clear, and answers reflected this issue. Answers were varied, and no significant changes were seen in the answers.

Overall, the answers given, especially to the first two questions show how the group progressed in their understanding of *laïcité* and now see *laïcité* through a biblical, legal, and historical lens against the restrictive cultural view that had some of the participants confused before the seminar (see fig. 4.2)

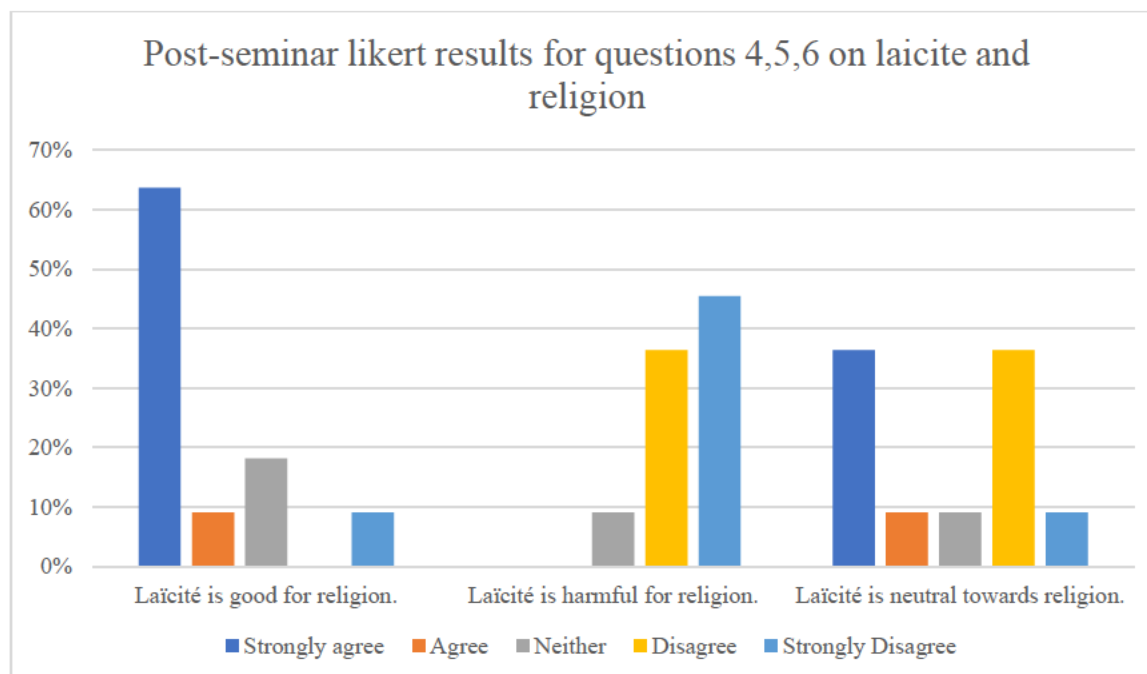


Figure 4.2 Post-seminar Likert results for questions 4,5,6 on *laïcité* and religion

Participants were also asked to share how they perceived *laïcité*'s impact on evangelism by answering questions that were more specific and dealt with evangelism and how *laïcité* impacts it. When participants were asked if they considered *laïcité* to be an obstacle to evangelism prior to the study, they gave a variety of answers with 18% answering that they strongly agreed with the statement, 18% simply agreed with it, and 27% neither agreed nor disagreed while 36% disagreed. These answers only confirmed what the research had observed in the answers given in the previous questions, which showed confusion over *laïcité* with a variety of opinions.

However, after the seminar participants showed a clear evolution and progress on the subject matter with 91% of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and only 9% strongly agreed. This marked a major improvement in the understanding of the group on the matter and revealed that overall the group understood and assimilated what the researcher sought to transmit.

The participants were also asked to share their views on statements that were not directly related to evangelism as they were broader. It included other religions that were indirectly related to evangelism as they dealt with public displays of faith and the sharing of one's faith. Public displays of faith are at the center of the battle around *laïcité* and are today in the French culture a central element of the discussion with the Muslim veil crystallizing all the attention as was demonstrated in the literature review.²

When asked whether people should publicly display their faith considering *laïcité*, the majority of participants answered that people should continue to display their faith publicly. With 18% answering that they strongly disagreed, 63% that they disagreed, and only 9% answering they agreed and another 9% answering they strongly agreed. Therefore, only a minority believed that believers should not display their faith publicly. Post-seminar answers did not see a major change as the researcher only reinforced this conception in the seminar, although a slight change may be noted with the 18% who previously agreed with the statement now answering they neither agreed nor disagreed. An increase in those who strongly disagreed over those who only disagreed was also seen, shifting from 18% to 54%.

Prior to the seminar, 27% of participants agreed with the statement that *laïcité* forbids followers of various faiths from sharing their faith. 27% answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, another 27% disagreed and 18% strongly disagreed. The answers given fall back in line with what the researcher saw in previous questions on *laïcité*, that is to say a “fuzziness” in the understanding of the concept. This “fuzziness” in the understanding of what *laïcité* is, was in these questions applied to evangelism. It is again, not a surprise that this would

² Amelie Barras, “Sacred *Laïcité* and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?” *Mediterranean Politics* Volume 18, Issue 2 (July 2013): 287.

be seen on this matter as the literature review presented the conflict between the libertarian and restrictive views of *laïcité* in the right individuals must publicly express their faith and the ideology that faith belongs to the private sphere.³

However, once again, results changed after the seminar with participants displaying in their answers to this question a change of opinion, with 91% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing, and only 9% disagreeing. This was a remarkable change in the opinion of the participants and marks a clear progression. Answers to these questions clearly show that the group now understands that *laïcité* is not something that hinders them from sharing or showing their faith in public spaces. Therefore, the intervention was successful in improving the understanding of the participants in key area number 1 as this was the desired outcome of the intervention in this area. (see fig. 4.3 and 4.4)

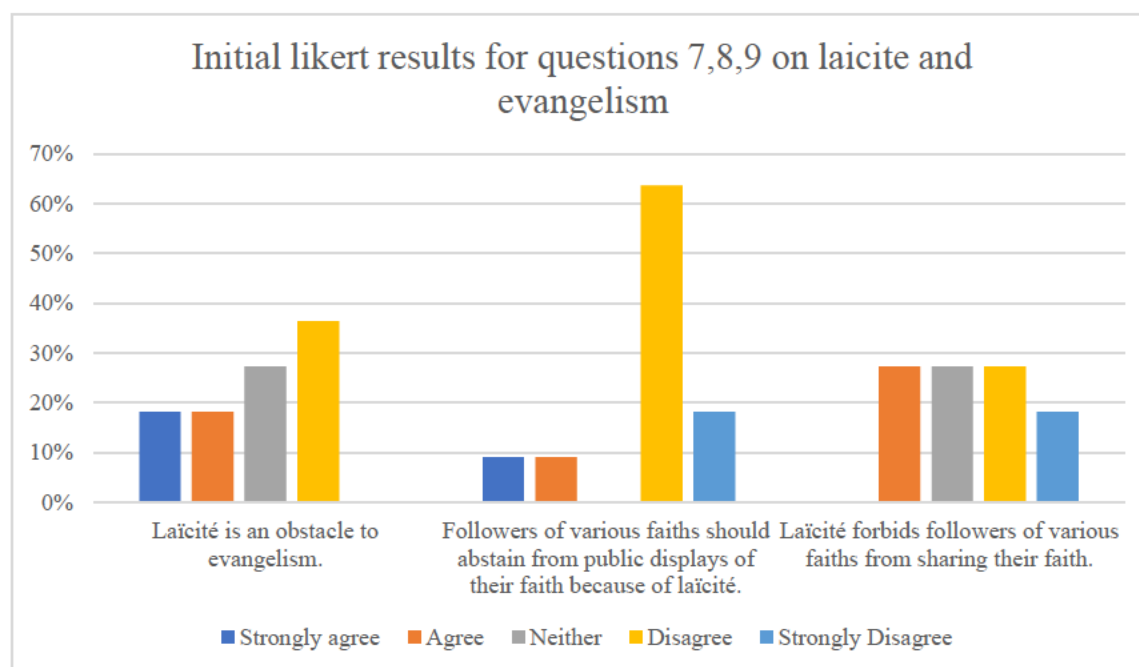


Figure 4.3 Initial Likert results for questions 7, 8, and 9 on *laïcité* and evangelism

³ Amelie Barras, "Sacred *Laïcité* and the Politics of Religious Resurgence in France: Whither Religious Pluralism?" *Mediterranean Politics* 18, 2 (July 2013): 287.

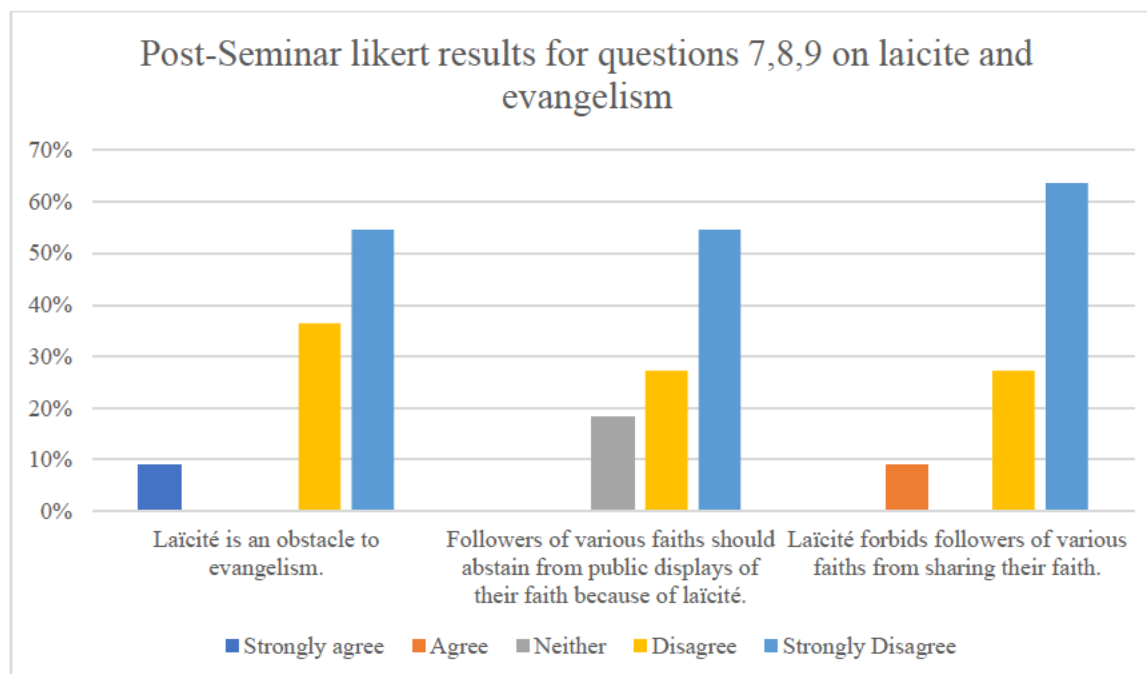


Figure 4.4 Post-Seminar Likert results for questions 7, 8, and 9 on laïcité and evangelism

Overall, the entry data for this matter was interesting and displayed confusion on what *laïcité* is. This confirmed what the literature review displayed as the literature presented *laïcité* as a concept that is disputed and changing in French society so much so that the foremost expert on the matter in France, Jean Baubérot speaks of *laïcité* as “falsified.”⁴ However, the exit data provided in the Likert questionnaires, provided the researcher with the data necessary to affirm that the participants understood *laïcité* better after having followed the seminar.

Interview Results

Prior to the first session, the researcher led interviews with all the participants. The interview questions sought to gather in-depth data to complete the somewhat superficial results of the Likert questionnaire. After the seminar, the same interviews were led to compare the data between the entrance and exit of the seminar.

⁴ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*.

The researcher asked participants questions meant to give him material on how the participants feel about the way society perceives their faith. This was important for the researcher as it related to the way participants see *laïcité* influencing their religious practice and views in society. Participants perceived their faith to be seen by society in two major ways, five mentioned that there were various views and did not have the feeling that there was a general unified opinion in society about their faith. However, eight participants did mention that there were negative terms and views attached to their faith in French society. Words like “weak-minded,” and “dangerous” were used by these eight participants, some of them were the same who answered that there were various views in French society, but only underlined the negative views. Only one participant answered differently and affirmed that she thought that French society was indifferent toward her faith. These answers showed the general feeling that the participants had of a society that is opposed to their faith.

This sentiment was confirmed when participants were more specifically asked to share how they believed society perceives evangelism and sharing one’s faith. Seven answered that society perceived faith sharing negatively, with common terms like, “intruding,” “privacy invading,” and “aggressive.” Four affirmed the previous question that there were various views on the matter, and they did not have the feeling that there was a general unified opinion in society about sharing one’s faith. Again, the impression that society is opposed to their evangelism was dominant. This impression was of interest to the research as it confirms what was described in the literature review on the “cultural” approach to *laïcité*.⁵

⁵ Christopher Lizotte, “Rethinking Laïcité as a Geopolitical Concept,” *Modern and Contemporary France* (2023): 13.

The post-seminar interviews did not offer major changes in the answers as comments like rejection, indifference, and the idea that there are a variety of views in society were reiterated. This was not surprising as the researcher's goal was not to change how society perceives faith or how believers think society perceives their faith. The new elements that were of interest were that the researcher asked the participants to also answer the question from a legal perspective. When this occurred, participants always spoke of the legal perception of their faith and the sharing of their faith as neutral or indifferent. It is also important to note that when speaking of evangelism and *laïcité*, the idea of not imposing faith as a limit that society has for evangelism was mentioned a couple of times. Thus, the answers given show that progress was made in key area number one and reflected the acquisition of concepts such as the distinction between proselytism and evangelism that were shared in the seminar.

On the topic of society and faith at large, participants were also asked to share how they felt society treated various faiths, if there was inequality, and then more specifically, what they thought of restrictive laws towards Muslims. Participants had a wide variety of responses, three had no opinion or answer to give on how society treats the various religions in France. Two thought that society at large was indifferent to the various religions, one felt like religions were demeaned, and another treated as dangerous. Interestingly, three considered that Islam was favored in society while Christians were disfavored. And one participant thought the exact opposite, seeing Islam as persecuted by society for cultural and racial motives while Catholics and Jews were favored. These various views were interesting as they show a variety of perceptions of the society's treatment of other religions in France and the sentiment of inequality that the participants see. This is important as *laïcité* is supposed to guarantee this equality and supports Tobias Cremer's conclusion that Catholicism is favored in France and Islam considered

problematic.⁶ This was confirmed by the answers participants gave on Islam and the restrictive laws. Most participants expressed negative views toward Islam, with two individuals stating that *laïcité* should be harder on Muslims because they are politically motivated and don't respect women. Five participants believed in one way or another that there is inequality in France between Muslims and Christians, with Muslims having more rights and public institutions like schools being harsher with Christians than with Muslims, thus asking for harsher laws towards Muslims. Three individuals stated that they did not have a clear opinion because it was a complex question, two of the three participants simply did not know enough to answer, and one stated that it was too complex because of political and cultural considerations for him to answer. Only one participant stated that she believed it was okay for Muslims to wear veils and expressed disapproval toward the laws that limit Muslims as she thought these same laws would limit Christians. These comments show that the same feelings of inequality that were present in when they spoke of society's treatment of religions are not important for some of the participants when geared towards Islam. This again supports the literature review that presented Islam as the central motive behind the growth of the restrictive view of *laïcité*.⁷

These opinions persisted with six individuals affirming the idea of inequality between religions. Two that Islam was treated preferentially, and two that Catholicism was. One did not give any religion as an example, and another said that it depends on the local authorities such as mayors who sometimes favor some over others. Three thought there was no inequality, and two that all religions were equally forbidden to share their faith. Thus, the teaching that *laïcité* is

⁶ Tobias Cremer, "The Rise of the Post-Religious Right: Christianity and Secularism in the French Rassemblement National," *Party Politics* 29 (2023): 41.

⁷ Carol Ferrara, "Religious Education in French Private Schools: Categories, Conflations, and Inequities," *British Journal of Religious Education* (October 2022): 11.

supposed to guarantee equality did not drastically change the feeling of inequality participants had. This was reinforced by the comments made towards Islam and the restrictive laws aimed at it. Four had no opinion, three approved the laws, and one stated that they were not sure about their view on these matters and that it depended on various elements that they did not necessarily understand well. Those who approved such laws, however, did not all have the same reasoning, one of the three individuals placed the debate on moral grounds with the idea that the veil is a sign of oppression of women and believed this matter was not related to *laïcité*.

The answers given showed that participants still felt that even if the law and *laïcité* are supposed to guarantee equality, the neutrality of the state, and freedom of religion, there are still inequalities, with Islam and Catholicism being favored. This was not true of all the answers, some said that all religions were treated poorly, and some that there was no inequality. There was, however, a slight decrease in the answers of those who wanted to limit Islam's rights. These comments were often accompanied by the comment that the law wasn't being applied to the various religions with neutrality and equality and showed that most participants understood *laïcité* but still had the feeling of inequality.

This improvement in the understanding of *laïcité* is seen in the comments participants made before the seminar and those made after the seminar when asked to define *laïcité* and point out how they agreed and disagreed with the concept. When participants were asked to define *laïcité* in the pre-seminar interviews, they gave various definitions, five portrayed *laïcité* negatively, as banning God from society, a hindrance, something that forbids us from sharing our faith or publicly displaying our faith. Of those five, two also noted that it is what guarantees freedom of religion, which seems to indicate that these individuals believe that these restrictions are necessary for religious cohabitation. Three other participants described *laïcité* as what

guarantees religious freedom, one of them associating it with the doctrine of separation of church and state. Another two defined *laïcité* as the doctrine of separation of church and state. This variety of answers reinforced the conclusion that believers in the group were overall confused on the topic with a wide variety of answers.

When asked in what ways they agreed or disagreed with *laïcité*, five individuals answered that they agreed with *laïcité* because it offers religious freedom. One agreed with *laïcité* if it is aimed toward Islam, she thus saw *laïcité* as a limitation to religious expression rather than a freedom-giving concept. Three individuals said they agreed with *laïcité* as long as it guaranteed their religious freedom thus displaying suspicion toward a potential or actual change of the law. Finally, two individuals spoke of *laïcité* as good and guaranteeing religious freedom “in theory” but not in practice. Most participants disagreed with *laïcité* as something that hinders their faith. Six of them spoke of it as prohibiting evangelism, prohibiting evangelism in certain places, asking believers to live their faiths only at home, and demanding that there be no public displays of faith. Two participants even spoke of it as an atheistic tool to manipulate society and oppress minority views like Christians. Two individuals had no negative remarks, and one only said she regretted that the state did not financially help churches.

These comments were completely in line with the data collected so far and led the researcher to the similar conclusion that the participants had mixed views on *laïcité* that caused them to have contradictory opinions on *laïcité*. Indeed, how could a majority speak of *laïcité* as a guarantor of religious freedom and in the next question answer that it is a tool that is used against Christians and that bans evangelism? This confusion was also apparent when participants were asked to share experiences of tension between *laïcité* and evangelism. It was interesting to note that although many had just described *laïcité* in negative terms, six of the eleven participants had

not had any issues with *laïcité* in their life. This could be due to a lack of evangelism, or a gap between what they perceive in the media and society and what they experience. This would confirm what the literature implied in Chapter 2, that there is a great deal of influence of the media on the general understanding of what *laïcité* is.⁸

Again, when participants were given time to offer any concluding thoughts, only considered that it was important to note that there isn't a conflict between *laïcité* and religion, and one that *laïcité* needed to be defined and applied according to its historical meaning and not what it has become. While one lady affirmed that *laïcités'* harsh rules were sad but necessary because of Islam. One participant noted that this question matter was something that depended on everyone's perspective and standpoint and that it is a complex subject, and one said that she believed that Christians should be brave and witness despite *laïcité*. Six participants had no additional comments to make. These comments show that some participants saw *laïcité* as restrictive, something that is meant to hinder Islam, or must be overcome by believers, while others affirmed a libertarian view, one in the historical definition and one in their view of *laïcité* today. Just as with the Likert questionnaire, and the previous comments on *laïcité*, the participants displayed a variety of views and confusion on their understanding of *laïcité*.⁹

The post-seminar answers indicated that some of these confusions were resolved with participants affirming that the seminar helped them understand the subject matter better. Seven defined *laïcité* as a freedom-giving concept for religious practice and two of those that it was the separation of church and state. An additional four individuals only described the concept as the separation of church and state. The definitions given demonstrated that the participants had

⁸ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 105.

⁹ Ibid.

grown in their understanding of *laïcité* as all the participants positively portrayed *laïcité*, with a doubling of those who associated it with the doctrine of the separation of church and state, and three participants stating that they better understood the concept after this course. Negatives or suspicion were absent in the definitions that had been present in the pre-seminar definitions and demonstrated that the participants understood the association the researcher made between the doctrine of the separation of church and state, and the libertarian and historical definition of *laïcité*, as well as an understanding of its usefulness.¹⁰

This was confirmed by the various elements that the participants pointed out when asked to share what they agreed with and what they disagreed with. Participants showed through their answers progress in their understanding of *laïcité* as those who viewed it with suspicion in the pre-study (a total of 6) now saw it as a freedom-giving concept. A majority of participants saw *laïcité* as something they agreed with, with eight stating their agreement with the fact that it offers believers freedom, two with the fact that the state is neutral towards religions, and six mentioning it as beneficial for evangelism. The addition of comments such as: “*laïcité* is good for evangelism,” show that participants no longer saw *laïcité* as a threat, but instead as an ally. It is especially interesting to note the change that occurred when they were asked to share what they disagreed with in *laïcité*. It is here that this change is most notable, as the majority changed their opinion. Two participants stated that they disagreed with *laïcité* in the fact that it does impose some restrictions on evangelism in some areas such as school and work. One stated that she disagreed with the fact that *laïcité* was erasing part of France’s historical Christian landmarks and culture. Two said they did not disagree with *laïcité* in any way. The majority said that they did not disagree with *laïcité* but with the misuse of *laïcité* in the culture and media, these were a

¹⁰ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (London: J. Brook, 1796), 11.

total of eight individuals. Thus, the complaints that *laïcité* was preventing evangelism, removing God from society, and asking believers to hide their faith, changed into complaints against the misuse of *laïcité*. While a couple still had some negative views on the legal aspect of *laïcité*, the progress is clear, as participants now see *laïcité* as a tool that gives them freedom but that is being misused as the researcher had taught in the first session. When allowed to offer concluding thoughts, five participants said they better understood *laïcité* because of the seminar although one still rejected the doctrine of separation of church and state. While there were still some lingering issues for a few participants, the group's improvement in the general understanding of *laïcité* is clear and noticeable in the answers given to the interview questions.

In Session Data

In this section of the results chapter, the researcher will share the results gathered during the seminar sessions themselves. These sessions served as teaching and training times as well as focus groups. These allowed and encouraged participants to ask questions and engage in conversations on the day's topic.

Session Comments

Comments made in the sessions were confused in the first session with many comments displaying confusion and tension around what *laïcité* is. In session 1, there was an obvious tension in the minds of some individuals in the group between the cultural and historical considerations and the legal and institutional ones. One participant stated that she felt like Islam was replacing Christianity in France in population and in the fact that historical Christian makers were being removed, such as nativity scenes. At the same time, more and more mosques were being built. This feeling of replacement of the French cultural and historical identity by Islam

was mentioned in the literature review and confirmed by this comment, marking the identarian shift occurring in the understanding of *laïcité*.¹¹ Another sentiment expressed was that Islam has rights that Christianity doesn't have, that Christians aren't allowed to share their faith while people and society tolerate it with Muslims. Comments also covered the specific case of the French public schooling system and the laws regarding "public displays of faith" in schools.

The group's general confusion on the matter was obvious as they did not understand why the legal *laïcité* that they were learning about in the day's lesson was a libertarian and permissive one and yet it was also the motive behind the law in 2004 that forbids public displays of faith in school. Again, this focus on the schooling system was of no surprise to the researcher as once again, the literature review accurately pointed to the French public schooling system as a stronghold of this battle for *laïcité*.¹²

This confusion seemed to be resolved as in session 6, two participants said they felt like session 1 was useful and clarifying and six individuals out of the ten in attendance during the last session said they understood *laïcité* because of the seminar. And in session 3 a participant shared how her new understanding of *laïcité* helped her during a tense encounter during street evangelism. Even if one participant had issues with the doctrine of the separation of church and state in session 2, two participants in session 6 said they felt encouraged to evangelize as they now saw *laïcité* and the doctrine of the separation of church and state as aligned. This was a notable change as there was some confusion over the doctrine itself and its link to *laïcité*. One participant confused the separation of church and state and the separation of Christian and state,

¹¹ Christopher Lizotte, "*Laïcité* as Assimilation, *Laïcité* as Negotiation: Political Geographies of Secularism in the French Public School," *Political Geography* 77 (2020): 5.

¹² Christopher Lizotte, "The Prosaic Stateness of Secularism: Diversity, Incoherence and Divergence in the Application of *Laïcité*," *Geopolitics* (2023): 6.

she made comments that affirmed that today in France it is the atheists who are in control and who impose *laïcité*, she struggled to understand how *laïcité* could be a Christian concept and felt like it was surrendering to the atheists. She wondered why it shouldn't be Christians in power.¹³ Her comments reflect two elements that were noted in Chapter 2. First, they show the feeling that Jean-Marie Rouart denounced in his book *Ce Pays des Hommes sans Dieu* that the French society is becoming atheistic and that these atheists are using *laïcité* to promote an atheistic agenda. Her comments should be understood as what the researcher stated earlier, as a call for Christians to be in power and influence society, which is not in opposition to *laïcité*, and thus reflected her confusion between the separation of church and state and the separation of the Christian and the state. Her comments show that there was a need to teach the biblical doctrine of the separation of church and state and why it is a prerequisite for true evangelism¹⁴ and true salvation¹⁵ as was demonstrated in the theological foundations. The in-session comments of session 6 are indicators of the general improvement made the group on this question.

¹³ Jean-Marie Rouart, *Ce pays des Hommes sans Dieu* (Paris: Edition Bouquin, 2021), 154.

¹⁴ Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 11.

¹⁵ Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 209.

Key Area #2 Participant Understanding of Evangelism

Likert Questionnaire

Likert surveys were distributed to each participant, a week prior to the first session and were returned completed to the researcher upon entry in the first session of the seminar. The same questionnaire was given after the last session of the seminar for data comparison. Each survey was comprised of 12 questions on the matters of evangelism and *laïcité*.

When asked whether participants believed that evangelism is a responsibility for Christians, it was interesting to note that 73% of participants strongly agreed with the statement that believers should share their faith regularly even in public. 18% only agreed, 9% responded “neither,” while no one answered disagree or strongly disagree. Thus, it was clear that the group believed evangelism was a responsibility for Christians before the seminar. The post-seminar results only showed a stronger degree of agreement on the question but no dramatic change with 91% strongly agreeing, and 9% agreeing. This commitment to evangelism was also contextualized with *laïcité* and participants gave similar answers with similar progression measured in the post-seminar results as well. Most participants answered affirmatively to the statement that believers should evangelize even when *laïcité* opposes it. 36% strongly agreed, and 54% agreed while only 9% responded by neither agreeing nor disagreeing and no one disagreed or strongly disagreed. Thus, the researcher found in this answer that participants believed it was their duty to evangelize even in a difficult context like the one they faced with *laïcité*. The progress in the post-seminar results was that 91% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed, with 72% of them strongly agreeing. Only 9% disagreed. This shows a clear understanding of their responsibility to evangelize and their theoretical agreement with Christian

civil disobedience. It also showed their readiness to disobey the law when it goes against God's commands in conformity with the Bible's teaching in the book of Acts.¹⁶

This theoretical commitment to evangelism was also tested when participants were asked if they believed that faith was a private matter. This question was related to how some understand *laïcité* which in its cultural rendition supposedly labels faith as a private matter that should stay private. None answered that they strongly agreed with the statement and 18% that they agreed. 18% answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed, 54% that they disagreed, and only 9% strongly disagreed. Therefore, there was a majority that agreed with the biblical view that faith is not a private matter. However, the results were not as strong as they were on the questions of evangelism. Improvement here was much stronger, and those who strongly disagreed went from 9% of the group to 82% of the group. Another point of improvement is that the 18% of participants who agreed with the statement and 9% of the 18% who answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed all changed their answers to either "disagree" or "strongly disagree." This shows how participants improved in their understanding of the responsibility of sharing their faith and how they perceive faith and their sharing of it in the public sphere (See fig. 4.5 and 4.6).

¹⁶ John B. Polhill, *Acts*, vol. 26, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 169.

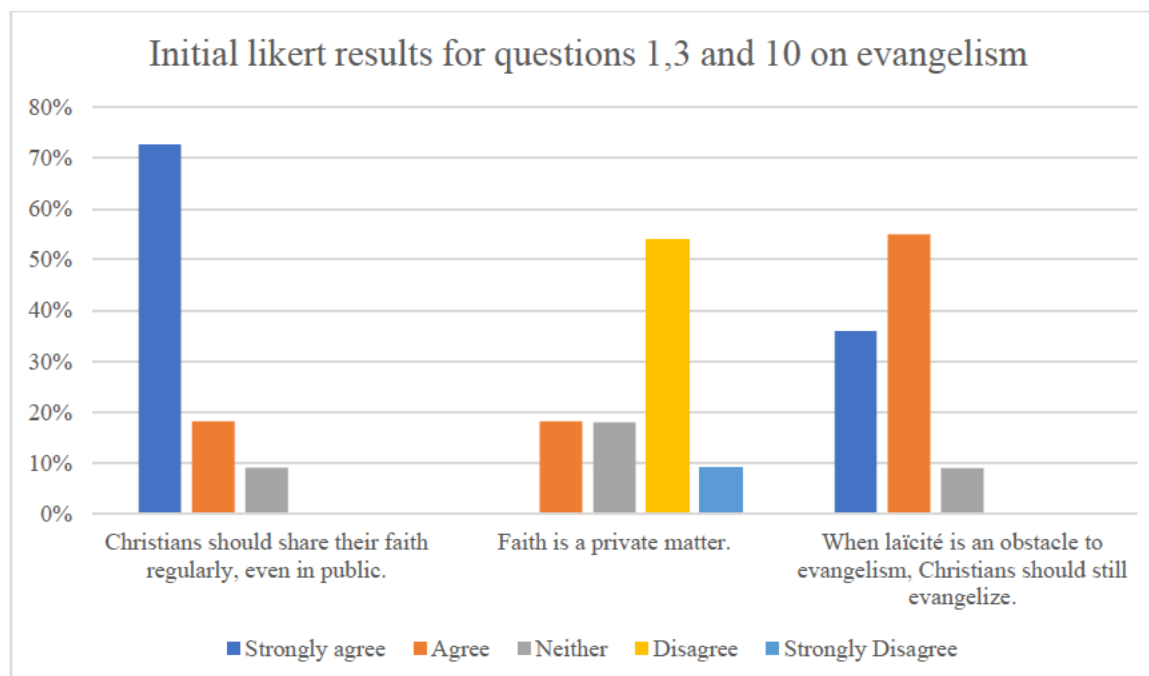


Figure 4.5 Initial Likert results on questions 1, 3, and 10 on evangelism

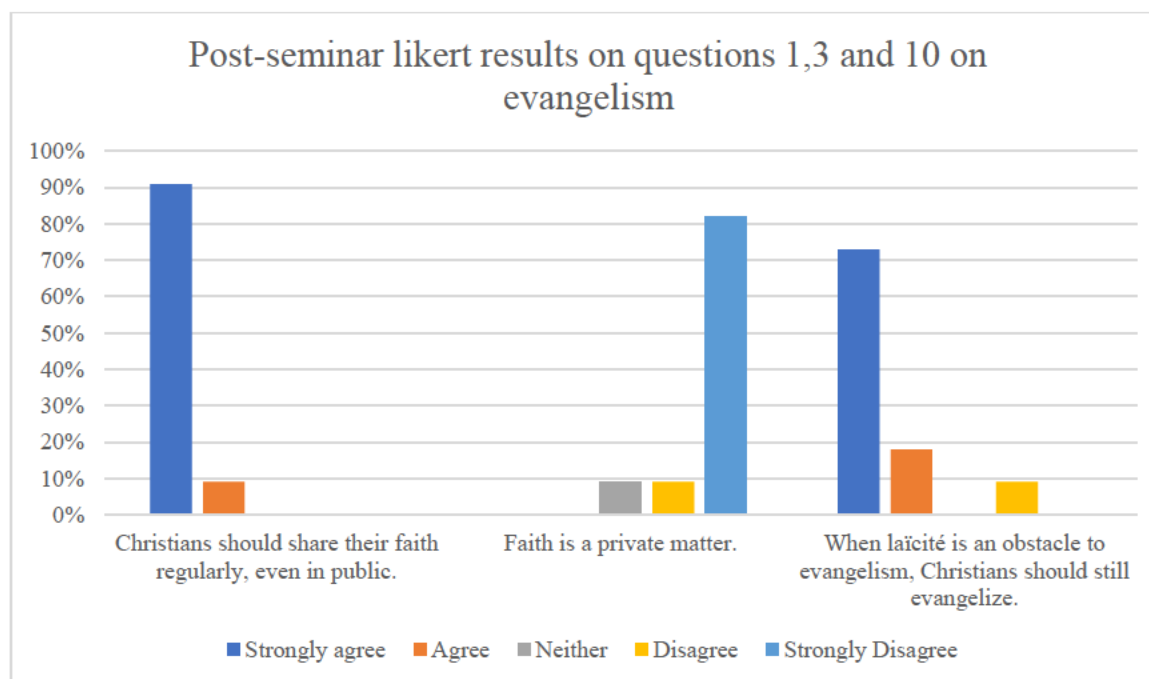


Figure 4.6 Post-seminar Likert results on questions 1, 3, and 10 on evangelism

Interview Results

Prior to the first session, the researcher led interviews with all the participants. The interview questions sought to gather in-depth data to complete the somewhat superficial results of the Likert questionnaire. After the seminar, the same interviews were led to compare the data between the seminar's entrance and exit.

The researcher wanted to evaluate if participants believed evangelism was, its content, and how they believed believers should engage in evangelism. The researcher offered the participants the freedom to develop their ideas on evangelism which gave the researcher a good idea of the understanding of evangelism in the group. The researcher asked participants if they could explain what evangelism is. Common themes emerged from the interviews, with the answer “sharing the good news” most frequently given. Other answers like “bringing souls to Christ,” “spreading His Word,” or “sharing our faith” were given. All participants had at least one of these elements in their answers. Only one participant gave an answer that seemed a little weak by stating that it was spreading God’s Word. While this is not entirely false, as the gospel is part of God’s Word it did not contain elements that referred to faith, or salvation, unlike the other answers. In the post seminar interviews, participants had similar answers with seven out of the eleven participants stating that it was the proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ. One was the sharing of one’s faith, three that it was leading people to Christ. Other themes such as using our testimonies when witnessing and the obligation or responsibility to evangelize, were also mentioned, five times for the latter and three times for the former. The use of testimonies in the post-study interviews was a new element that indicated that participants had learned to use their testimonies as tools for evangelism. The use of the term responsibility was also new and indicated that participants had integrated through the seminar that they called to evangelize. This

shows that participants improved in their understanding of evangelism with a new tool and a better understanding of the obligation to evangelize.

These answers were completed with answers on how they would engage in evangelism. Participants answered that evangelism is done spontaneously when opportunities arise in a person's day in both interviews. Only one participant admitted not sharing the gospel and not knowing how to as he is a young believer in the pre-study interview. However, using testimonies was a new element linked to Session 3 that stayed with the participants. Street evangelism was also mentioned a few times, and this was a new element, perhaps the result of the sharing times when participants had gone on street evangelism and shared their experiences. In addition, the one participant that had answered that he did not know, now answered like the other participants. Thus, there was some progress in the answers to this question, but no radical change. When participants were given the opportunity to share any additional thoughts at the end of the interview in the post intervention interviews six participants answered that they felt more equipped for evangelism and that this was useful in preparing believers for evangelism. Four said they felt free to share the gospel after the seminar as it had removed apprehensions and questions they had on evangelism and *laïcité*. Thus, participants provided comments that show improvement in key area number 2 and demonstrate that this seminar gave them more freedom and assurance to evangelize and a better understanding of the responsibility of believers to evangelize.

In Session Data

Session Comments

No negative comments were made on the necessity to evangelize during the sessions. Many comments during the sessions were made on the method of evangelism and how to

evangelize in sessions 3, 4, and 5. Participants progressed in this area, and their questions were answered as in session 6, nine of the ten said they felt better equipped and prepared for evangelism. Six out of the ten participants also said they better understood the difference between evangelism and proselytism even if there were some discussions on the question during the session. Participants also shared their approval of this distinction and their approval of the testimony approach to evangelism that was shared in the third session. Finally, participants shared that they enjoyed the session's practical elements that they found useful for evangelism.

Key Area #3 Participant Practical Evangelism in the Context of *Laïcité*

Likert Questionnaire

Likert surveys were distributed to each participant, a week prior to the first session and were returned completed to the researcher upon entry in the first session of the seminar. The same questionnaire was given after the last session of the seminar for data comparison. Each survey was comprised of 12 questions on the matters of evangelism and *laïcité*.

The researcher asked participants practical questions on evangelism, in addition to the theoretical ones presented earlier. This was done by asking the participants if they evangelize, if they know how to evangelize when in a *laïcité* context and if they even know how to evangelize at all. Participants were asked if they were involved if they were active in their evangelistic efforts prior to the seminar. Participants gave a variety of answers to this question, with 27% affirming that they strongly agree with the statement that they regularly share the gospel, and 18% agreeing. 9% answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, 9% answered that they disagreed with the statement and 36% that they strongly disagreed. Based on these answers, only half of the participants regularly evangelized prior to the seminar, however after the seminar the results soared participants who answered that they strongly agreed with the

statement doubled from 27% to 54% after the seminar, and there was a 9% increase for the “agree” answer. Another interesting point to note is the absence of participants answering they strongly disagreed with the veracity of the statement, with only one answering they neither agreed nor disagreed, and one disagreeing. This clearly demonstrates progress in the practice of evangelism.

Not only were participants asked to share if they were active in their evangelism, but they were also asked if they felt equipped to share the gospel and if this was still true of their evangelistic skill in the context of *laïcité*. Participants were first asked if they knew how to share the gospel in order to determine their feeling of readiness prior to introducing the complicating element of *laïcité* so that the results of the following question could be more clearly linked to *laïcité* itself. 27% individuals affirmed that they strongly agreed with the statement that they know how to share the gospel, 36% agreed with it, 18% answered they neither agreed nor disagreed, 9% disagreed and another 9% strongly disagreed. A majority of participants answered that they knew how to evangelize but multiple participants did not know how to fulfill this command. When the element of *laïcité* was introduced, results surprisingly only varied slightly, with 18% participants strongly agreeing, 45% agreeing and 27% participants answering neither, while only 9% strongly disagreed. The change in responses was somewhat surprising for the researcher as one participant who did not know how to share the gospel in the previous question had now answered that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that they knew how to share the gospel in the context of *laïcité*. The decrease in participants answering “strongly agree” that was recorded between the two scenarios and in the increase of participants answering “agree” was not surprising and showed the researcher that there was indeed an additional difficulty for believers to share in the context of *laïcité*. They felt they could still evangelize but

not as well without *laïcité*. Once again, the results showed that participants knew how to evangelize in the context of *laïcité*. Still, multiple participants did not know how to fulfill this command in that context (see fig. 4.7).

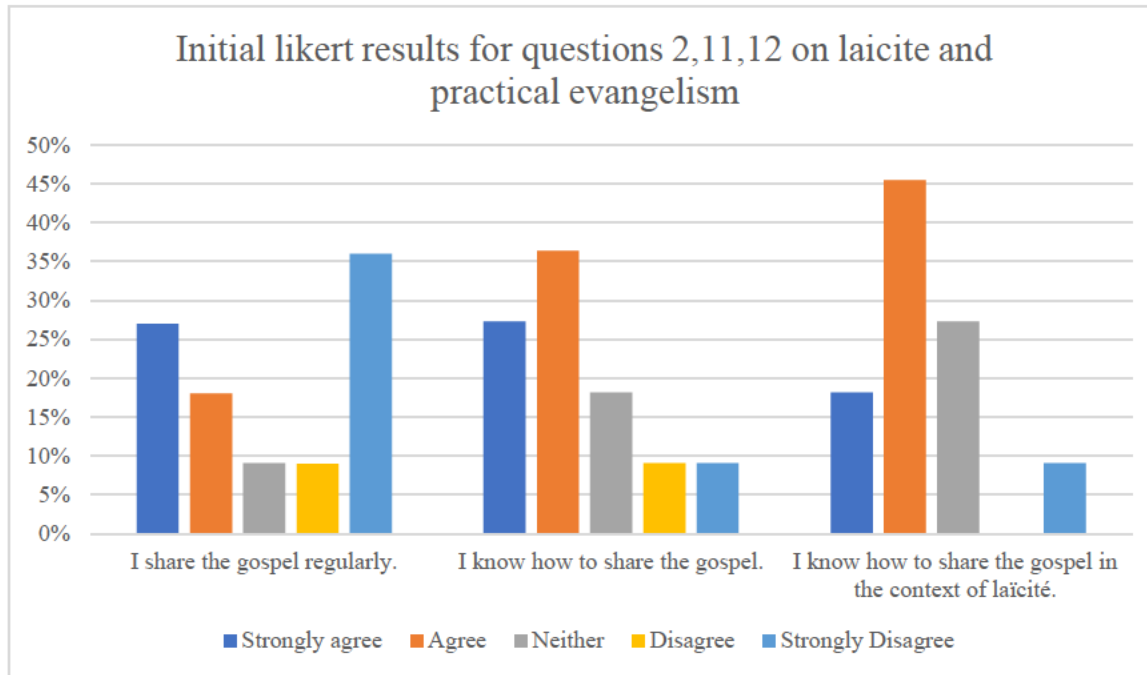


Figure 4.7 Initial Likert results for questions 2, 11, and 12 on *laïcité* and practical evangelism

The results in this area after the seminar, were spectacular, with 72% of the group affirming that they strongly agreed with the statement that they know how to share the gospel, and 28% agreed with it. The change is obvious as 100% of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed, with 72% strongly agreeing with both statements and there were no negative or neutral answers. The results were identical for the *laïcité* scenario and show that participants clearly progressed in their ability to evangelize (see fig. 4.8).

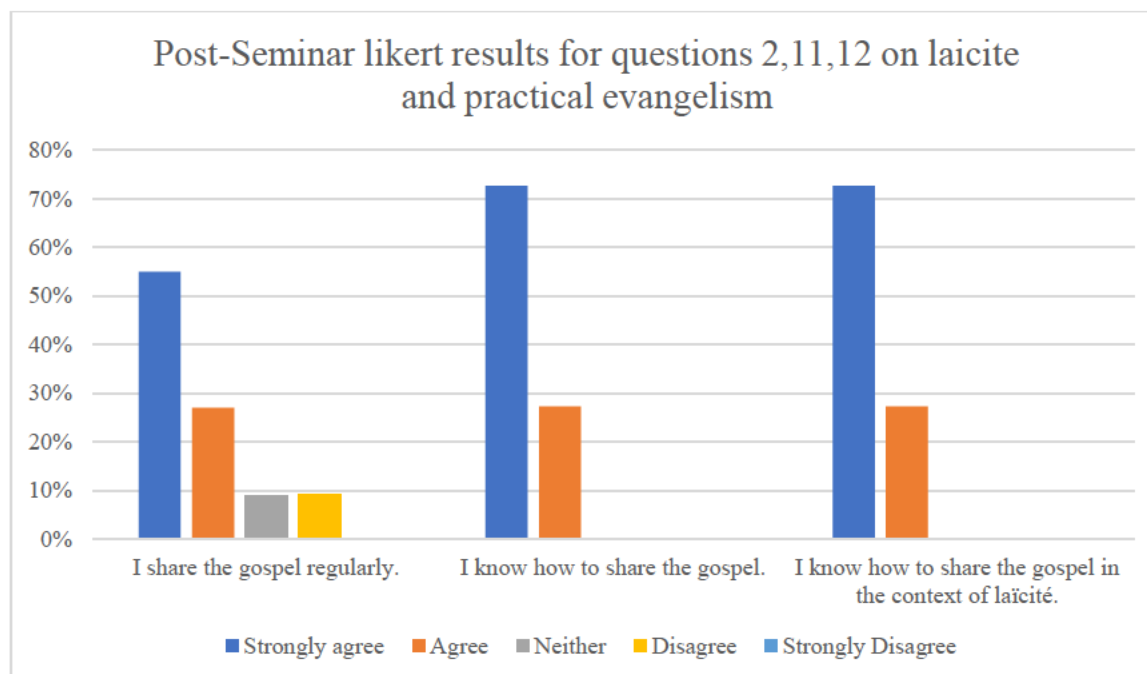


Figure 4.8 Post-Seminar Likert results for questions 2, 11, and 12 on *laïcité* and practical evangelism

Interview Results

Prior to the first session, the researcher led interviews with all the participants. The interview questions sought to gather in-depth data to complete the somewhat superficial results of the Likert questionnaire. After the seminar, the same interviews were led to compare the data between the seminar's entrance and the seminar and the exit.

When the researcher asked participants in the pre-seminar interviews to share stories of times when *laïcité* was an obstacle in their evangelism, very few stories were shared, which could have indicated that maybe there was a lack of evangelistic efforts from the group. While 45% of the group shared stories, only 36% of these involved evangelism. The few stories that were shared showed a various ways to share the gospel in the everyday lives of these individuals with an element of spontaneity, which would later be presented as a tool for testimony sharing in

the seminar. While this data is not necessarily conclusive on the evangelistic output of the group it is nonetheless an indicator of the intensity in the involvement of the participants in evangelism.

In addition, in the post-seminar interviews, when the researcher allowed the group to share their thoughts, six of the eleven participants commented that this seminar helped them in their evangelistic zeal and practice with useful advice, tools, and group dynamics. This demonstrates growth in the third key area of study. There were few elements in the interviews that provided much information on the evangelistic output or readiness of the group. However, the data that was collected did show a growth in the practice of evangelism.

In Session Data

Session Comments

A few elements that were shared during the sessions, showed the researcher that the participants were both active and more confident in their evangelism as a result of the seminar. In session 3 for example, a participant said she felt more confident during an evangelistic outreach when faced with a man who told her she had to stop because of *laïcité* as she said she knew he was wrong, and she was exercising her rights. When teaching on the necessity to share the gospel spontaneously, many comments were made about how in the past two weeks they had been using various elements of their life stories and testimonies to share the gospel and how they were already being spontaneous in seizing various opportunities. Participants seemed to really enjoy sharing their experiences of spontaneous evangelism with people around them. This shows that the participants were more equipped and were practicing evangelism and their new approaches to evangelism.

In session 6 after the recap of session 3, the researcher also asked the group whether the participants felt more equipped on testimonies to share the gospel. Nine of the ten participants

said they felt better equipped and prepared for evangelism, with two participants (both new believers) saying that this was the first time they engaged in evangelism. After the recap of session 5, participants shared that they saw the practical exercises as very useful. The practical elements that were mentioned, were the “sharing time” and “how to” times that they believed were useful, and edifying. This was important for the researcher as it confirmed the theoretical foundations that presented the power of accountability and this was pointed out by the participants who spoke of a group dynamic that encouraged them.¹⁷ In addition, this model of practical teaching on how to share the gospel through one’s testimony, and also implementing a group dynamic with accountability and prayer was based on the T4T model and the poser of the small groups model¹⁸ that was presented in the theoretical foundations.¹⁹ One participant commented that she felt motivated every morning to think about her day and what opportunities might arise during the day for spontaneous evangelism. At the end of the session, one participant said she felt more equipped, and another that the seminar had removed “barriers” for her evangelistic efforts. Finally, two shared that they believed this was a seminar that was needed, that should be extended to the whole church and to other churches in France. With some crossover between key areas two and three, it is noteworthy to repeat that nine of the ten participants in attendance during session 6, said they felt better equipped and prepared for evangelism. Two participants said that they had shared the gospel for the first time because of the seminar. One participant said she felt like some barriers were lifted and she was every day seeking new opportunities for evangelism.

¹⁷ Andrew Torrance, “Accountability as a Virtue,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 34 (2021): 314.

¹⁸ Harley Atkinson, Joshua Rose, “The Small-Group Ministry Movement of the Last Four Decades,” *Christian Education Journal* 17, 3 (2020): 557.

¹⁹ Smith and Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution*, 94–102.

Sharing Time

The first session to include a “sharing time” was session 4. In session 4, nine out of the ten participants present had shared the gospel. Five with the person they committed to sharing the gospel with during the previous session. The four other participants were unable to share the gospel with the person they planned to share it with but seized opportunities with others during the week. Another important element was that six of the ten participants present mentioned how they shared their testimonies during these gospel conversations. Three of those testimonies seized opportunities to share how God helped them during times of personal loss because the individuals they were conversing with had recently experienced loss. Only one person did not share the gospel or their testimony with anyone nor did he attempt to do so.

In the second “sharing time,” four out of the eleven participants had shared the gospel with someone during the week, and five tried to share the gospel with someone during the week. Three shared their testimony and have gospel conversations with the person they had committed to try to share the gospel with. The participants used recent events in their lives as well as common points with the people they were conversing with to share their testimonies and the gospel. A few had committed during the previous week to going on street evangelism to try to share their testimony. These three individuals had different experiences, two of them had great difficulty and although they tried did not manage to share the gospel with anyone. They did give tracts, however and put themselves in a situation of discomfort with the intention to share the gospel. The third participant who committed to go out on street evangelism had a great interaction with a lady whom she had already met in the past and she was able to share her testimony as they had similar life experiences. Not unlike the two participants who struggled during street evangelism, two others had committed to sharing the gospel, one with a friend and one with a customer at work, and both experienced rejections. One participant wasn’t present

during the previous session; however, she did try to share the gospel with friends during the week but had like others closed hearts to deal with. Finally, two other participants had no interactions or attempts to interact during the week, one had committed to trying with a co-worker, and another had not committed the previous week because she had no idea.

In the seminar's last “sharing time”, the participants had to report how their evangelistic efforts fared during the week. The evangelistic efforts were different from the previous weeks as this week, participants were asked to spontaneously share the gospel and seize opportunities as they came. However, participants were also given the opportunity to continue with the planned model they had been using during the previous weeks and work to share the gospel with the person they intended to share the gospel with. In this week’s session, only one out of the ten participants who were in attendance did not share or attempt to share the gospel with anyone, even though the participant did say that they had tried to look for opportunities. Seven out of the ten participants were able to share the gospel during the week. Three participants were able to share the gospel with the person they had committed to trying to share the gospel with during the previous session. Two of those three participants continued working with the same person since the first commitment time. One participant out of those three also seized an opportunity for evangelism during the week. In addition, three participants, the same as in the previous week decided to go do street evangelism and all three had opportunities they seized in that specific context. One of the three participants was even able to share his testimony with someone during that time. The seventh participant to share the gospel during the week seized two opportunities during her week and was able to share her testimony and the gospel with two individuals. She was excited to share that the husband of one of the individuals she had shared within the previous weeks contacted her with questions. Finally, two participants tried to seize opportunities

without success, one with a homeless lady and one with a man at work in a conversation on the situation in the Gaza Strip.

The sharing time results showed an overall implication of the participants in evangelistic efforts. This effort was marked by regularity and using the tools taught in the sessions, such as testimonies and spontaneously sharing the gospel by recognizing and seizing opportunities in everyday life. The use of testimonies was promoted by the researcher in the seminar and was presented in the theoretical foundations in Chapter 2 as a powerful tool for evangelism in the French context of *laïcité*.²⁰ The two figures below show the results of each session's sharing times and use of testimonies in witnessing opportunities.

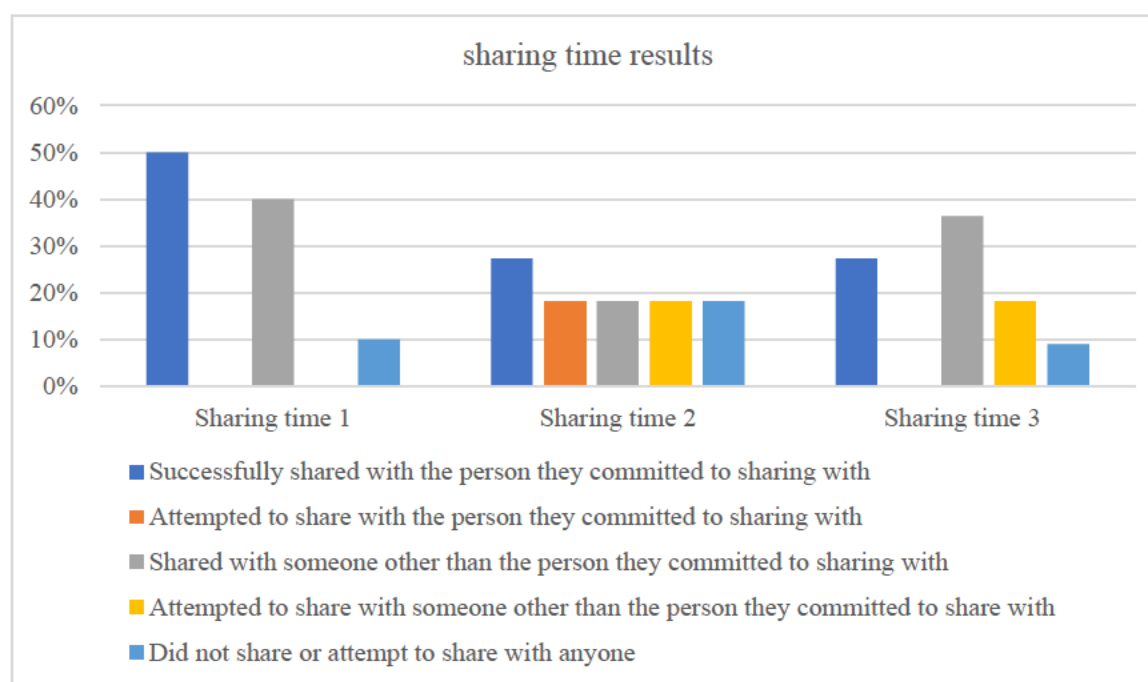


Figure 4.9 Sharing time results

²⁰ Sam Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 174.

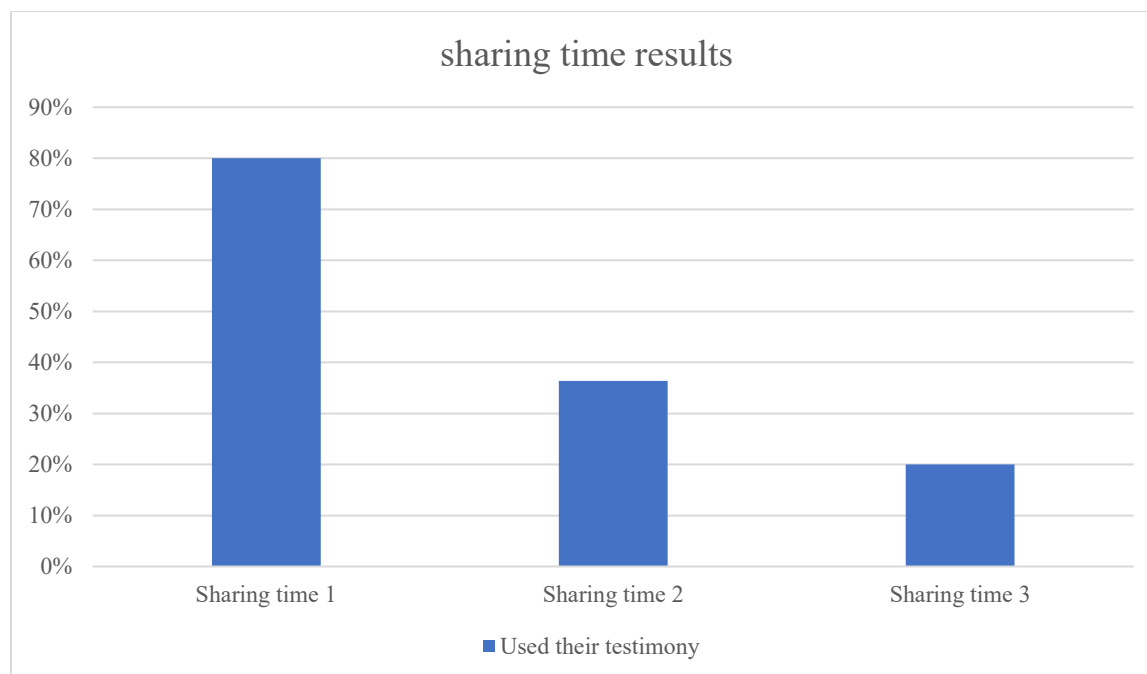


Figure 4.10 Use of testimonies in gospel sharing

The results gathered by the sharing time of each session show that in the first sharing time, 90% of the participants in attendance had either been successful in sharing the gospel or their testimony or had tried to do so but had experienced refusal to engage in the conversation. In the second sharing time that number dropped to 73% but returned to 90% in the last session. This shows that participants attempted to apply the seminar and embraced the responsibility to evangelize. Participants often noted during these times that they shared how God worked in their lives with those having similar life experiences and thus used their testimonies to share the gospel (see fig. 4.10).

Summary of Results

In this section of Chapter 4, the researcher will summarize the results in each key area of the study in order to give the reader a clear picture of the effectiveness of the intervention in solving the problem that the believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan were ill-

equipped to evangelize in the *laïcité* context. The purpose of this DMIN action research project was to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*. This researcher believed that this could be done if believers were equipped to face *laïcité* through an “Evangelistic *Laïcité*” seminar, then they would adjust their understanding to overcome the obstacles of *laïcité* to evangelism.

Key Area #1 Participant Understanding of *Laïcité*

It is clear from all the data collected by this researcher that key area number one was significantly impacted. Answers to the Likert questions 3 through 9, comments made in sessions 3 and 6, and answers given in the interview questions 3–7 and 9–11 show improvement in the understanding the participants have of what *laïcité* is in the law, their rights, how *laïcité* is supported by the biblical doctrine of the separation of church and state, and how there is a cultural misuse of the concept to pressure believers. Although there were some negative results such as a dissenting comment on the doctrine of the separation of church and state, and two answers to question 9 that seemed to imply a misunderstanding of *laïcité*, it is safe to say that this intervention helped participants improved significantly in this first key area. Thus, this researcher believes that the intervention was successful in furnishing the participants with a counter-narrative to the one being pushed in the culture. This is in line with the view that faith should transform society as was shared in the theoretical foundations, and the goal that the believers at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan would become the “primary agents of cultural renewal.”²¹

²¹ James R. Estep and Jonathan H. Kim, *Christian Formation: Integrating Theology and Human Development* (Nashville, TN: B&H Books, 2010), 217.

Key Area #2 Participant Understanding of Evangelism

Data collected by the researcher through Likert questions 1–3 and 10–12, through in-session comments in session six, and in interview questions 1, 2 and 10 show that participants improved in their overall understanding of evangelism. Although this area was not the weakest in the pre-study data, progress is still significant and demonstrates the effectiveness of the intervention to help believers integrate their obligation to evangelize, learn how to evangelize, and what to say, and therefore grow in key area number two. The biblical teaching as well as the practical application made by the researcher on the examples of the apostles sharing their testimony of what they saw Jesus accomplish and teach, was effective in transmitting a tool for the participants in their evangelism as well as a method to evangelize through testimony sharing.²²

Key Area #3 Participant Practical Evangelism in the Context of *Laïcité*

Results seen through the answers to the Likert questions 3, 11 and 12, as well as in-session data such as sharing time results and comments in session 6, and interview question 11 all show that participants improved in their perception of their ability to evangelize and their practice of evangelism. These improvements show that the intervention was effective in creating growth for the participants in key area number 3. Elements presented in the theoretical foundations were once again confirmed in this intervention, showing that a blend of the transmission model of teaching, as well as the constructivist model, was useful and effective.²³

²² Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World*, 174.

²³ Lindsey Wilkerson, “Constructivist Curriculum for Christian Transformation,” *Christian Education Journal* (2021): 34.

This model was in part borrowed by the researcher from the T4T model and confirms its usefulness.²⁴

²⁴ Smith and Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship ReRevolution*, 189.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

“*Laïcité* initially meant the separation of Church and State. It has eventually come to mean the separation of Church and Society.”¹ This citation from Jasper Doomen, in his article so powerfully entitled “Ousting Some Religious Elements while Introducing Others, Democracy and Security,” sets the tone for the French believer in his evangelistic efforts in France. Indeed, today in France, *laïcité* has become for so many a weapon against religion and public displays of faith. Therefore, the problem was that believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan were ill-equipped to evangelize in the *laïcité* context. This researcher’s goal in this project was to provide believers with a counter-narrative and a set of tools to assist them in their difficult duty of evangelizing a country where a new *laïcité* is emerging. The purpose of this DMIN action research project was to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*.

The focus of this research was to determine whether the intervention model described in Chapter 3 would be an effective means of equipping believers of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan in their evangelism in the context of *laïcité* in France. In Chapter 1, the researcher presented the context of the research, the problem, and the purpose of the research as well as his hypothesis on a method to solve the said problem. The problem that was advanced was that the researcher believed that the believers of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan were unequipped to evangelize in the context of *laïcité*. *Laïcité* is such a contested term with a

¹ Jasper Doomen, “Ousting Some Religious Elements while Introducing Others, Democracy and Security,” *Laïcité* 19, 3 (2023): 290.

cultural, political, and intellectual battle being waged around its meaning and implementation. Because of this confusion, believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan were not only unequipped but were also intimidated and pressured not to evangelize.

The researcher believed that it was important for the participants in this research project to be equipped with a “biblical *laïcité*” that would inform them of what *laïcité* is in the law and contrast that with what is being promoted in the media and in the mouths of politicians. Chapter 2 largely aimed to demonstrate this double understanding of *laïcité* as a libertarian concept in the law and a restrictive concept in the culture. The researcher believed that it was important that believers understand what is happening to the concept of *laïcité* and be able to promote the libertarian view in the hope of influencing and changing collective perceptions on the matter. This defense of a libertarian view was done with the support of the biblical doctrine of the separation of church and state which clearly supports the libertarian view. In chapter two the researcher defended this doctrine as an appropriate support for the libertarian view of *laïcité* and used this defense in the intervention itself. However, the equipping of the participants with a biblical *laïcité* was not limited to these considerations, it was also necessary that the researcher include in this biblical *laïcité* the concept of evangelism as it is the main area affected by this restrictive *laïcité* and its consequences.

It was necessary to explain evangelism, present it as a requirement for believers, and it was also necessary that the participants be prepared to evangelize in a culture that is embracing a restrictive view of *laïcité*. To do this, the researcher believed that testimony sharing was the best method. This evangelistic method was based on various works presented in the theoretical foundations in Chapter 2 and gave the researcher tools for the intervention itself. This method was not only taught, but as the works in the theoretical foundations suggested, it was also

practiced in session with tools and exercises meant to equip the participants for evangelism.

Thus, the intervention included teaching sessions and practical sections within each session with testimony writing exercises and weekly commitments to go and evangelize with the tools they were given.

In this fifth chapter, this researcher will conclude his research and share with the reader the implications of the results gathered and analyzed in Chapter 4. He will share with the reader the applications of the results he gathered to the ministry, the limitations of the said research as well as the potential for further research on the matter.

Research Implications

The intervention plan designed and described in Chapter 3 addressed the problem that believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan were ill-equipped to evangelize in the *laïcité* context. This intervention yielded positive results that have implications for ministries at large on the issue at hand as well as on other issues.

This intervention was led within the context of *laïcité* and its impact on evangelism for believers. When analyzing the data collected in the study, it becomes clear that cultural pressure and media propaganda can cause a great deal of damage to believers in their walk with the Lord. The initial results in the pre-intervention answers show that this negative cultural environment has shaped their view of evangelism. The intervention results on this issue show that it is important for leaders in the local church to address the issues they see arising in their society and that affect various areas of the believers' walk with the Lord. Interventions like this one should be led on this issue in France and will yield positive results as pastors assist their flocks in seeing things as they are and not as the world wants them to see. In sum, pastors are called to help their flocks see through the lies and the pressures they face and help them emerge out of the fog and

more faithfully follow the Lord. This was what the researcher sought to do and the intervention lifted the veil of confusion on the concept of *laïcité*. In the case of this intervention, one participant said she felt like barriers to evangelism had been removed for her and that she felt freer to share the gospel because of this seminar. This can only be done if the problem is well defined and understood by the leader, and confronted with the word of God as well as the law when it is aligned with the Word as is the case in the present study on *laïcité* and evangelism.

This action research project also showed the researcher that there is a need in most churches and with most believers for assistance and training in how to evangelize. Most believers, at least the ones involved in the research, understand that they are supposed to evangelize but have no idea how to evangelize. They hear sermon after sermon on the topic but as this research displayed some of them have no clue how to evangelize in their everyday lives. It was also clear that believers needed not only to know how to evangelize but also to remove the pressure of not knowing what to say and feeling unequipped. Interventions like this one are needed as they show that believers need practical assistance in evangelism. They need to know that they are equipped with the best tool possible to evangelize and that is their own testimony of God's work in their lives and the gospel's effect on their hearts. This reality is especially true in the context of *laïcité* as participants are frequently reminded by the media and culture that their faith is not something that should be shared. Knowing that testimonies are a tool for evangelism that accommodates this cultural pressure relieves the believer of the fear and pressure to conform. All the participants said that they felt equipped to share the gospel in the context of *laïcité* because of the research, which means that believers can be equipped and assisted in evangelism in a difficult context like that of *laïcité*. Thus, this research implies that believers in

the context of *laïcité* need assistance in knowing how to share the gospel and in removing some of the pressure they feel about evangelism and the cultural *laïcité*.

One more implication of this action research project is that believers perceive evangelism as intrusive or believe others perceive it as intrusive and aggressive. This view was sometimes expressed in answers that participants gave on how they thought society perceived evangelism. Participants really appreciated the distinction made between proselytism and evangelism. Presenting evangelism as making an offer without pressuring the person to accept the Lord, and presenting evangelism as seizing an opportunity to share their own story without forcing the other to engage in a conversation with the believer was a real encouragement to the participants. One even said she felt relieved and another that he was glad to be in a church that thinks like that. This distinction and the method of evangelism proposed were seen as respectful of others and fair. Participants and more largely believers in France are unfortunately used to seeing some pressure tactics employed by Jehovah's Witnesses and Muslims as well as political activists. The implication of this research in this study area is important for believers in France as participants testified in their answers and comments that it was a relief and, therefore, something that encouraged them in their evangelism. Not only is this useful for believers but it is also a distinction and approach to evangelism that allows the believer to be faithful in evangelizing and yet adapt to the culture and preserve a positive testimony. This researcher believes that the research shows that believers will benefit from the teaching of this distinction and the implementation of approaches that are evangelistic and not proselytism.

Finally, it is also important to note that this research implies that participants even if they are not opposed to evangelism and believe it is a good and biblical command still need a doctrinal encouragement to obey and to understand what it is that God has called them to share.

All the implications that were mentioned earlier are solutions that contribute to the correction of a misunderstanding that participants had of evangelism. They did not completely understand their rights and caved to the pressure of the cultural *laïcité* because of an incomplete theology of evangelism. They did not feel equipped to share as they did not completely understand what it was, they were sharing. And they did not know how to approach others with the gospel because they had a negative impression of the act in itself as they did not have a thorough understanding of the biblical mandate and the examples of the Lord and His disciples.

Research Applications

As was seen in the literature review, there is a war raging in France over the place religion should have in society. This war on the topic of *laïcité* is deeply concerning for believers and for their leaders. Not only is it concerning for believers and leaders, but it is also a hindrance in the lives of believers who want to follow Christ fully in their evangelistic efforts. However, the literature in France among evangelicals is very limited on the topic, usually only informing believers of what the law says and their rights.

The results of this intervention show that solutions are available for believers who want to evangelize and remain faithful to the Lord's command to proclaim the good news while living in peace with all men and being sensitive to the deep societal issues shaping France's new *laïcité*. This researcher believes that this seminar should be applied to two key areas of church life in order to assist churches and believers in the context of *laïcité* in France. In fact, the researcher is not the only one to believe that this research can and should be applied in other churches in France. Two of the seminar participants shared that they believed this seminar should be applied in other churches in France.

Offering a Counter-Narrative

Counter-narratives are popular in our day with critical race theory making it a foundational tool in the promotion of counter-narratives that challenge the master narrative.² However, unlike what critical theorists promote, this researcher's counter-narrative is not based on the sharing of a different perspective than that of the master narrative, it is in fact a call for the return to the master narrative that is dying at the hands of an emergent master narrative not based on the facts of the law and the historical approach to *laïcité*, but based on the perception of a part of the population that is well supported by the media.

It is important that believers and leaders in local churches in France understand that the narrative that is being promoted in France around *laïcité* is not biblical and is not even legally accurate. Believers need to understand that they are not required to conform to this new narrative and that they should follow the Bible and rest in the assurance that the law is on their side. When this is understood and assimilated, participants grow in their confidence and freedom to evangelize because they now know that opponents are not justified in stopping them. One participant shared this feeling of confidence and freedom with the group in session 3. She explained that she did not let a man claiming she was not allowed to evangelize because of *laïcité* hinder her in her street evangelism because she knew his narrative was false. In addition, the reinforcement of the biblical authority and Christian obedience to God encouraged believers to buy into this biblical counter-narrative and participants demonstrated this same resolve by answering in question 10 of the Likert questionnaire that they agreed or strongly agreed that when *laïcité* is an obstacle to evangelism, Christians should still evangelize. Promoting a biblical

² Richard Miller, Katrina Liu and Arnetha F. Ball, "Critical Counter-Narrative as Transformative Methodology for Educational Equity," *Review of Research in Education* Volume 44, Issue 1 (2020).

counter-narrative that is also supported in the law is a fantastic tool to encourage believers in their walk with the Lord and can be applied to other churches in France on this topic as well as on other topics that fit the description. This leads to an additional implication of this research which is that believers by understanding what *laïcité* is can, not only change their own views but also improve the general understanding of Christian theology with the separation of church and state being a central element of the believers' view of *laïcité* and evangelism and therefore promote an alternate biblical view of *laïcité* that can influence the society at large in France in contrast with the very negative view that is associated with Islam in France.

Teaching How to Evangelize

While many believers agree that evangelism is a good thing that they should be doing in their everyday lives, it is also true that many of those believers have no idea how to evangelize. Evangelism is a daunting act in a believer's life and the first step is often the highest and hardest. Equipping believers with tools to evangelize is necessary and this researcher believes that it is needed. "Evangelism is simply telling "your" story and sharing the good news of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."³ This is exactly what the researcher shared with the group during the seminar and promoted testimony sharing as the best tool for evangelism in the context of *laïcité*. Evangelism is not done in a cultural vacuum and the researcher believed that believers should be sensitive to this culture if they want to share the gospel effectively. The International Mission Board gives 8 guidelines for sharing the gospel cross-culturally and lists contextualizing the gospel and learning the things that shouldn't be done as key guidelines.⁴ In the postmodern

³ Steven E. Adams, "Metamorphosis of the Traditional Church: The Hybrid Church Model" (Dmin Diss., Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, 2023), 99, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

⁴ <https://www.imb.org/2017/01/20/8-guidelines-crossing-cultures/>.

society, sharing a testimony is contextualizing the gospel in the society's preferred language and adapting to the cultural don't of the restrictive *laïcité*. This was particularly pointed out in session 3 of the seminar and participants shared how they felt equipped to evangelize in the post-study Likert questionnaires with 100% of the participants agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that they felt equipped to share the gospel in the context of *laïcité*.

In addition, training the believers to know and understand how to approach people is also key. They may know what to say but not how to initiate or create the opportunity to say what they have to say. Pastor Easley shares how this is the responsibility of pastors and speaks of how he learned to grow in personal evangelism by watching his father lead conversations to Christ and share the gospel.⁵ This was taught in the intervention with tools and advice given to allow believers to spot opportunities in their everyday lives and conversations and transform them into gospel-sharing events. In-session practical exercises like the "how to" sections and the "sharing times" proved to be of great value in communicating these tools that had been taught in sessions 3 and 5. This was needed as participants in the pre-study results showed unpreparedness to evangelize. One participant shared in the pre-study that he had no idea how to evangelize and had never done it. By the end of the seminar, he had shared the gospel with a friend and initiated two gospel conversations. He shared that the practical elements of the seminar combined with the teaching and group dynamics were useful in equipping him and helping him take that first step in evangelism and initiate gospel conversations.

⁵ Ernest L. Easley and Easley Jordan, *Resuscitating Evangelism* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2020), 57.

Research Limitations

If the results show that the intervention was a success in addressing the problem that Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan was ill-equipped to evangelize in the *laïcité* context, it is also important to note that this study was conducted within a specific and particular environment that warrants a disclaimer regarding broader applications. This research was done in a very specific and setting, that is unique in four main ways.

First, the research led in this seminar relied on the current data concerning *laïcité*. *Laïcité* is a legal and as was demonstrated a cultural concept that is prone to change. In fact, this research was needed precisely because the concept of *laïcité* had been changing in France. This means that any consideration of this research in the future will need to consider that *laïcité*'s fluctuant nature does not guarantee that the facts shared in this study will always be accurate and that the strategies employed might become more difficult to apply, or irrelevant to a future French society with a different *laïcité*. This is especially important as the concept of *laïcité* is moving in a more restrictive direction. In her article on *laïcité* and religion in the law, professor Caroline Cochet describes in vivid terms what is the main concern of this researcher and others on the future of the concept of *laïcité*:

The foregoing also point to a disturbing political intention to broaden the scope of secularism and religious neutrality. The jurist will also have to recall that freedom of conscience and religion implies being able to manifest one's beliefs both in public and in private, contrary to what the supporters of a total disappearance of all traces of religion in the public space would like.⁶

Second, any researcher must be well-informed of the legal landscape in France if he or she is to study the impact of *laïcité* on religion. As was mentioned in the previous limitation,

⁶ Caroline Cochet, "La Laïcité et le Vivre Ensemble en République Française," *Revue du Droit des Religions* 15, (2023) : 144.

research on this topic does require a keen understanding of the law. This researcher having completed legal studies in the past was competent enough to study and understand the legal aspects of this research on *laïcité*. This is not to say that a researcher with no legal training cannot study *laïcité*, but it does imply a limitation in the legal knowledge of the matter at hand and therefore in the capacity the researcher would have to fully explain the state of the legal landscape as is and even more if it were to change in the near future as it is a volatile subject. This researcher knows that at times his legal training was necessary to understand some of the fine nuances in the law and believes a solid understanding of the law is required in a field of study such as this one.

Third, this research is also specific to the French culture. Though many elements could easily be transferred into a research project on secularism, evangelism, and missiology, it must be clear that this research focused on the French people and culture. The nuances explained on topics such as proselytism and *laïcité* that were made in this study were intended to be pertinent to and reflective of the French society's perception of these matters. Applications may certainly be drawn in similar cultures such as the French-Canadian regions of Canada like Quebec, or even to a lesser degree in most of Western Europe, but the researcher must bear in mind that each culture is unique and has its' own specificities. This research was done in completion of a Doctor of Ministry degree and aims to assist pastors in their ministry of evangelism in the context of the French *laïcité*. Because of this, this researcher believes that it is important that the reader remember the apostle's admonition in 1 Cor. 9:22 "to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all *men*, that I might by all means save some." Hence any ministry research must be adapted to the people that are supposed to benefit from it. Not

unlike Paul, it is the responsibility of any minister who seeks to use this research to make sure it is pertinent and if not adapt it to his people.

Finally, this researcher's small group model and testimony-based evangelism required of the group a certain level of trust and mutual support. With testimonies being shared during the small group meetings, a certain level of trust was necessary for each participant to feel comfortable enough to share their testimony without the fear of being judged or ridiculed by other members. Of course, each participant is free to share whatever they want in their testimonies and the level of detail was totally left up to them. However, sharing a testimony is in itself an act that requires the participant to feel comfortable with the people around them if they are shy, young believers, or anxious. In addition, the "commitment times" at the end of the last four sessions with their counterparts the "sharing times" at the beginning of the following sessions required the group to be supportive and encouraging of those who failed to share their testimonies during the week. This group dynamic is of course something that the researcher will help foster, but it is also something that is deeply anchored in the church culture itself. Therefore, this intervention's effects might be limited in certain instances if there are underlying tensions in the group or mistrust. Of course, no group or church is perfect or free from any of the aforementioned issues, however, it is important for the local minister to consider how he can prepare his people for an intervention like this one that will require accountability, trust, and support.

Further Research

This action research project had to be limited to certain questions as the intervention could only treat some of the aspects of the issues that arise in France as a result of the growing tension around *laïcité* in France. One of these issues that would deserve to be researched that

could not be expounded on by the researcher is in regard to the French public schooling system. Since 2004 and the ban on religious signs in schools, the rhetoric around schools and *laïcité* has only increased in its harshness towards religion. Recently, minister of Education Gabriel Attal banned the Abaya, a traditional Islamic dress in schools on these grounds and reaffirmed a desire for a harder line in the schooling system.⁷ In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on French schools that caused the death of Samuel Paty in 2020 and Dominique Bernard in the fall of 2023, *laïcité* was mentioned as the target of these terror attacks and also the supposed solution to these issues. In this context of heightened tension around the public schooling system, it is obvious to this researcher that Christian parents, children, and teachers need to be equipped to face the daily pressures they face regarding their faith and the imperatives that are placed on them. Thus, a research project seeking to assist believers in their relations with the schooling system and the *laïcité* that is being promoted within this microcosm and their faith would be necessary and useful.

Another area of concern for this researcher that would necessitate further research and work is in regard to the tension surrounding Islam and *laïcité* and how Christians should act and position themselves. This research would not aim to defend Islam as that would be counter-productive for believers, but one that would deal with the idea that a *laïcité* with double standards is fine. Indeed, through the seminar, the researcher noticed that some believers thought that *laïcité* was a great concept as long as it protected their rights and not those of the Muslims. While Islam is in no way compatible with Christianity, it is important that believers hold to one standard and not have a double standard that would inevitably backfire and cause more

⁷ <https://www.conseil-etat.fr/actualites/laicite-le-conseil-d-etat-rejette-un-deuxieme-refere-contre-l-interdiction-du-port-de-l-abaya-a-l-ecole>.

restrictions towards Christians. This reality has already been seen in the 2020 law “confortant le respect des principes de la République” which imposed new restrictions on all religious organizations in France even though it was aimed to address issues with Islamic organizations. Therefore, this researcher believes it would be useful to lead additional research with this consideration in mind.

An additional area of consideration that would yield useful results, that was not studied in this action research project is in the perception of the oppressiveness of *laïcité* and the reality of this oppression. Indeed, the researcher found that at times the sentiments of oppression and opposition that participants associated with *laïcité* were either the fruit of misassociations or lacked any experiential evidence. This was noted in chapter 4 when the researcher found that many participants who described *laïcité* as a hindrance to evangelism did not have any experience of an event in which the said *laïcité* was advanced to ask them not to share the gospel or to cease their public displays of faith in words or clothes. Some of the instances in which those individuals said that *laïcité* was used against them to limit their public displays of faith were in fact not related to *laïcité* but to personal preferences of the people they were interacting with. This research would concentrate on dedramatizing the perceived threat they see in *laïcité* or instead measuring the reality of the damage that is being done by the cultural *laïcité* in the lives of those that perceive *laïcité* it as a threat because of this cultural *laïcité*.

While this research dealt with *laïcité*, it did not deal with secularism and its impact on believers. *Laïcité* as was mentioned earlier in this thesis is not the same as secularity even though they are often associated, it is important to separate these two terms. There is undoubtedly an atheistic agenda at hand in the restrictive view of *laïcité*, but it is even more evident in other areas of French society that could contribute to a secular ambiance that is detrimental to

believers, *laïcité* and evangelism. This researcher saw in some instances how atheism was being promoted through *laïcité* as the restrictive view of *laïcité* saw public spaces as areas where faith is not welcomed and private spaces being the only places for religious expression. While many argue this is not an atheistic agenda, this researcher believes that by asking people to keep their religious beliefs private, they are creating by default spaces without God and therefore atheistic in practice. Thus, research on how secularism in France is being pushed through a restrictive view of *laïcité* and peddles an atheistic view would be useful and would surely help believers understand their role in society as lights in the world. Equipping them with tools to face a secular agenda would maybe be similar to those used in this seminar but should in any case provide believers with a resolve and methodology to continue sharing the gospel

In his research, this researcher found that participants really enjoyed the group dynamic in the gospel-sharing efforts and appreciated the accountability and the experiences that other participants shared with the group. While research has already been done in the area of small groups, discipleship, and accountability, it would be interesting to lead broader research on evangelism exclusively in an accountability group. Research on a longer period, with an exclusively evangelistic orientation in a small group setting with accountability as the central element of the meetings could show promising results in equipping believers for evangelism as well as creating the habit of evangelizing and praying for salvations. This is somewhat like what T4T promotes but without the leadership training and the discipleship done separately from the small group meeting.

Finally, this researcher believes that the actual trend surrounding *laïcité* is a negative restrictive one that might one day lead to a difficult situation for believers in France who are faithful to the Lord's command to proclaim the gospel. Therefore, this researcher believes that it

might also be helpful in the future to provide a model for believers to share the gospel in a more restrictive environment. This might be to focus research on Christian civil disobedience and biblical examples of evangelism in hostile environments.

This researcher was encouraged by the positive results that were seen as a result of this intervention and believes that with training, encouragement, and assistance believers can overcome obstacles and walk in obedience to the Lord's command to proclaim the gospel. This researcher hopes that in the future, believers confronted with similar situations will continue to use their testimonies as powerful tools for the gospel like many believers before them.

APPENDIX A
PASTORAL APPROVAL REQUEST

June 1st, 2023.

Pastor Randy Laase

Request for permission to conduct doctoral work within the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan

Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan

Imapsse des Geraniums

83300 Draguignan France

Dear Pastor Randy Laase,

As a graduate student in the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a Doctor of Ministry degree. The title of my research project is Counteracting *laïcité*'s negative effects on Evangelism and the purpose of my research is to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct my research at the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan with the people that regularly attend there and use the church as the object of my research.

Participants will be asked to complete the attached survey at the end of the intervention, contact me to schedule an interview and be part of a 6-week seminar. The data will be used to compare if the intervention had an effect on the evangelistic output of the participants. Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please provide a signed statement on official letterhead indicating your approval. A permission letter document is attached for your convenience.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Laase
Doctoral candidate

APPENDIX B

PASTORAL APPROVAL

Eglise
Evangélique
Baptiste

Centre Commercial « Les Hellènes III »
Quartier Saint Léger – 83300 Draguignan

June 7, 2023

Randall Laase
Pastor

Eglise Evangélique Baptiste
Centre commercial « Les Hellènes III »
Quartier Saint Léger
83300 Draguignan, France

Dear Jonathan:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled, **A Plan to Counteract the Negative Effects of *Laïcité* on Evangelism** I have decided to grant you permission to access our membership list and invite them to participate in your study.

I will provide our membership list to Jonathan, and Jonathan may use the list to contact our members to invite them to participate in his research study.

I grant permission for Jonathan to contact members of our congregation to invite them to participate in his research study.

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

Sincerely,

Randall S. Laase
Pastor
Eglise Evangélique Baptiste de Draguign

APPENDIX C

HANDBOOK FOR CHRISTIAN EVANGELISM IN THE *LAÏCITÉ* CONTEXT

Table of Contents:

Introduction

Session 1

Lesson 1: What is *laïcité*? What is Evangelism?

“How To time”

Session 2

Lesson 2: A Biblical Definition of *Laïcité*

“How to Time”

Session 3

Lesson 3: Why Share your Testimony?

“Who, When, and Where Time”

“Commitment Time”

Session 4

“Sharing Time”

Lesson 4: Common Concerns and Objections on Evangelism and *Laïcité*

“Who When and Where Time”

“Commitment Time”

Session 5

“Sharing Time”

Lesson 5: How to be Spontaneous?

“How to Time”

“Commitment Time”

Session 6

“Sharing Time.”

“Summary Time”

“Commitment Time”

Introduction

If you are reading this congratulations, you are now part of a group of believers that seeks to grow in their knowledge of God and love for others! This Handbook will be your friend throughout this program. It will be a place where you can find answers to difficult questions and where you can write down some of your own thoughts on the matters that will be covered.

This seminar is designed to equip believers in the battle for evangelism against the pressure of the restrictive view of *laïcité*. This is only a tool, and as with any tool, it will only be useful if it is used by people who are willing to work!

Session One

Lesson 1: What is *Laïcité*? What is Evangelism?

Objective:

The aim is that by the end of session 1, each participant will **Understand** secularism, **Integrate** his or her responsibility to evangelize and bear **Witness** to his or her faith.

1) What is Evangelism?

Evangelism is a biblical mandate that Christians are called to carry out. This mandate is straightforward, it is most notably associated with the “Great Commission” in Matt 28:19-20.

However, even if you have heard all these things before it is quite possible that the meaning of these terms never really seemed clear. So, what is this mandate that Christians need to carry out?

a) A Message

-What kind of message?

Evangelism is first and foremost a message that believers need to convey. The word comes from the Greek *euaggelion* which means “good news.” Therefore, if one engages in evangelism, he engages in the work of proclaiming good news!

Paul makes this abundantly clear in Rom chapter 10 verses 14-15:

“¹⁴ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? ¹⁵ And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

*“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
Who bring glad tidings of good things!”¹*

Paul quotes an Old Testament passage in Isa 52:7. In Isa 52, the prophet is indeed speaking of redemption, but firstly of the redemption of Jerusalem and puts it in the context of Israel’s deliverance from their enemies. Thus, just like those messengers that bring tidings of peace, believers run to announce peace, to bring good news!

-What is this good news?

Paul offers us again in Romans 10:8-13 the answer to our question:

“But what does it say? ”The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith which we preach): ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The good news believers proclaim is that there is a way that is made for salvation! Peace is offered through faith, and Paul makes it clear and simple for us to understand that we are to place our faith in Jesus and in what He has done! The good news is simple, there is a way!

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New King James Version.

-What has He done?

Paul announced in previous chapters what the gospel was, in fact one can say that chapter 10 is based on the previous 9 chapters and that Paul has brought the full gospel in those 9 chapters.

But there is another one of Paul's writings that gives Christians a clear picture of the gospel content, of what Christ has done that allows us to go and proclaim the gospel news that there is a way for salvation!

1 Cor 15:1-11

"Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, ² by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain.

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by ¹Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

⁹ For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. ¹⁰ But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. ¹¹ Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed."

Therefore, Evangelism is the task of sharing the good news that Jesus Christ died and rose again for our sins and that we can obtain salvation, if we place our faith in Jesus.

b) A Command

Evangelism is, as was mentioned earlier, a biblical mandate for Christians. Evangelism is not optional for believers but is a command and a natural working out of the gospel in our lives.

-Why a mandate?

It is interesting to see that the command to evangelize in the New Testament is not an option. As mentioned earlier, Matt 28:19-20 is a key text when it comes to evangelism. There is no conditional in this command, it is an imperative and the disciples must obey. Christ Himself called His disciples to be lights and to shine in Matt 5:16. The apostles exemplified this and dedicated their lives to this mission, which was not a career choice, but a submitting to the Lord's command.

Also, Paul in 2 Cor 5:14 speaks of love that compels them to live as ambassadors (V20) with the ministry of reconciliation (V18) and implores those lost to be reconciled (V20) to God through Jesus Christ.

Thus, evangelism is a mandate, a mandate that is clear, believers are called to go and evangelize the world, to spread the gospel! This mandate is made clear by God's direct commands and by the compelling power of His love.

-Why is it natural for a Christian to evangelize?

Earlier Paul was cited in Romans chapter 10 as having extolled the act of evangelizing using an Old Testament quote from Isa 52. But why does Paul think that evangelization should be extolled? He gives the answer just prior to quoting Isaiah when he says that without the proclamation of the gospel, men will not hear and thus will not be able to believe and be saved.

Evangelism is a natural outworking of the gospel in our lives because it is the first cause of our own salvation to begin with. Evangelism is necessary for salvation and Paul is quick to praise those who evangelize because they are tools for the salvation of the lost.

So, evangelism should be a natural endeavor for a believer because it is something that he himself experienced and lived. It is the founding act of that person's journey to faith and thus to

salvation. Of course, one can always build away off of the foundation and surely many do, but it is by its nature, something that should be anchored in the hearts of believers.

In addition, it is an act of love. Paul does not cite love here as a motive for the sharing of the gospel, but it is implied in his rhetorical questions in verse 14. If they do not hear, they will not believe, and if they do not believe they won't be saved! How can one miss what Paul is saying here? Love should be the impetus for evangelism! And love is at the core of the gospel, one could cite John 3:16 to support this. Love is a fruit of our salvation as seen in Galatians 5:22. Jesus said in John 13:35 it is by our love that the world will recognize us in. And therefore, as mentioned earlier, it is love that compels us to evangelize 2 Cor 5:14.

Conclusion:

Evangelization then, is an obligation and natural outworking of the gospel in the born-again believer, that compels him to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection for the sins of mankind and the salvation through faith that all men can obtain because of His finished work.

2) What is *laïcité*?

In France today one can hardly go a week without hearing this familiar word: "*Laïcité*." But what does it even mean? Do we really know what we are saying when we speak of *laïcité*? Do the people who seem to have this concept glued to their lips even know what it means?

a) What *laïcité* is.

-*Laïcité* is the separation of church and state. This can be found on the government's website:

“Laïcité implies the separation of the state and religious organizations. The political order is based solely on the sovereignty of the people, of the citizens, and the state – which does not recognize or pay salaries for any religion – does not govern the internal functioning of religious organizations. From this separation is deduced the neutrality of the State, local authorities and public services, not of its users. The laïque Republic thus imposes the equality of citizens with regard to the administration and public service, regardless of their convictions or beliefs.”²

-Laïcité is the freedom to believe or not believe according to the same government website:

“It also ensures the right to have or not to have a religion, to change it or to no longer have one. It guarantees the free exercise of religions and freedom of religion, but also freedom vis-à-vis religion: no one can be compelled to respect religious dogmas or prescriptions.”³

-Laïcité is the freedom to share your beliefs, again reaffirmed on the government website:

“Laïcité guarantees freedom of conscience. From it comes the freedom to manifest one’s beliefs or convictions within the limits of respect for public order. Laïcité implies the neutrality of the State and imposes the equality of all before the law without distinction of religion or belief. Laïcité guarantees believers and non-believers the same right to freedom of expression of their beliefs or convictions.”⁴

Not only is this reaffirmed on the government’s website, but it is also guaranteed by the Court of the European Convention of Human Rights which is the highest Court in the European system who ruled in 1993 in the case Kokkinakis vs. Greece that sharing ones faith publicly is legal and is a right that the European nations must protect.

²Comité interministérielle de la laïcité *Qu’est ce que la laïcité*, 2022, [Qu’est-ce que la laïcité ? | Gouvernement.fr.](https://www.gouvernement.fr/la-laicite)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

So why are we doing this seminar? It seems like *laïcité* is a favorable concept for us believers in our task for evangelism!

b) What *laïcité* is not.

-*Laïcité* is not a law.

Laïcité is a French principle that is based on laws. In 1905 a famous law was passed on the separation of church and state. This law is often considered to be the founding law of *laïcité*.

Ironically, the 1905 law does not even use the word “*laïcité*.”⁵

Because *laïcité* is a principle and not a law it is hard for one to clearly understand what *laïcité* is and is not in the overall legal framework. Because of this blurriness, many politicians, philosophers, and journalists have twisted the meaning of *laïcité* to make it more restrictive than it actually is.

-*Laïcité* is not the same for everyone.

Laïcité is indeed a legal principle that is supposed to be the conceptual underpinning of many religious freedom laws in France like the 1905 law. However, *laïcité* has become much more than a legal concept.

Professor Daly, who is an expert in the field of law, is the spokesperson for many researchers who are concerned that *laïcité* is becoming a cultural and societal principle that is far different from what the legal *laïcité* is.⁶ Thus, *laïcité* is a legal principle for some but for many in French

⁵ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 26.

⁶ Eoin Daly “The Ambiguous Reach of Constitutional Secularism in Republican France: Revisiting the Idea of *Laïcité* and Political Liberalism as Alternatives,” *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* Vol. 32, No. 3 (Autumn 2012).

⁶ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 587.

society, it is becoming a cultural principle that is much more restrictive than its legal counterpart. It is now more of a cultural and identarian issue, than a legal and institutional one.⁷

Conclusion: What should we do then? Are we stuck between a rock and a hard place? Are we to accommodate the cultural view? Are we to hold to the legal view and disregard the cultural view?

If we see our responsibility as believers to go share the gospel, and we see that the law protects our rights to go and share the gospel, it then seems quite obvious that we should engage in evangelism. However, the cultural aspect of *laïcité* is important and we must be sensitive to the culture and consider how we can engage in evangelism in a more *laïcité*-friendly way. In the next session, it will be argued that testimony sharing is the most *laïcité*-friendly means of evangelism.

How to?

In the next sessions, testimony sharing will be presented as a *laïcité*-friendly means of evangelism. Meanwhile, in this week's how-to session, each of you will need to write out a short presentation of your testimony. "Sharing it should not exceed 2 minutes and you need to make sure that the gospel is in it."

⁷ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 43.

Session Two

Objective:

The aim is that by the end of session 2, each participant will **Understand** the doctrine of separation of church and state, **Integrate** their responsibility to evangelize in a way that respects the law as much as possible, and bear **Witness** to their faith in a way that is as respectful of the law and culture as possible.

1) Separation of Church and State

In last week's session, we studied what evangelism and *laïcité* were and how we are free in France to share the gospel and proclaim the message of what Christ has done for us. This freedom however is threatened by the restrictive approach to *laïcité* that is being promoted in various outlets. Bearing this in mind, it is important for the French believer to have a solid biblical view of the separation of church and state as not only a supporting doctrine of the current legal framework but also a compass for the French believer in the changing seas of *laïcité*.

The separation of church and state is a doctrine that defends the idea that the civil authorities should be independent of religious control and that churches should equally be independent of the civil authorities. This mutual independence is the central component of the doctrine of the separation of church and state.

However, simply stating that, is not enough. One cannot simply establish a doctrine and impose it on Christians, especially not if they are of the evangelical tradition and hold to the primacy of scripture. Therefore, it is important to show that this doctrine is rooted in scripture and traces back to Christ himself.

- What did Christ Teach?

Indeed, Christ did not come with the sword to conquer and subdue the rulers as the Jews had hoped. In fact, His teachings were very disappointing for this crowd who had hoped that He would start a military revolution. When Christ taught that one was to "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17, NKJV). He certainly was not calling for religious control of civil authorities nor was he calling for civil authorities to intervene in religious matters. His statement offers a clear separation between the two.

- What did Christ do?

Mark 12:17 is not the only proof one has to give for the separation of church and state in Christ's ministry. His humble submission to authorities during His arrest and trial displays His teaching put into action. So much so that when Peter, one of His disciples draws a sword to fight, he is rebuked and the damage he caused is repaired.

Matt 26:52-53 "But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"

Here we see clearly that Jesus was opposed to rebellion, and that in the most extreme circumstances He acted as He taught.

So, it's important to note that the separation of church and state does not mean the separation of the Christian and State. Christians, like Jesus and his disciples, remain under the authority of the state, as Jesus demonstrated. Jesus being the absolute model of the Christian, his opposition to rebellion should encourage us to keep a certain reserve towards rebellions and revolutions. These acts of violence may be motivated, as with the French Revolution, by deeply Christian concepts such as liberty, equality and fraternity, but they remain actions that Christ would not have led, and which the Church must guard against. The Christian revolution is a spiritual revolution that transforms souls one by one, and often, as with Jesus and his disciples, costs the Christian his life.

- What did the civil authorities say about Christ?

It is important that Christ taught the separation of church and state and lived out his teaching. But it is also important to note that the civil authorities confirm this analysis of Jesus' doctrine by

judging that He is not a threat to them. Pilate judged that the accusation that Jesus was the leader of a revolt against Rome was false.

In John 18:37, Pilate commences his interrogation of Christ with a telling question: “Are You the King of the Jews?” This question indicates that the charges leveled against Jesus were political ones, and this conclusion is reinforced by verse 12 of Chapter 19 when the crowd of accusers contests Pilate’s judgment that Jesus is innocent and demands His death on political grounds.

“From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, “If you let this Man go, you are not Caesar’s friend. Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar.”

It is noteworthy that in this text, Pilate is reported to have sought to release “the king of the Jews” which is absurd for a Roman official. This is exactly why the crowd reminds him of the treason to Rome and Caesar such a ruling would constitute and shows us that Pilate was convinced of Jesus’ innocence but condemned Him out of fear of the crowd and political consequences.

- What did Jesus’ Apostles do?

If one were still uncertain of Jesus’s view on the doctrine of the separation of church and state, there is also the testimony of the Apostles that clearly shows Christ’s understanding of the matter.

The word Apostle is important, as it means “those who are sent.” Thus, understanding what those who were sent by Christ did is key to understanding what Christ taught on the matter. Romans 13 is an obvious text to consider on this matter since it is a pertinent text on the matter and comes from the most prolific author amongst the apostles. In Rom 13:7, Paul makes it plain by stating

that all believers should: “Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due*, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”

The Apostles’ teaching is in line with what Christ taught and reinforces this notion of separation of church and state.

- When will Christ reign?

Finally, it is crucial to understand that Christ’s view of the separation of church and state is informed by His future earthly reign. The scriptures are clear that one day there will be no separation between the church and state and that it will be Christ that will reign and rule over the earth.

Rev 20:4 *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.”*

Therefore, it seems obvious that if Christ did not promote an earthly kingdom in His first coming and promised His earthly reign in His second coming then it is clear that in the present day, there is a clear foundation for the doctrine of the separation of church and state.

2) Exceptions to the doctrine and evangelism

It is important that each believer understand how to evangelize in the very probable case that this doctrine is not applied in society.

- How to evangelize when the church oversteps

It is important to note that the gospel is based on the freedom of choice for everyone. Many have criticized this overreach that unfortunately occurred in the past. The criticism was straightforward as it rested on the fact that before God outward appearances are not sufficient for salvation, but sincere repentance and faith are required.

Rom 10:9-10 “that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

- How to evangelize when the State oversteps

The opposite issue of the State overstepping in the realm of the religious is also something that has occurred in history, but more importantly in the New Testament itself.

Examples are multiple, in Rev 13, Christians who refuse to submit to the wicked authorities are martyred, and in Acts, there are many instances when the Apostles are disobedient to civil authorities because they preach the gospel despite orders to refrain.

In Acts 5, Peter and the other apostles are facing the Sanhedrin for having preached the gospel and are once again ordered not to preach about Christ anymore. Peter provides them with a similar answer to the one he gave them in Acts 4:19 when they had made the same injunction.

Acts 5: 29 “But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ”We ought to obey God rather than men.”

It is essential to note that, although the Scriptures teach submission to the authorities, they also support disobedience to these same authorities when they impose on the Christian acts contrary to God’s commandments. History and the Bible teach us that such disobedience comes at a price, as Jesus, Peter, John and thousands of Christians since the first century have paid with their lives

for their obedience to the mandate of evangelization despite state opposition. It is therefore important for Christians to keep in mind the need to submit to the state whenever possible, and to disobey with courage and regardless of the cost when the state forbids Christians to evangelize. More importantly, this is an example of the doctrine of separation of church and state, as in this case, the state is not to intervene in the church.

How To?

Here once again like last week you must write a short testimony presentation to share with unbelievers. In session three we'll see that sharing one's testimony is a clever way of evangelizing without breaking the law or offending secular culture. Sharing it should not exceed 2 minutes and you need to make sure it includes the gospel.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

ENDING MEAL

Session three

Why sharing your testimony is better.

Objective:

The aim is that by the end of session 3, each participant will **Understand** the value of using his or her testimony to evangelize, **Integrate** his or her responsibility to evangelize while respecting the law and culture as much as possible, and bear **Witness** to his or her faith in a way that is as respectful of the law and culture as possible.

a) Testimonies: A powerful tool.

Sharing your testimony is the best way to share the gospel because it combines the power of stories with a *laïcité*-friendly method of gospel sharing.

The power of stories.

Sharing your testimony can be one the best evangelism tools there is as it communicates the gospel in a powerful way. Stories appeal to everyone as they appeal to the imagination and as Os Guinness says, “stories have a further strength. They are indirect, involving and imaginative. Imagination is our most powerful human faculty.”⁸

⁸ Os Guinness, *Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 165.

This western contemporary society is filled with stories and narratives that are meant to push agendas and ideas. The Twenty-first century is marked by the prevalence of TV and Movies, music and radio, video games and social media that all contribute to the ideological shaping of the culture and society. Dr. Baubérot has also seen this important trend in *laïcité* labelling the media a “Monstre doux,” a soft monster that slowly distorts and changes the landscape of *laïcité*.⁹

Thus, Christians need to understand that they too have a story to share! They have the story of Jesus in the gospel which is a powerful life-changing and world-altering story of divine love and justice. Authors like C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien understood this powerful truth and used their God-given talents to create stories that reflected their Christian beliefs in powerful ways. In France, Victor Hugo’s “Les Misérables” echoes this use of the novel to share Christian beliefs.

Not only do Christians have the story of Jesus Christ to share, but they also have the application and the effects of this story on their life and the story of their journey to Christ and their walk since then that can be compelling and powerful tools for them to share.

Personal

When you share your testimony, you are sharing part of your story. It is important that unbelievers be challenged not simply on a philosophical or theological plain, but also on a personal plain. Unfortunately, evangelism can sometimes become a theology course or a philosophical debate when it is supposed to be the sharing of the gospel and especially of the gospel story in action in the lives of those who are witnessing and sharing what God has done.

⁹ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifié*, 105.

This personal side of the gospel-sharing effort of evangelism is also considered to be an important component of the powerful nature of stories and testimonies in Evangelism in the current Western culture. This is because a testimony is something that this society is more open to because the post-modern society is open to feelings, traditions, emotions, and stories.¹⁰

b) Testimonies, Evangelism and *Laïcité*

Evangelism

In the previous lesson, Evangelism was defined and defended from a biblical standpoint and was presented as a mandatory act of obedience.

It is important that believers understand once again the main tenants of evangelism that were given in the last session. Evangelization then, is an obligation and natural outworking of the gospel in the born-again believer, that compels him to go and share the good news of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection for the sins of mankind and the salvation through faith that all men can obtain because of His finished work.

Proselytism

It is important for the sake of this study, that one clearly define what proselytism is and how it differs from evangelism. This is essential as the government in France differentiates these two terms. But the importance of this matter must not be limited to France but expanded to the world, as the Pope himself in his address to the pontifical institute for foreign missions considered this nuance crucial in light of the growing tensions between secularism and faith across the globe, in light of the catholic historical background that informs these tensions.

¹⁰ Sam Chan, *Evangelism in a Skeptical World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 113.

There is a danger that reappears – it seemed outdated but it tends to re-emerge -: confuse evangelization and proselytism. No. Evangelism is the testimony of Jesus Christ, dead and risen. It is he who attracts. This is why the Church grows by attraction and not by proselytism, as Benedict XVI said. But this confusion is somewhat born of a politico-economic conception of “evangelization”, which is no longer evangelization. [...] It is not a question of looking for new members for this “Catholic society”, no; it is to show Jesus: that he makes himself seen in my person, in my behavior; and open spaces to Jesus throughout my life. This is evangelizing.¹¹

Thus, evangelism and proselytism must be understood to differ in the means and purpose of the content being shared. Evangelism is a sharing of the faith that then leaves the interlocutor completely free without the evangelist attempting to convince him to adhere or join, it is a declaration or offer. Thus, evangelism falls under freedom of speech that coincides with the separation of church and state defended in the last session. Proselytism, on the other hand, is more active in sharing, it is more engaged, and has an end goal of converting the person. While many might disagree with this distinction, it is necessary to define the terms as they are seen in the country of study, namely France, and this distinction that Pope Francis made is reflective of what the French government believes proselytism to be. The “Observatoire de la *laïcité*,” a government agency that is charged with oversight on matters of *laïcité* defined proselytism as consisting in “trying to convince people to adhere to a religion.”¹²

Other government agencies have negatively portrayed proselytism:

The “Charte de la *Laïcité*” in 2013 states that schools are to protect children “from any proselytism and pressures that would prevent them from making their own choices.”¹³

¹¹ Pope Francis address by pope Francis to the participants in the general assembly of the pontifical institute for foreign missions (PIME) May 20 2019, [Aux participants au Chapitre général de l’Institut pontifical des Missions étrangères \(PIME\) \(20 mai 2019\) | François \(vatican.va\)](#).

¹² Observatoire de la *Laïcité* LIBERTES ET INTERDITS DANS LE CADRE LAÏQUE, 2016, 3, [2. libertes et interdits dans le cadre laïque 0.pdf\(gouvernement.fr\)](#).

¹³ Ministère de l’Education Nationale “Charte de la *laïcité* a l’école,” 2013.

And the “Charte de la *Laïcité* dans les services publics” states that “All users are equal before the public service. They have the right to express their religious convictions within the limits of respect for the neutrality of the public service, its proper functioning and the requirements of public order, safety, health and hygiene. Users must refrain from any form of proselytism.”¹⁴

While every Christian should aim to convert a person when evangelizing, it is also important that one understand that Evangelism is essentially about offering lost men and women an opportunity to accept the message of the gospel. Christians cannot compel men and women to Christ as it is contrary to the gospel itself. The eminent political thinker John Locke in his *A Letter Concerning Toleration* rightly captured the matter by saying that “the care of souls is not committed to the civil magistrate any more than it is to other men. It isn’t committed to him by God, because it seems that God hasn’t ever given any man the authority to compel someone else to join his religion.”¹⁵ John Locke ties this matter with the separation of church and state and helps Christians understand the differences between evangelism and proselytism.

Proselytism or Evangelism?

Christians are called to contend for lost souls! But they are not called to compel individuals to faith. If Christians, consider what is understood by these two terms and how people perceive these matters then Christians will learn to evangelize in a way that is respectful of the negative perception of proselytism in the French society.

Christians should evangelize, proclaim the gospel and use their testimonies as powerful tools for the sharing of the gospel and of their faith. Once this proclamation has been done, it is also

¹⁴ Comité interministériel de la laïcité “*Charte de la laïcité dans les services publics*” (2022): 1.

¹⁵ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (London: J. Brook, 1796), 11.

important that Christians fear not the proselytism accusation that could be made if a conversation ensues.

Indeed, if one shares his testimony and questions are asked of that testimony then it is only normal and part of a natural conversation for one to give a compelling answer. Not only is this a normal and natural response, it is also a biblical one:

1 Peter 3:15 “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;”

Thus, evangelism is the duty of the believer who must preach the gospel and can use his testimony as a powerful tool in the accomplishment of that mission and proselytize if the individual is asked to.

Testimonies offer thus not only a powerful tool to proclaim the gospel with, they also offer Christians a useful and accepted way to share the gospel and open up opportunities for people to seek further with questions and objections that will allow the believer to seamlessly engage in a soft form of proselytism.

Who, When, and Where

In this section, you are required to think about who you might be able to share the gospel with this week. Choose one or two individuals that you are going to intentionally try to share your testimony with. This will require a plan; you’ll need to think about a time and place for this to happen.

Commitment time

In this section, you are asked to commit before the rest of the group to carry out your “who, when, and where section. Next session you will be asked to share with the group how things went. You also commit as a member of the group to supporting, encouraging, and praying for the other members of the group and abstain from judgment if they struggle to fulfill their commitment.

ENDING MEAL

Session four

Sharing Time

From here forward, each session will include a sharing time portion at the beginning. This time is to encourage group commitment to evangelism during the week. Each participant will be asked to share how their evangelistic commitment was carried out and its outcome. This is a time of encouragement and support, if you haven't shared the gospel this week, this is not a time for others to judge you, or for you to judge others. We are to support and encourage one another.

Lesson 4: Miscellaneous Objections

Objective

The objective is that by the time participants leave session 1, each participant **Understands** evangelism, **Integrates** his responsibility to evangelize and **Testifies** to his faith.

From this point on, lessons will be shorter, and the sessions will focus on the practical aspects at hand. This week, various objections leveled against evangelism in general and evangelism in the context of *laïcité* will be addressed. This lesson will not be a comprehensive argumentation against all the possible arguments, rather it contains a rebuttal of some common arguments.

In *The Ethics of Evangelism* Dr. Elmer Thiessen, a Christian philosopher has attempted to answer some of these common objections. Thiessen addresses a common objection that is that evangelism is an exercise in an immoral attempt to persuade people.¹⁶ The idea is that evangelism is an attempt to exert power over others and thus it is not honest; instead, it is coercive and manipulative. This common argument presents itself in various ways. This session

¹⁶ Elmer J. Thiessen, *The Ethics of Evangelism* (Milton Keynes: UK, Authentic Media, 2011), 55.

will focus on responding to this objection that evangelism is immoral and will answer three common objections that qualify evangelism as immoral as well as provide an answer to a practical and pastoral question.

1) Calvinism

Some strong “Calvinists” will erroneously assume that evangelism is not trusting in God and placing man at the center of the gospel and will thus open the door to evangelistic malpractice. Therefore they consider evangelization to be unethical. While this is a gross misunderstanding of what Calvinism is, it is also a gross misunderstanding of what evangelism is and the state of society at large. This is not the place to argue over the age-old free will-sovereignty question, but it is important to remember that the apostle Paul is surely in contradiction with those individuals that oppose evangelism in Romans 10:14-15:

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!

If Paul believes that preaching and testifying of our faith is necessary to reach the lost, then all other considerations on free will and sovereignty need to submit to this unequivocal command that believers have to preach and evangelize the lost.

2) Freedom

Some will affirm that Evangelism is a breach of individual freedom as the Christian is trying to persuade and convince people of his beliefs. In this situation, the Christian is assaulting the intellectual autonomy of the individual. It is important to understand that those who level this objection are attempting to persuade the believer not to evangelize and are thus contradicting

themselves.¹⁷ Secondly, those who are defending this view are also living in a utopic intellectual autonomy, they assume that individuals are free from pressures and persuasion and that evangelism is a breach of this unbiased, uninfluenced, autonomous intellect.¹⁸ This could not be further from the truth. In fact, proponents of the restrictive view seem to think that faith being a private matter, should not be expressed in public and remain private in order not to encroach on others' freedom. However, they are themselves persuading and pressuring others into believing that a secularized world is a free world, and that faith is a personal belief that is not anchored in reality. In addition, in lesson four evangelism was presented as the act of making an offer or a declaration and letting the individual make his own choice. This was contrasted with the definition of proselytism in France that is more engaged and seeks to pressure and convince people.

3) Truth and arrogance

Thiessen also pinpoints what is a common attack on evangelism and that is the question of truth and arrogance. He notes that unbelievers often accuse evangelism of being an arrogant endeavor that seeks to define and impose one's truth. This issue comes from a postmodern mindset growing in the 21st-century society. Basically, the claim is that there is no objective truth, and that truth is just a subjective construct of the world that each individual defines personally. Therefore, when a Christian comes and proclaims "his truth" it might not be a problem until he affirms that Jesus is the only way, that He is the one and only true God, and that truth is found in Him. Thiessen gives a good response to this double issue by explaining that anytime a truth claim is being made, another's truth claim is being undermined, and this can

¹⁷ Thiessen, *The Ethics of Evangelism*, 58.

¹⁸ Ibid., 57.

seem to be an arrogant attitude. However, it is only perceived to be arrogant. Thiessen explains that this is because the person who is listening has already determined that his interlocutor is wrong.¹⁹ Indeed, if this world is postmodern then it believes that truth claims are only subjective and not absolute, and when someone proclaims the absolute truth of the gospel, the world perceives him as arrogant and condescending because it has deemed that he is wrong to do so because of its prior commitment to postmodernism. This is not only true of postmodernism, but anyone also who has a belief system will perceive someone who boldly proclaims an opposing belief system to be arrogant and condescending because they believe that they are right, and he is wrong.

4) Unequipped

Finally, a more pastoral approach to this question might also yield one more argument against evangelism. This is not so much an argument against evangelism as it is an argument against one's participation in evangelism. This argument is that of the Christian who feels unequipped, too shy, or intimidated by evangelism. This issue should not be a major one after the first sessions. Indeed, sharing the gospel can be a much easier task if it is done through one's testimony. Believers in this seminar will have been trained to prepare and practice sharing their salvation testimony which should effectively remedy the issue of shyness and fear of not knowing what to say. While there will always be apprehension regarding what people might say about one's testimony or faith it is important for the believer to remember that their testimony is a powerful tool. Of course, this seminar is not enough to prepare a believer for everything they might encounter in their evangelistic efforts, Christians are called to study and prepare

¹⁹ Thiessen. *The Ethics of Evangelism*, 61.

themselves to provide answers, but they can always rely on their testimony as a powerful means of sharing.

Who, When and Where?

In this section, you are required to think about who you might be able to share the gospel with this week. Choose one or two individuals that you are going to intentionally try to share your testimony with. This will require a plan; you'll need to think about a time and place for this to happen.

Commitment Time

In this section, you are asked to commit before the rest of the group to carry out your “who, when, and where section. Next session you will be asked to share with the group how things went. You also commit as a member of the group to supporting, encouraging, and praying for the other members of the group and abstain from judgment if they struggle to fulfill their commitment.

ENDING MEAL

Session five

Sharing Time

Each session will include a sharing time portion at the beginning. This sharing time portion is meant to encourage the group in their commitment to evangelism during the week. Each participant will be asked to share how their evangelistic commitment was carried out and its outcome. This is a time of encouragement and support, if you haven't shared the gospel this week, this is not a time for others to judge you, or for you to judge others. We are to support and encourage one another.

Lesson 5: Spontaneity in Evangelism

Objective

The objective is that after leaving session 5, each participant **understands** evangelism, **integrates** his responsibility to always evangelize, and spontaneously **testifies** to his faith.

1) Steering the conversation

Up to now, the sessions have been promoting a planned and intentional testimony-sharing method of evangelism. This is still encouraged, however, lesson five will focus on the everyday opportunities one has for evangelism and does not necessarily see or seize. The testimonies developed so far are fantastic tools for evangelism, and they must continue to be used as the best tools for evangelism in the context of *laïcité*.

This session is meant to encourage everyone to think about how they can use this tool more frequently and use it to transform conversations into gospel opportunities. In his classic book *Tactics*, Gregory Koukl, an apologist and evangelist, offers Christians advice to assist them in their evangelism and steering conversations toward God. The main point of his book is that Christians need to learn to ask questions and thus take the lead in the orientation of the conversation.²⁰ While Koukl intends this to be used as a response to a comment that is aimed against God, our faith, or the Bible, it remains a valuable skill for believers in everyday conversations as it will assist them in creating opportunities to share their testimonies. When believers see how they can steer a conversation toward God, then they can ask questions that will lead the conversation into an opportunity to share their testimony and answer questions to the best of their ability.

This is not an attempt to twist one's words and lead one against their will into a conversation they want to avoid at all cost. This is instead, a vigilance towards statements that indicate a need that believers have found fulfilled in Christ, or statements that are directly or indirectly referring to faith and God.

²⁰ Gregory Koukl, *Tactics, 10th Anniversary Edition : A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019): 1–28.

2) Being ready

If Christians are called to be vigilant and pay attention to what is being said by their interlocutors to ask the right questions, then it follows that Christians are called to be ready at all times and thus engage in spontaneous evangelism. The Bible is clear when it comes to this topic, that believers are called to on standby for evangelism, ready for action at any time. 1 Peter 3:15 notes “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

This readiness is tied to the previous point as Christians should not only be ready to answer questions, but they need to understand their new identity and role as “ambassadors” as Paul states in 2 Corinthians 5:20, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ.”

While ambassadors in the first century were very different from ambassadors today, they do have in common, that they are representatives and interlocutors for those who seek to interact or engage with the country they represent. In a similar fashion, we are called to be those interlocutors, those representatives on earth always pointing to God and being ready to answer and represent our God to the lost world.

This means that believers need to be attentive, passivity is not an option for believers in the work of evangelism. Spontaneous evangelism is only possible if believers are planning on it! Spontaneity in evangelism is thus the fruit of intentional planning and preparation. If believers want to obey God and be faithful ambassadors, they must be prepared and vigilant. No ambassador is perfect or has all the answers, but ambassadors know who they represent and seek to be faithful representatives. This should be true of Christians as well, believers cannot be ready for everything they will face, but they can be ready to share why they are followers of Jesus and share to the best of their ability what they know about God.

It is apparent that the mission of evangelism requires more than surface-level efforts. It is an all-encompassing mission, being an ambassador is an everyday reality and this reminds us of our testimony to the world. It is also noteworthy that since our evangelism is constant, our actions and words are scrutinized and compared with what we say we believe. While this last point is not necessarily tied to the duty of spontaneous gospel sharing, believers must remember their everyday lives and actions impact their credibility and ability to share the gospel. The lack of proper Christian living is not only a potential negative for the gospel, but it can also be a potential plus for the gospel as unbelievers will have questions about how or why believers act the way they do, which will provide the believer with gospel opportunities.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is important for believers to be always ready with the gospel, and to seek and create opportunities for gospel conversations. This duty is not easy and requires that believers genuinely care about others, and about what they are living and saying. Believers are called to ask the right questions, seize opportunities, and answer questions. Much of this can be done by sharing one's testimony, and by living it out with those who are lost.

Who, When and Where?

This week's Who, When, and Where will require creative thinking as participants will be asked to share their testimony spontaneously. In this section, you are asked to think about who you can create an opportunity for spontaneous evangelism with this week. Choose one or two individuals to share your testimony spontaneously. This will require a plan; you'll need to think about a time and place for this to happen and pray for the opportunity to arise.

How to?

In the previous sessions, testimony sharing was presented as a *laïcité*-friendly means of evangelism. In this week's how-to session, each of you will need to brainstorm ideas to share your testimony or the gospel in an impromptu fashion.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Commitment Time

In this section, you are asked to commit before the rest of the group to complete your “how to” section. Next session you will be asked to share with the group how things went. You also commit as a member of the group to supporting, encouraging, and praying for the other members of the group and abstain from judgment if they struggle to fulfill their commitment.

ENDING MEAL

Session six

Sharing Time

Each session will include a sharing time portion at the beginning. This sharing time portion is meant to encourage the group in their commitment to evangelism during the week. Each participant will be asked to share how their evangelistic commitment was carried out and its outcome. This is a time of encouragement and support, if you haven’t shared the gospel this

week, this is not a time for others to judge you, or for you to judge others. We are to support and encourage one another.

Lesson 6: Review of handbook

Objective

The objective is that after leaving session 6, each participant **understands** evangelism and *laïcité*, **integrates** his responsibility to evangelize consistently, and do so in a manner that is most appropriate to the circumstances and *laïcité* as well as spontaneously **testifies** to his faith.

This is the last session of the seminar and will be a summary session of what was covered to this point. Participants will be asked to share their thoughts and questions on the various sessions or on the entire seminar. During each recap, participants will be asked to comment and share how this session was helpful or not.

1) Session 1 Recap

In France, *laïcité* guarantees believers the right to share their faith even if the cultural understanding of *laïcité* seems to promote an absence of such displays of faith. Believers are commanded to go and evangelize, to go and share the gospel, and should do so out of love for lost souls and for Christ.

2) Session 2 Recap

Believers can fight against the negative influence of the cultural, restrictive *laïcité*, by defending the historical, libertarian *laïcité* which is in line with the biblical doctrine of the separation of church and state. They should also bear in mind that this opinion and their evangelism might cost them but that they are called to follow God and live peaceably with all men as much as they can.

3) Session 3 Recap

Believers can and should share the gospel by using their testimonies, as they are powerful tools for evangelism. Testimonies are a great means of sharing the gospel without stepping over the line of proselytism in France, and they are powerful tools for gospel sharing. They also offer Christians a useful and accepted way to share the gospel and open opportunities for people to seek further with questions and objections that will allow the believer to engage in a soft form of proselytism seamlessly.

4) Session 4 Recap

There are many objections to evangelism, but it is important for the believer to remember that evangelism is not optional for believers and that the various objections that might be brought against evangelism are not potent.

5) Session 5 Recap

Christians need to think about how to use their testimonies spontaneously to transform conversations into gospel opportunities. Therefore, believers should always be vigilant towards statements that indicate a need that believers have found fulfilled in Christ or statements that directly or indirectly refer to faith and God. Believers are ambassadors, and being an ambassador is an everyday reality, and this reminds us of our testimony to the world!

Commitment Time

Since this is the last session, you cannot share with the group how your evangelism efforts went during the week. However, as a believer, it is your duty to engage in evangelism every week and share with your brothers and sisters what God is doing through you in your evangelism. You also

commit as a member of the group to supporting, encouraging, and praying for the other members of the group and abstain from judgment if they struggle to fulfill their commitment.

ENDING MEAL

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is evangelism to you?
2. Describe how you engage in evangelism.
3. How do you believe society perceives your faith?
4. How do you believe society perceives sharing your faith?
5. What is *laïcité* for you?
6. In what ways do you agree with it?
7. In what ways do you disagree with it?
8. Tell me about a time when you felt like there might have been a conflict between *laïcité* and evangelism in your life.
9. How do you perceive our society's treatment of various faiths (e.g., Catholicism, Islam, Evangelicals, Jews, etc.)?
10. Share your opinion on some of the laws or propositions of laws regarding Islam and *laïcité* (e.g., Veils, street prayers, government funding, etc.).
11. Do you have any other thoughts?

APPENDIX E

LAÏCITÉ AND EVANGELISM

Likert Survey

Question 1: Christians should share their faith regularly, even in public.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 2: I share the gospel regularly.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 3: Faith is a private matter.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 4: *Laïcité* is good for religion.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 5: *Laïcité* is harmful for religion.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 6: *Laïcité* is neutral towards religion.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 7: *Laïcité* is an obstacle to evangelism.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 8: Followers of various faiths should abstain from public displays of their faith because of *laïcité*.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 9: *Laïcité* forbids followers of various faiths from sharing their faith.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 10: When *laïcité* is an obstacle to evangelism, Christians should still evangelize.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 11: I know how to share the gospel.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

Question 12: I know how to share the gospel in the context of *laïcité*.

| | | | | |
|----------------|-------|----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither Or N/A | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |

APPENDIX F

VERBAL RECRUITMENT SHEET

Hello [Potential Participant],

As a graduate student in the John Rawlins School of divinity at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctor of ministry degree. The purpose of my research is to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*, and if you meet my participant criteria and are interested, I would like to invite you to join the study.

1. Participants, if willing, will be asked to be interviewed. (30 min.)
2. You will need to review the interview transcript.
3. You will partake in 6 different meetings, once a week for approximately 75 min.
4. You will be asked during these meetings to follow a teaching time, and then prepare a short testimony for the sake of sharing it with others in the group, and during the week with unbelievers.
5. You will be asked to plan such opportunities for sharing your testimony intentionally.
6. You will be asked to share with the group how well the testimony sharing went or if it happened.
7. You will be asked to brainstorm how to share the gospel spontaneously and then attempt to apply this in your everyday life during the week before reporting to the group.
8. You will be asked to pray for boldness for those in your group.
9. You will be asked to answer a survey at the end of the intervention.

Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

Would you like to participate? [Yes] Great, [could I get your email address so can we set up a time for an interview?

[No] I understand. Thank you for your time. [Conclude the conversation.]

A consent document will be provided at the time of the interview. The consent document contains additional information about my research. If you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at the time of the interview.

Thank you for your time. Do you have any questions?

APPENDIX G

CONSENT FORM

Consent

Title of the Project: Counteracting *laïcité*'s negative effects on evangelism

Principal Investigator: doctoral candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be part of a research study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a regular attendee of the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. You must also be over 18 years of age. 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 equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité* that counteracts the negative effects of *laïcité* on evangelism.

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:

1. You will be interviewed. (30 min.)
2. You will need to review the interview transcript.
3. You will partake in 6 different meetings, once a week for approximately 75 min.
4. You will be asked during these meetings to follow a teaching time, and then prepare a short testimony for the sake of sharing it with others in the group, and during the week with unbelievers. Twice you will be asked to do so around a meal.
5. You will be asked to plan intentionally for opportunities to share your testimony.

6. You will be asked to share with the group how well the testimony sharing went or if it happened.
7. You will be asked to brainstorm how to share the gospel spontaneously and then attempt to apply this in your everyday life during the week before reporting to the group.
8. You will be asked to pray for boldness for those in your group.
9. You will be asked to answer a survey at the end of the intervention.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study include a better understanding of *laïcité*, and a greater desire to share the gospel with tools to do so effectively.

Benefits to society include the propagation of the gospel to your neighbors and to the community. A Christian voice to answer the restrictive view of *laïcité*. And a thesis to assist pastors and churches across the country in equipping their people with tools to face this challenge.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

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

I am a mandatory reporter. During this study, if I receive information about child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, I will be required to report it to the appropriate authorities.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you, if applicable, will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer. After seven years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer until participants have reviewed and confirmed the accuracy of the transcripts and then deleted. The researcher and members of his doctoral committee will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty or the Eglise Evangelique Baptiste de Draguignan. 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 contact the researcher at the email address included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Jonathan Brian Laase. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him via email at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Howard Owens.

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 IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is 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

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team 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.

0 The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

APPENDIX H

GDRP CONSENT FORM

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Consent

To be signed by individuals providing personal data

Controller Information

For the purposes of this research study, the principal investigator (PI), Jonathan Laase, is the controller of your personal data. You may contact Jonathan Laase by phone and email at

[REDACTED]

Uses of Personal Data

Your personal data will be used for the purpose of research. Specifically, the research seeks to equip believers in the Eglise Evangelique Baptist de Draguignan through a seminar with a biblical *laïcité*.

Categories of Personal Data

The categories of personal data you are being asked to consent to the principal investigator's use of are your name, address, age, gender, political, religious, and philosophical beliefs.

Confidentiality of Personal Data & Provisions for Data-Sharing

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. The principal investigator may share your personal data with third-parties, including the researcher's sponsor, and school.

Provisions for Data Storage & Your Rights

Your personal data will be stored in accordance with the record retention requirements applicable to research activities and Health and Human Services (HHS) regulations in the United States. Under the EUGDPR, you have the right to request access to, rectify, erase, and restrict the processing of your personal data. You also have the right to revoke this consent to use your personal data. If you feel the principal investigator has violated the EUGDPR, you have the right to file a complaint with the appropriate EU supervisory authority.

Your Consent

Please sign and check the desired box, date, and return this form to the principal investigator.

I consent to Jonathan Laase using my personal data for the purposes described in this notice and understand that I can withdraw my consent at any time using the contact information provided above in this notice.

☐ Gives consent

☐ Does not give consent

Printed Name of Individual Providing Consent

Address of Individual Providing Consent

Signature of Individual Providing Consent

Date

APPENDIX I

TRANSLATION OF HANDBOOK

Manuel pour l'évangélisation chrétienne dans le contexte de la *laïcité*.

Table des matières :

Introduction

Session 1

Leçon 1 : Qu'est-ce que la *laïcité* ? Qu'est-ce que l'évangélisation ?

“Comment faire ?”

Session 2

Leçon 2 : Une définition biblique de la *laïcité*.

“Comment faire ?”

Session 3

Leçon 3 : Pourquoi partager son témoignage ?

“Qui, quand et où ? ”

“Temps d'engagement.”

Session 4

“Temps de partage.”

Leçon 4 : Préoccupations et objections courantes concernant l'évangélisation et la *laïcité*.

“Qui, quand et où ?”

“Temps d'engagement.”

Session 5

“Temps de partage”.

Leçon 5 : Comment être spontané ?

“Comment faire ?”

“Temps d’engagement.”

Session 6

“Temps de partage.”

“Temps de synthèse.”

“Temps d’engagement.”

Introduction

Si vous lisez ce texte, félicitations, vous faites maintenant partie d’un groupe de croyants qui cherche à grandir dans leur connaissance de Dieu et leur amour pour les autres ! Ce manuel sera votre ami tout au long de ce programme. Il vous permettra de trouver des réponses à des questions difficiles et d’écrire vos propres réflexions sur les sujets abordés. Ce séminaire est conçu pour « **équiper** » les croyants dans la bataille de l’évangélisation contre la pression de la vision restrictive de la *laïcité*. Ce n’est qu’un outil, et comme tout outil, il ne sera utile que s’il est utilisé par des personnes qui sont prêtes à le travailler au quotidien !

Première session

Leçon 1 : Qu'est-ce que *la laïcité* ? Qu'est-ce que l'évangélisation ?

Objectif

L'objectif est qu'en sortant de la session 1, chaque participant **Comprenne** la *laïcité*, **Intègre** sa responsabilité d'évangéliser et **Témoigne** de sa foi.

1) Qu'est-ce que l'évangélisation ?

L'évangélisation est un mandat biblique que les chrétiens sont appelés à accomplir. Ce mandat est simple, et est notamment associé à des textes clefs comme Actes 1.8. Cependant, même si vous avez déjà entendu toutes ces choses, il est tout à fait possible que la signification de ces termes ne vous ait jamais semblé claire. Quel est donc ce mandat que les chrétiens doivent accomplir ?

a) Un message

-Quel type de message ?

L'évangélisation est avant tout un message que les croyants doivent transmettre. Le mot vient du grec « *euaggelion* » qui signifie “bonne nouvelle”. Par conséquent, si quelqu'un s'engage dans l'évangélisation, il s'engage dans le travail de proclamation de la bonne nouvelle !

Paul l'explique très clairement dans le chapitre 10 des Romains, aux versets 14 et 15 :

“¹⁴ Comment donc invoqueront-ils Celui en qui ils n'ont pas cru ? Comment croiront-ils en Celui dont ils n'ont pas entendu parler ? Et comment entendront-ils sans prédicateur ? ¹⁵ Et comment prêcheront-ils s'ils ne sont pas envoyés ? Comme il est écrit :

*“Qu'ils sont beaux, les pieds de ceux qui annoncent la paix,
Qui apportent la bonne nouvelle de bonnes choses !”*

Paul cite un passage de l'Ancien Testament, Esaïe 52.7. Dans Esaïe 52, le prophète parle bien de rédemption, mais d'abord de la rédemption de Jérusalem et la place dans le contexte de la délivrance d'Israël de ses ennemis. Ainsi, comme ces messagers qui apportent des nouvelles de paix, les croyants courent pour annoncer la paix, pour apporter de bonnes nouvelles !

-Quelle est cette bonne nouvelle ?

Paul nous offre à nouveau la réponse à notre question dans le chapitre 10 des Romains, aux versets 8 à 13 :

“Mais que dit-elle ? “La parole est près de toi, dans ta bouche et dans ton cœur (c'est-à-dire la parole de foi que nous prêchons) :⁹ Si tu confesses de ta bouche le Seigneur Jésus et si tu crois dans ton cœur que Dieu l'a ressuscité d'entre les morts, tu seras sauvé. ¹⁰ Car c'est avec le cœur que l'on croit pour la justice, et c'est avec la bouche que l'on confesse pour le salut. ¹¹ Car l'Écriture dit : “Quiconque croit en lui ne sera pas confondu”. ¹² En effet, il n'y a pas de distinction entre le Juif et le Grec, car le même Seigneur qui domine tout est riche pour tous ceux qui l'invoquent. ¹³ Car “quiconque invoquera le nom du Seigneur sera sauvé”.

La bonne nouvelle que les croyants proclament, c'est qu'il y a un chemin tracé pour le salut ! La paix est offerte par la foi, et Paul nous fait comprendre clairement et simplement que nous devons placer notre foi en Jésus et en ce qu'il a fait ! La bonne nouvelle est simple : il y a un chemin !

Qu'a-t-il fait ?

Paul a annoncé dans les chapitres précédents ce qu'était l'évangile. En fait, on peut dire que le chapitre 10 est basé sur les 9 chapitres précédents et que Paul a apporté tout l'évangile dans ces 9 chapitres. Mais il y a un autre écrit de Paul qui donne aux chrétiens une image claire du contenu

de l'évangile, de ce que le Christ a fait et qui nous permet d'aller proclamer la nouvelle de l'évangile, à savoir qu'il y a un chemin pour le salut !

1 Cor 15.1-11

“De plus, frères, je vous déclare l'Évangile que je vous ai annoncé, que vous avez reçu et dans lequel vous vous tenez,² par lequel vous êtes sauvés, si vous retenez la parole que je vous ai annoncée, à moins que vous n'ayez cru en vain.

³ Car je vous ai enseigné avant tout ce que j'ai moi-même reçu, à savoir que le Christ est mort pour nos péchés, selon les Écritures,⁴ qu'il a été enseveli et qu'il est ressuscité le troisième jour, selon les Écritures,⁵ qu'il a été vu par Céphas, puis par les douze. ⁶ Après cela, il a été vu par plus de cinq cents frères à la fois, dont la plupart sont restés jusqu'à présent, mais quelques-uns se sont endormis.. ⁷ Ensuite, il a été vu par Jacques, puis par tous les apôtres. ⁸ Enfin, il a été vu par moi aussi, comme par quelqu'un qui est né hors du temps.

⁹ Car je suis le plus petit des apôtres, et je ne suis pas digne d'être appelé « apôtre », parce que j'ai persécuté l'Église de Dieu. ¹⁰ Mais c'est par la grâce de Dieu que je suis ce que je suis, et sa grâce envers moi n'a pas été vaine ; j'ai travaillé plus qu'eux tous, non pas moi, mais la grâce de Dieu qui était avec moi. ¹¹ C'est pourquoi, que ce soit moi ou eux, c'est ainsi que nous prêchons et c'est ainsi que vous avez cru.

Par conséquent, l'évangélisation consiste à partager la bonne nouvelle que Jésus-Christ est mort et ressuscité pour nos péchés et que nous pouvons obtenir le salut si nous plaçons notre foi en Jésus.

b) Un commandement

L'évangélisation est, comme nous l'avons mentionné plus haut, un mandat biblique pour les chrétiens. L'évangélisation n'est pas facultative pour les croyants : elle est un commandement et une réalisation naturelle de l'Évangile dans nos vies.

-Pourquoi un mandat ?

Il est intéressant de constater que le commandement d'évangéliser dans le Nouveau Testament n'est pas une option. Comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, Actes 1.8 est un texte clé en matière d'évangélisation. Il n'y a pas de conditionnel dans ce commandement, c'est un impératif et les disciples doivent obéir. Le Christ lui-même a appelé ses disciples à être des lumières et à briller (Matt 5.16). Les apôtres en ont été l'exemple et ont consacré leur vie à cette mission qui n'était pas un choix de carrière, mais une soumission au commandement du Seigneur.

En outre, Paul, dans 2 Cor 5 parle de l'amour qui les oblige à vivre comme des ambassadeurs (**verset 20**) avec le ministère de la réconciliation (**verset 18**) et implore ceux qui sont perdus d'être réconciliés (**verset 20**) avec Dieu par Jésus-Christ. Ainsi, l'évangélisation est un mandat, un mandat clair : les croyants sont appelés à aller évangéliser le monde, à proclamer l'Évangile ! Ce mandat est rendu clair par les commandements directs de Dieu et par la puissance irrésistible de son amour.

Pourquoi est-il naturel pour un chrétien d'évangéliser ?

Auparavant Paul a été cité dans le chapitre 10 des Romains comme ayant exalté l'acte d'évangélisation en utilisant une citation de l'Ancien Testament tirée d'Ésaïe 52. Mais pourquoi Paul pense-t-il qu'il faut exalter l'évangélisation ? Il donne la réponse juste avant de citer Ésaïe, lorsqu'il nous dit que, sans la proclamation de l'Évangile, les hommes n'entendront pas, et ne

pourront donc pas croire et être sauvés. L'évangélisation est une conséquence naturelle de l'Évangile dans nos vies, parce qu'elle est la cause première de notre propre salut.

L'évangélisation est nécessaire au salut et Paul n'hésite pas à faire l'éloge de ceux qui évangélisent parce qu'ils sont des « outils » pour le salut des perdus. Ainsi l'évangélisation devrait être tout à fait naturel pour un croyant parce que c'est quelque chose qu'il a lui-même expérimenté et vécu. C'est l'acte fondateur de son cheminement vers la foi et donc vers le salut. Bien sûr, on peut toujours construire à partir de cette fondation, et beaucoup le font, mais c'est, par sa nature même, quelque chose qui devrait être ancré dans le cœur des croyants.

En outre, il s'agit d'un acte d'amour. Paul ne cite pas ici l'amour comme motif de partage de l'Évangile, mais c'est sous-entendu dans ses questions rhétoriques du verset 14. S'ils n'entendent pas, ils ne croiront pas, et s'ils ne croient pas, ils ne seront pas sauvés ! Comment ne pas comprendre ce que Paul dit ici ? L'amour doit être le moteur de notre évangélisation ! Et l'amour est au cœur de l'évangile, on pourrait citer Jean 3.16 pour appuyer cela. L'amour est un fruit de notre salut, comme le montre Gal 5.22. Jésus a dit dans Jean 13.35 que c'est par notre amour que le monde nous reconnaîtra. Par conséquent, comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, c'est l'amour qui nous pousse à évangéliser (2 Cor 5.14).

Conclusion :

L'évangélisation est donc une obligation et un résultat naturel de l'Évangile pour le croyant né de nouveau, qui l'oblige à aller partager la bonne nouvelle de la mort et de la résurrection de Jésus-Christ pour les péchés de l'humanité et le salut par la foi que tous les hommes peuvent obtenir grâce à son œuvre achevée.

Maintenant, tournons nos regards vers la *laïcité* :

2) Qu'est-ce que *la laïcité* ?

Aujourd'hui, en France, il ne se passe pas une semaine sans que l'on entende ce mot si familier : "*Laïcité*". Mais qu'est-ce que ça veut dire ? Sait-on vraiment ce que l'on dit quand on parle de « *laïcité* » ? Les personnes qui semblent avoir ce concept scotché à la bouche savent-elles vraiment ce qu'il signifie ?

a) Ce qu'est *la laïcité*.

-*La laïcité* est la séparation de l'Église et de l'État. Sa définition peut être consultée sur le site web du gouvernement :

"La *laïcité* implique la séparation de l'État et des organisations religieuses. L'ordre politique est fondé sur la seule souveraineté du peuple, des citoyens, et l'Etat - qui ne reconnaît ni ne salarie aucune religion - ne régit pas le fonctionnement interne des organisations religieuses. De cette séparation découle la neutralité de l'Etat, des collectivités locales et des services publics, et non celle de ses usagers. La République laïque impose ainsi l'égalité des citoyens devant l'administration et le service public, quelles que soient leurs convictions ou leurs croyances".¹

-*La laïcité* est la liberté de croire ou de ne pas croire, selon le même site du gouvernement :

"Elle assure également le droit d'avoir ou de ne pas avoir de religion, d'en changer ou de ne plus en avoir. Elle garantit le libre exercice des cultes et la liberté de religion, mais aussi la liberté vis-à-vis de la religion : nul ne peut être contraint de respecter des dogmes ou des prescriptions religieuses".²

¹ Comité **interministériel** de la laïcité *Qu'est ce que la laïcité*, 2022 [Qu'est-ce que la laïcité ? | Gouvernement.fr.](https://www.gouvernement.fr/la-laicite)

²Ibid

-La *laïcité* est la liberté de partager ses convictions, réaffirmée sur le site du gouvernement :

“La *laïcité* garantit la liberté de conscience. Il en découle la liberté de manifester ses croyances ou ses convictions dans les limites du respect de l’ordre public. La *laïcité* implique la neutralité de l’Etat et impose l’égalité de tous devant la loi sans distinction de religion ou de conviction. La *laïcité* garantit aux croyants et aux non-croyants le même droit à la liberté d’expression de leurs croyances ou convictions”.³

Non seulement cela est réaffirmé sur le site web du gouvernement, mais c’est également garanti par la Cour de la Convention européenne des droits de l’homme, la plus haute juridiction du système européen, qui a statué en 1993, dans l’affaire « **Kokkinakis contre la Grèce** », que le fait de partager sa foi publiquement est légal et constitue un droit que les nations européennes doivent protéger.

Alors pourquoi ce séminaire alors qu’il semblerait que la *laïcité* soit un concept favorable pour nous, croyants, dans notre tâche d’évangélisation !

b) Ce que la *laïcité* n’est pas.

-La *laïcité* n’est pas une loi.

La *laïcité* est un principe Français qui s’appuie sur des lois. En 1905, une célèbre loi a été votée sur la séparation de l’Église et de l’État. Cette loi est souvent considérée comme la loi fondatrice de la *laïcité*. Paradoxalement, la loi de 1905 n’utilise même pas le mot “*laïcité*.”⁴

La *laïcité* étant un principe et non une loi, il est difficile de comprendre clairement ce qu’elle est et ce qu’elle n’est pas dans le cadre juridique global. En raison de ce flou, de nombreux

³ Comité **interministériel** de la *laïcité* *Qu’est ce que la laïcité.*

⁴ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifié*, 26.

politiciens, philosophes et journalistes ont détourné le sens de la *laïcité* pour la rendre plus restrictive qu'elle ne l'est en réalité.

-La *laïcité* n'est pas la même pour tous.

La laïcité est en effet un principe juridique qui est censé être le fondement conceptuel de nombreuses lois sur la liberté religieuse en France, comme la loi de 1905. Cependant, *la laïcité* est devenue bien plus qu'un concept juridique.

Le professeur Daly, qui est un expert en droit, se fait le porte voix de nombreux chercheurs qui s'inquiètent du fait que *la laïcité* est en train de devenir un principe culturel et sociétal très différent de la *laïcité* légale.⁵ Ainsi, *la laïcité* est un principe juridique pour certains mais, pour de nombreux membres de la société française, elle est en train de devenir un principe culturel beaucoup plus restrictif que son équivalent juridique. Elle est désormais plus une question culturelle et identitaire qu'une question juridique et institutionnelle.⁶

Conclusion :

Que faire alors ? Sommes-nous coincés entre le marteau et l'enclume ? Devons-nous nous accommoder de la vision culturelle ? Devons-nous nous en tenir au point de vue juridique et ignorer le point de vue culturel ?

Si nous considérons qu'il est de notre responsabilité, en tant que croyants, d'aller partager l'Évangile et que la loi protège notre droit d'aller partager l'Évangile, il semble alors évident que nous devrions évangéliser. Cependant, l'aspect culturel de la *laïcité* est important et nous devons

⁵ Eoin Daly "La portée ambiguë de la laïcité constitutionnelle dans la France républicaine : Revisiting the Idea of Laïcité and Political Liberalism as Alternatives " *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies* 32, 3 (automne 2012) : 587.

⁶ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 43

être sensibles à la culture et examiner comment nous pouvons évangéliser d'une manière plus respectueuse de *la laïcité* culturelle. Dans les prochaines sessions, nous soutiendrons que le partage de témoignages est le moyen d'évangélisation le plus *respectueux de la laïcité*.

Comment faire ?

Dans les prochaines sessions, le partage de témoignage sera présenté comme un moyen d'évangélisation *respectueux de la laïcité*. En attendant, dans la session pratique de cette semaine, chacun d'entre vous devra rédiger une courte présentation de son témoignage. Le partage ne doit pas excéder 2 minutes et vous devez vous assurer que l'évangile y est présent.

[illegible]

REPAS DE FIN

Deuxième session

Deuxième leçon : Une définition biblique de la *laïcité*

Objectif :

L'objectif est qu'en sortant de la session 2, chaque participant **Comprenne** la doctrine de séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat, **Intègre** sa responsabilité d'évangéliser en respectant la loi autant que possible et **Témoigne** de sa foi d'une manière aussi respectueuse de la loi et la culture que possible.

1) La Séparation de l'Église et de l'État

Dans la session de la semaine dernière, nous avons étudié ce qu'étaient l'évangélisation et la *laïcité* et comment nous sommes libres en France de partager l'évangile et de proclamer le message de ce que le Christ a fait pour nous. Cette liberté est cependant menacée par l'approche restrictive de la *laïcité* qui est promue dans divers médias. En gardant cela à l'esprit, il est important pour le croyant français d'avoir une vision biblique solide de la séparation de l'Église et de l'État, non seulement comme doctrine soutenant le cadre juridique actuel, mais aussi comme boussole pour le croyant français dans les mers changeantes de la *laïcité*.

La séparation de l'Église et de l'État est une doctrine qui défend l'idée que les autorités civiles doivent être indépendantes du contrôle religieux et que les Églises doivent également être indépendantes des autorités civiles. Cette indépendance mutuelle est l'élément central de la doctrine de la séparation de l'Église et de l'État.

Cependant, le simple fait de l'affirmer ne suffit pas. On ne peut pas simplement établir une doctrine et l'imposer aux chrétiens, surtout s'ils sont de tradition évangélique et qu'ils tiennent à

la primauté de l'Écriture. Il est donc important de montrer que cette doctrine est enracinée dans les Ecritures et qu'elle remonte au Christ lui-même.

- Qu'a enseigné le Christ ?

En effet, le Christ n'est pas venu avec l'épée pour conquérir et soumettre les dirigeants comme l'espéraient les Juifs. Ses enseignements ont été très décevants pour cette foule qui espérait qu'il déclencherait une révolution militaire. Lorsque le Christ a enseigné qu'il fallait "rendre à César ce qui est à César, et à Dieu ce qui est à Dieu" (Marc 12.17) il n'a certainement pas appelé à un contrôle religieux. Il n'appelait pas à un contrôle religieux des autorités civiles, ni à l'intervention des autorités civiles dans les affaires religieuses. Sa déclaration établit une séparation claire entre les deux.

- Qu'a fait le Christ ?

Marc 12.17 n'est pas la seule preuve de la séparation de l'Église et de l'État dans le ministère du Christ. Son humble soumission aux autorités lors de son arrestation et de son procès témoigne de la mise en pratique de son enseignement. À tel point que lorsque Pierre, l'un de ses disciples, tire l'épée pour se battre, il est réprimandé et les dégâts qu'il a causés sont réparés.

Matt 26.52-53 : « **Jésus** lui dit : "Remets ton épée à sa place, car tous ceux qui prennent l'épée périront par l'épée. 53 Crois-tu que je ne puisse pas maintenant prier mon Père, et qu'il me donne plus de douze légions d'anges ? »

Ici nous voyons très clairement que Jésus était opposé à la rébellion, et qu'Il a agi dans les circonstances les plus extrême en cohérence avec son enseignement.

Ainsi, il est important de noter que la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat ne signifie pas la séparation du Chrétien et de l'Etat. Le Chrétiens comme Jésus ou les disciples restent sous

l'autorité étatique comme Jésus l'a démontré. Jésus étant le model absolu du Chrétien, son opposition à la rébellion doit nous inciter à garder une certaine réserve envers les rebellions et révolutions. Ces actes de violences qui peuvent être motivé comme avec la Révolution française par des concept profondément Chrétiens comme la liberté, l'égalité, et la fraternité, restes néanmoins des actions que Christ n'aurais pas mener et dont l'Eglise doit se garder. La révolution Chrétienne est un révolution spirituelle qui transforme les âmes une par une, et qui bien souvent comme avec Jésus et ses disciples coute au Chrétien.

- Que disaient les autorités civiles à propos du Christ ?

Il est important que le Christ ait enseigné la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat et qu'il ait vécu son enseignement. Mais il est aussi très important de noter que les autorités civiles confirment cette analyse de la doctrine de Jésus en jugeant qu'il n'est pas une menace pour elles. Pilate juge que l'accusation selon laquelle Jésus serait le chef d'une révolte contre Rome est fausse.

Dans Jean 18.37, Pilate commence son interrogatoire du Christ par une question révélatrice : "Es-tu le roi des Juifs ?" Cette question indique que les accusations portées contre Jésus sont de nature politique, et cette conclusion est renforcée par le verset 12 du chapitre 19, lorsque la foule des accusateurs conteste le jugement de Pilate selon lequel Jésus est innocent et exige sa mort pour des motifs politiques. "Dès ce moment, Pilate cherchait à le relâcher. Mais les Juifs criaient: Si tu le relâches, tu n'es pas ami de César. Quiconque se fait roi se déclare contre César."

Il est à noter que dans ce texte, Pilate aurait cherché à libérer "le roi des Juifs," ce qui est absurde pour un fonctionnaire romain. C'est précisément pour cette raison que la foule lui rappelle la trahison envers Rome et César qu'une telle décision constituerait. Ce verset nous montre que Pilate était convaincu de l'innocence de Jésus et qu'il l'a condamné par peur de la foule et des conséquences politiques.

- Que faisaient les apôtres de Jésus ?

Si l'on n'était pas sûr de la position de Jésus sur la doctrine de la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat, le témoignage des Apôtres montre clairement la compréhension du Christ sur ce sujet.

Le mot "apôtre" est important, car il signifie "ceux qui sont envoyés". Ainsi, comprendre ce qu'ont fait ceux qui ont été envoyés par le Christ est la clé pour comprendre ce que le Christ a enseigné en la matière. Rom 13 est un texte essentiel à considérer sur cette question puisqu'il s'agit d'un texte pertinent sur le sujet et qu'il provient de l'auteur le plus prolifique parmi les apôtres. Dans Rom 13.7, Paul affirme clairement que tous les croyants doivent rendre « à tous ce qui leur est dû: l'impôt à qui vous devez l'impôt, le tribut à qui vous devez le tribut, la crainte à qui vous devez la crainte, l'honneur à qui vous devez l'honneur »

L'enseignement des apôtres est dans la lignée de ce que Christ a enseigné et renforce cette notion de séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat.

- Quand le Christ régnera-t-il ?

Enfin il est essentiel de comprendre que le point de vue du Christ sur la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat s'appuie sur son futur règne terrestre. Les Ecritures sont claires : un jour, il n'y aura plus de séparation entre l'Eglise et l'Etat et c'est le Christ qui régnera sur la terre.

Apocalypse 20.4 : "Et je vis des trônes, et ils s'y assirent, et le jugement leur fut confié. Puis je vis les âmes de ceux qui avaient été décapités pour avoir rendu témoignage à Jésus et à la parole de Dieu, pour n'avoir pas adoré la bête ni son image, et pour n'avoir pas reçu sa marque sur le front ou sur la main. Ils vécurent et régnèrent avec le Christ pendant mille ans"

Par conséquent, si le Christ n'a pas promu un royaume terrestre lors de sa première venue et **s'il** a promis son règne terrestre lors de sa seconde venue, alors la doctrine de la séparation de l'Église et de l'État repose sur un fondement clair.

2) Exceptions à la doctrine et à l'évangélisation

Il est important que chaque croyant comprenne bien comment évangéliser dans le cas très probable où cette doctrine ne serait pas appliquée dans la société.

- Comment évangéliser quand l'église s'écarte du droit chemin ?

Il est important de noter que l'évangile est basé sur la liberté de choix de chaque individu.

Nombreux sont ceux qui ont critiqué cette dérive qui s'est malheureusement produite dans le passé. La critique était assez simple puisqu'elle reposait sur le fait que devant Dieu, les apparences ne suffisent pas au salut, mais qu'il faut une repentance et une foi sincères.

Rom 10.9-10 : "Si tu confesses de ta bouche le Seigneur Jésus et si tu crois dans ton cœur que Dieu l'a ressuscité des morts, tu seras sauvé. 10 Car c'est avec le cœur que l'on croit pour la justice, et c'est avec la bouche que l'on confesse pour le salut".

- Comment évangéliser quand l'État outrepassse ses droits ?

La question inverse de l'État qui s'immisce dans le domaine religieux s'est également posée dans l'histoire, mais surtout dans le Nouveau Testament lui-même.

Les exemples sont multiples: dans Apocalypse 13, les chrétiens qui refusent de se soumettre aux autorités malveillantes sont martyrisés, et dans les Actes, il y a de nombreux cas où les apôtres désobéissent aux autorités civiles parce qu'ils prêchent l'évangile malgré les injonctions de s'abstenir.

Dans Actes 5 Pierre et les autres apôtres sont confrontés au Sanhédrin pour avoir prêché l'Évangile et reçoivent à nouveau l'ordre de ne plus prêcher l'enseignement du Christ. Pierre leur donne une réponse similaire à celle qu'il leur avait donnée en Actes 4.19 lorsqu'ils avaient fait la même injonction. Actes 5.29 "Pierre et les autres apôtres prirent la parole et dirent: "Nous devons obéir à Dieu plutôt qu'aux hommes."

Il est essentiel de remarquer que, bien que les Écritures enseignent la soumission aux autorités, elles soutiennent également la désobéissance à ces mêmes autorités lorsqu'elles imposent au Chrétien des actes contraire aux commandements de Dieu. L'histoire et la Bible nous enseignent que cette désobéissance a un prix, puisque Jésus, Pierre, Jean et des milliers de Chrétiens depuis le premier siècle ont payé de leur vie leur obéissance au mandat de l'évangélisation malgré l'opposition étatique. Il est donc important pour le Chrétien de garder à l'Esprit la nécessité de se soumettre à l'État tant que possible et de désobéir avec courage et peu importe le coût lorsque celui-ci interdit aux Chrétiens d'évangéliser. Plus important encore, il s'agit d'un exemple de la doctrine de la séparation de l'Église et de l'État, puisque, dans ce cas, l'État ne doit pas intervenir dans l'Église.

Comment faire ?

Ici encore, comme la semaine dernière, vous devez rédiger une courte présentation de témoignage à partager avec des non-croyants. Dans la session trois nous verrons que le partage de son témoignage est un moyen très astucieux d'évangéliser et de ne pas enfreindre la loi ou offenser la culture laïque. Le partage ne doit pas dépasser 2 minutes et vous devez vous assurer que des citations de l'évangile y figurent.

[illegible]

REPAS DE FIN

Troisième session

Pourquoi il est préférable de partager son témoignage.

Objectif :

L'objectif est qu'en sortant de la session 3, chaque participant **Comprenne** l'intérêt d'utiliser son témoignage pour évangéliser, **Intègre** sa responsabilité d'évangéliser en respectant la loi et la culture autant que possible et **Témoigne** de sa foi d'une manière aussi respectueuse de la loi et la culture que possible.

a) Témoignages : Un outil puissant.

Partager son témoignage est la meilleure façon de partager l'Évangile parce qu'il combine la puissance du récit de vie avec une méthode de partage de l'Évangile respectueuse de la *laïcité*.

La puissance du récit de vie

Partager son témoignage peut être l'un des meilleurs outils d'évangélisation qui soit, car il communique l'Évangile d'une manière puissante. Les histoires plaisent à tout le monde car elles font appel à l'imagination et, comme le dit Os Guinness : "Les histoires ont une force supplémentaire. Elles sont indirectes, impliquantes et imaginatives. L'imagination est notre faculté humaine la plus puissante." ⁷

La société occidentale contemporaine est remplie d'histoires et de récits destinés à promouvoir des programmes et des idées. Le XXI^e siècle est marqué par la prévalence de la télévision et du cinéma, de la musique et de la radio, des jeux vidéo et des médias sociaux qui contribuent tous à la formation idéologique de la culture et de la société. Le **Docteur** Baubérot a également observé cette tendance importante dans le domaine de la *laïcité*, qualifiant les médias de "monstres doux" qui déforment et modifient lentement le paysage de la *laïcité* ".⁸

Les chrétiens doivent donc comprendre qu'ils ont eux aussi une histoire à partager ! Ils ont l'histoire de Jésus dans l'Évangile, une histoire puissante qui change la vie et le monde, celle de l'amour et de la justice divins. Des auteurs comme C.S. Lewis et J.R.R Tolkien ont compris cette puissante vérité et ont utilisé les talents que Dieu leur a donnés pour créer des histoires qui

⁷ Os Guinness, *Fool's Talk: Recovering the Art of Christian Persuasion* (Downers Grove, IL : InterVarsity Press, 2015), 165.

⁸ Baubérot, *La Laïcité Falsifiée*, 105.

reflètent leurs croyances chrétiennes de manière puissante. En France, Victor Hugo avec son œuvre « *Les Misérables* » fait écho à cette utilisation du Roman pour partager des croyances Chrétiennes.

Non seulement les chrétiens ont l'histoire de Jésus-Christ à partager, mais ils ont aussi l'application et les effets de cette histoire sur leur vie, ainsi que l'histoire de leur cheminement vers le Christ et de leur marche depuis lors qui peuvent être des outils convaincants et puissants à partager.

Personnel

Lorsque vous partagez votre témoignage, vous partagez une partie de votre histoire. Il est important que les non-croyants soient interpellés non seulement sur le plan philosophique ou théologique, mais aussi sur le plan personnel. Malheureusement, l'évangélisation peut parfois devenir un cours de théologie ou un débat philosophique alors qu'elle est censée être le partage de l'Évangile et surtout de l'Évangile en action dans la vie de ceux qui témoignent et partagent ce que Dieu a réalisé pour eux.

Cet aspect personnel de l'effort d'évangélisation est également considéré comme une composante importante de la nature puissante des récits et des témoignages dans l'évangélisation dans la culture occidentale actuelle. En effet, cette société est plus ouverte aux témoignages, car la société post-moderne est ouverte aux sentiments, aux traditions, aux émotions et aux histoires.⁹

b) Témoignages, évangélisation et *laïcité*.

⁹ Sam Chan, *L'évangélisation dans un monde sceptique* (Grand Rapids, MI : Zondervan, 2018.), 113.

Évangélisation

Dans les leçons précédentes, l'évangélisation a été définie et défendue d'un point de vue biblique et a été présentée comme un acte d'obéissance obligatoire.

Il est important que les croyants comprennent à nouveau les principes fondamentaux de l'évangélisation qui ont été présentés lors de la dernière session. L'évangélisation est donc une obligation et un résultat naturel de l'Évangile dans le croyant né de nouveau, qui l'oblige à aller partager la bonne nouvelle de la mort et de la résurrection de Jésus-Christ pour les péchés de l'humanité et le salut par la foi que tous les hommes peuvent obtenir grâce à son œuvre achevée.

Prosélytisme

Il est important, dans le cadre de cette étude, de définir clairement ce qu'est le prosélytisme et en quoi il diffère de l'évangélisation. Ceci est essentiel car le gouvernement français différencie ces deux termes. Mais l'importance de cette question ne doit pas se limiter à la France mais s'étendre au monde entier, puisque le Pape lui-même, dans son discours à l'Institut pontifical pour les missions étrangères, a considéré cette nuance comme cruciale à la lumière des tensions croissantes entre le sécularisme et la foi à travers le monde, à la lumière du contexte historique catholique qui sous-tend ces tensions.

« Il y a un danger qui réapparaît - il semblait dépassé mais il tend à réapparaître - : confondre évangélisation et prosélytisme. Non. L'évangélisation est le témoignage de Jésus-Christ, mort et ressuscité. C'est lui qui attire. C'est pourquoi l'Église grandit par attraction et non par prosélytisme, comme l'a dit Benoît XVI. Mais cette confusion est en quelque sorte née d'une conception politico-économique de l'évangélisation, qui n'est plus l'évangélisation.

[...] Il ne s'agit pas de chercher de nouveaux membres pour cette "société catholique", non ; il s'agit de montrer Jésus : qu'il se fasse voir dans ma personne, dans mon comportement ; et d'ouvrir des espaces à Jésus tout au long de ma vie. C'est cela l'évangélisation.¹⁰

Ainsi, l'évangélisation et le prosélytisme doivent être compris comme se distinguant par les moyens et la finalité du contenu partagé. L'évangélisation est un partage de la foi qui laisse ensuite l'interlocuteur totalement libre sans que l'évangéliste ne cherche à le convaincre d'adhérer ou de se joindre à lui, il s'agit d'une déclaration ou d'une offre. Ainsi, l'évangélisation relève de la liberté d'expression qui coïncide avec la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat qui a été défendue lors de la dernière session. Le prosélytisme, quant à lui, est plus actif dans le partage, il est plus engagé et a pour objectif final de convertir la personne. Bien que beaucoup puissent être en désaccord avec cette distinction, il est nécessaire de définir les termes tels qu'ils sont perçus dans le pays étudié, à savoir la France, et cette distinction faite par le Pape François reflète ce que le gouvernement français considère comme le prosélytisme. L'Observatoire de la *laïcité*, un organisme gouvernemental chargé de superviser les questions de *laïcité*, a défini le prosélytisme comme consistant à "essayer de convaincre les gens d'adhérer à une religion".¹¹

D'autres organismes gouvernementaux ont donné une image négative du prosélytisme :

La "Charte de la *Laïcité*" de 2013 stipule que les écoles doivent protéger les enfants "de tout prosélytisme et de toute pression qui les empêcheraient de faire leurs propres choix".¹²

¹⁰ Discours du pape François aux participants à l'assemblée générale de l'institut pontifical des missions étrangères (PIME) 20 mai 2019. [Aux participants au Chapitre général de l'Institut pontifical des Missions étrangères \(PIME\) \(20 mai 2019\) | François \(vatican.va\).](#)

¹¹ Observatoire de la *laïcité* *LIBERTES ET INTERDITS DANS LE CADRE LAÏQUE*, 2016, 3 [2. libertes et interdits dans le cadre laïque 0.pdf \(gouvernement.fr\).](#)

¹² Ministère de l'Education Nationale "Charte de la *laïcité* à l'école" 2013.

Et la “Charte de la *Laïcité* dans les services publics” stipule que “Tous les usagers sont égaux devant le service public. Il a le droit d’exprimer ses convictions religieuses dans les limites du respect de la neutralité du service public, de son bon fonctionnement et des exigences de l’ordre public, de la sécurité, de la santé et de l’hygiène. Les usagers doivent s’abstenir de toute forme de prosélytisme”.¹³

Bien que tout chrétien doive chercher à convertir une personne lorsqu’il évangélise, il est également important de comprendre que l’évangélisation consiste essentiellement à offrir aux hommes et aux femmes perdus l’occasion d’accepter le message de l’Évangile. Les chrétiens ne peuvent pas contraindre les hommes et les femmes au Christ, car cela est contraire à l’Évangile lui-même. L’éminent penseur politique John Locke, dans sa *Lettre sur la tolérance*, a bien saisi la question en disant que “le soin des âmes n’est pas confié au magistrat civil, pas plus qu’il ne l’est à d’autres hommes. Il ne lui est pas confié par Dieu, car il semble que Dieu n’ait jamais donné à un homme l’autorité de contraindre quelqu’un d’autre à adhérer à sa religion”.¹⁴ John Locke lie cette question à la séparation de l’Église et de l’État et aide les chrétiens à comprendre les différences entre l’évangélisation et le prosélytisme.

Prosélytisme ou évangélisation ?

Les chrétiens sont appelés à lutter pour les âmes perdues ! Mais ils ne sont pas appelés à contraindre les individus à la foi. Si les chrétiens réfléchissent à ce que l’on entend par ces deux termes et à la manière dont les gens perçoivent ces questions, ils apprendront à évangéliser d’une manière qui respecte la perception négative du prosélytisme dans la société française.

¹³ Comité interministériel de la laïcité “Charte de la laïcité dans les services publics” (2022), 1.

¹⁴ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Londres: J. Brook, 1796), 11.

Les chrétiens doivent évangéliser, proclamer l'Évangile et utiliser leurs témoignages comme des outils puissants pour partager l'Évangile et leur foi. Une fois cette proclamation faite, il est également important que les chrétiens ne craignent pas l'accusation de prosélytisme qui pourrait être faite si une conversation s'ensuivait.

En effet, si quelqu'un partage son témoignage et que des questions sont posées sur ce témoignage, il est normal, dans le cadre d'une conversation naturelle, de donner une réponse convaincante. Non seulement cette réponse est normale et naturelle, mais elle est aussi biblique :

1 Pierre 3.15 : “Sanctifiez dans vos cœurs le Seigneur Dieu, et soyez toujours prêts à défendre, avec douceur et crainte, l'espérance qui est en vous, devant quiconque vous en demande raison.

Ainsi, l'évangélisation est le devoir du croyant qui doit prêcher l'évangile et peut utiliser son témoignage comme un outil puissant dans l'accomplissement de cette mission et faire du prosélytisme si on le lui demande.

Les témoignages offrent donc non seulement un outil puissant pour proclamer l'évangile, mais ils offrent également aux chrétiens un moyen utile et accepté de partager l'évangile et ouvrent des opportunités pour que les gens cherchent à aller plus loin avec des questions et des objections qui permettront au croyant de s'engager sans problème dans une forme douce de prosélytisme.

Qui, quand et où ?

Dans cette section, vous devez réfléchir aux personnes avec lesquelles vous pourriez partager l'Évangile cette semaine. Choisissez une ou deux personnes avec lesquelles vous allez essayer intentionnellement de partager votre témoignage. Cela nécessitera un plan : vous devrez réfléchir à un lieu et à un moment pour le faire.

Dans cette section, il vous est demandé de vous engager devant le reste du groupe à réaliser votre section “**qui, quand et où ?**”. Lors de la prochaine session, il vous sera demandé de partager avec le groupe la manière dont les choses se sont déroulées. Vous vous engagez également, en tant que membre du groupe, à soutenir, encourager et prier pour les autres membres du groupe et à vous abstenir de tout jugement s’ils ont du mal à respecter leur engagement.

[illegible]

Quatrième session

Temps de partage

Chaque session comprendra un temps de partage au début. Ce temps de partage a pour but d'encourager le groupe dans son engagement d'évangélisation au cours de la semaine. Chaque participant sera invité à partager la manière dont son engagement d'évangélisation a été mis en œuvre et ses résultats. Si vous **n'avez** pas partagé l'Évangile **pendant la** semaine, ce ne **sera** pas **l'occasion** pour les autres de vous juger, ni pour vous de juger les autres. Nous devons nous soutenir et nous encourager les uns les autres.

Leçon 4 : Objections diverses

Objectif

L'objectif est qu'à l'issue de la session 1, chaque participant **comprenne** l'évangélisation, **intègre** sa responsabilité d'évangéliser et **témoigne** de sa foi.

À partir de maintenant, les leçons seront plus courtes et les sessions se concentreront sur les aspects pratiques. Dans la leçon de cette semaine, plusieurs objections seront abordées. Il s'agit d'objections formulées à l'encontre de l'évangélisation en général et de l'évangélisation dans le contexte de la *laïcité*. Cette leçon ne sera pas une argumentation complète contre tous les arguments possibles **et imaginables** mais une réfutation de certains arguments courants.

Dans *The Ethics of Evangelism*, le professeur Elmer Thiessen, un philosophe chrétien, a tenté de répondre à certaines de ces objections courantes. Dans son ouvrage, Thiessen répond à une objection courante selon laquelle l'évangélisation est une tentative « immorale » de persuader les

gens¹⁵. L'idée est que l'évangélisation serait une tentative d'exercer un pouvoir sur les autres et que, par conséquent, l'évangélisation ne serait pas honnête, mais plutôt coercitive et manipulatrice. Il s'agit d'un argument très courant que chacun peut avoir entendu dans des termes différents. Cette session se concentrera sur la réponse à l'objection selon laquelle l'évangélisation est immorale et répondra à trois objections courantes qui qualifient l'évangélisation d'immorale, tout en apportant une réponse à une question pratique et pastorale.

1) Le Calvinisme

Certains "calvinistes" très convaincus supposeront, à tort, que l'évangélisation est un acte qui ne fait pas confiance à Dieu et à placer l'homme au centre de l'évangile et ouvriront ainsi la porte à cette mauvaise pratique évangélique. Ainsi ils considèrent l'évangélisation comme immorale. S'il s'agit là d'une grave incompréhension de ce qu'est le calvinisme, c'est aussi une grave incompréhension de ce qu'est l'évangélisme et de l'état de la société dans son ensemble. Ce n'est pas maintenant le moment de débattre de l'éternelle question du libre arbitre et de la souveraineté, mais il est important de se rappeler que l'apôtre Paul est certainement en contradiction avec les individus qui s'opposent à l'évangélisation dans Romains 10:14-15 : "Comment donc invoqueront-ils celui en qui ils n'ont pas cru ? Comment croiront-ils en Celui dont ils n'ont pas entendu parler ? Et comment entendront-ils sans prédicateur ? Et comment prêcheront-ils s'ils ne sont pas envoyés ? Comme il est écrit : "Qu'ils sont beaux, les pieds de ceux qui annoncent la paix, Qui apportent la bonne nouvelle de bonnes choses !"

Si Paul croit que prêcher et témoigner de notre foi est nécessaire pour atteindre ceux qui n'ont pas mis leur foi en Christ, alors toutes les autres considérations sur le libre arbitre et la

¹⁵ Elmer J. Thiessen. *The Ethics of Evangelism* (Milton Keynes:Uk, Authentic Media, 2011) , 55 .

souveraineté doivent se soumettre à ce commandement sans équivoque selon lequel les croyants doivent prêcher et évangéliser ceux qui n'ont pas mis leur foi en Christ.

2) La liberté

Certains affirmeront que l'évangélisation est une atteinte à la liberté individuelle, car le chrétien essaie de persuader et de convaincre les gens de ses convictions. Dans ce cas, le chrétien porterait atteinte à l'autonomie intellectuelle de l'individu. Il est important de comprendre que ceux qui soulèvent cette objection tentent de persuader le croyant de ne pas évangéliser et se contredisent donc eux-mêmes.¹⁶ Deuxièmement, ceux qui défendent ce point de vue vivent également dans une autonomie intellectuelle illusoire, ils supposent que les individus sont libres de toute pression et de toute influence et que l'évangélisation est une violation de cet intellect impartial, non influencé et autonome.¹⁷ Ce n'est certainement pas la vérité. En fait, les partisans de la vision restrictive semblent penser que la foi étant une affaire privée, elle ne devrait pas être exprimée en public et devrait rester privée afin de ne pas empiéter sur la liberté d'autrui. Cependant, ils persuadent eux-mêmes les autres et font pression sur eux pour qu'ils croient qu'un monde sécularisé est un monde libre, et que la foi est une croyance personnelle qui n'est pas ancrée dans la réalité.

De plus, dans la leçon 4, l'évangélisation a été présentée comme l'acte de faire une offre ou une déclaration et de laisser l'individu faire son propre choix. Cette définition s'oppose à celle du prosélytisme en France, qui est plus engagé et cherche à faire pression et à convaincre les gens.

¹⁶ Elmer J. Thiessen . *L'éthique de l'évangélisation* (Milton Keynes, UK: Authentic Media, 2011), 58.

¹⁷ Ibid. 57.

3) La vérité et l'arrogance

Dans son livre sur les objections à l'évangélisation, le professeur Thiessen met également le doigt sur une attaque très courante contre l'évangélisation, à savoir la question de la vérité et de l'arrogance. Il note que les non-croyants accusent souvent l'évangélisation d'être une entreprise arrogante qui cherche à définir et à imposer sa propre vérité aux autres. Il s'agit d'un problème qui découle de l'état d'esprit postmoderne qui s'est développé dans la société du 21^e siècle. Fondamentalement, l'affirmation est qu'il n'y a pas de vérité objective et que la vérité n'est qu'une construction subjective du monde que chaque individu définit pour lui-même. Par conséquent, lorsqu'un chrétien vient proclamer "sa vérité", il n'y a pas de problème tant qu'il n'affirme pas que Jésus est le seul chemin, qu'il est le seul et unique vrai Dieu et que la vérité se trouve en Lui. Thiessen donne une bonne réponse à cette double question dans son livre, il explique que chaque fois qu'une revendication de vérité est faite, la revendication de vérité d'un autre est minée, et cela peut sembler être une attitude arrogante. Toutefois, comme l'explique Thiessen, cette attitude n'est perçue comme arrogante que parce que la personne qui écoute a déjà déterminé que son interlocuteur avait tort.¹⁸ En effet, si ce monde est postmoderne, il croit que les affirmations de vérité ne sont que subjectives et non absolues, et lorsque quelqu'un proclame la vérité absolue de l'Évangile, le monde le perçoit comme arrogant et condescendant parce qu'il a **déjà** jugé qu'il avait tort de le faire en raison de son engagement préalable en faveur du postmodernisme. Ce n'est pas seulement vrai pour le postmodernisme, toute personne ayant un système de croyances percevra quelqu'un qui proclame avec ferveur un système de croyances opposé comme arrogant et condescendant parce qu'elle croit qu'elle a raison et qu'il a tort.

¹⁸ Elmer J. Thiessen. *L'éthique de l'évangélisation* (Milton Keynes:Uk, Authentic Media, 2011), 61.

4) Pas équiper

Enfin, une approche plus pastorale de cette question pourrait également fournir un argument supplémentaire contre l'évangélisation. Il ne s'agit pas tant d'un argument contre l'évangélisation que d'un argument contre la participation à l'évangélisation. Cet argument est celui du chrétien qui se sent mal **formé**, trop timide ou intimidé par l'évangélisation. Cette question ne devrait pas être un problème majeur après les premières sessions. En effet, partager l'Évangile peut être une tâche beaucoup plus facile si cela se fait à travers le témoignage d'une personne. Les croyants participant à ce séminaire auront été formés à la préparation et à la pratique du témoignage de leur salut, ce qui devrait remédier efficacement au problème de la timidité et de la peur de ne pas savoir quoi dire. Bien qu'il y ait toujours une appréhension concernant ce que les gens pourraient dire à propos de son témoignage ou de sa foi, il est important que le croyant se souvienne que son témoignage est un outil puissant. Bien sûr, ce séminaire n'est pas suffisant pour préparer un croyant à tout ce qu'il pourrait rencontrer dans ses efforts d'évangélisation, les chrétiens sont appelés à étudier et à se préparer à fournir des réponses, mais ils peuvent toujours compter sur leur témoignage comme un moyen puissant de partage.

Qui, quand et où ?

Dans cette section, vous devez réfléchir aux personnes avec lesquelles vous pourriez partager l'Évangile cette semaine. Choisissez une ou deux personnes avec lesquelles vous allez essayer intentionnellement de partager votre témoignage. Cela nécessitera un plan ; vous devrez réfléchir à un lieu et à un moment pour le faire.

Temps d'engagement

Dans cette section, il vous est demandé de vous engager devant le reste du groupe à réaliser votre section “qui, quand et où”. Lors de la prochaine session, il vous sera demandé de partager avec le groupe la manière dont les choses se sont déroulées. Vous vous engagez également, en tant que membre du groupe, à soutenir, encourager et prier pour les autres membres du groupe et à vous abstenir de tout jugement s'ils ont du mal à respecter leur engagement.

REPAS DE FIN D'ANNÉE

Cinquième session

Temps de partage

Chaque session comprendra un temps de partage au début. Ce temps de partage a pour but d'encourager le groupe dans son engagement d'évangélisation au cours de la semaine. Chaque participant sera invité à partager la manière dont son engagement d'évangélisation a été mis en œuvre et ses résultats. Si vous n'avez pas partagé l'Évangile cette semaine, ce n'est pas **l'occasion** pour les autres de vous juger, ni pour vous de juger les autres. Nous devons nous soutenir et nous encourager les uns les autres.

Leçon 5 : La spontanéité dans l'évangélisation

Objectif

L'objectif est qu'à l'issue de la session 5, chaque participant **comprenne** l'évangélisation, **intègre** sa responsabilité de toujours évangéliser et **témoigne** spontanément de sa foi.

1) Orienter la conversation

Jusqu'à présent, les sessions ont promu une méthode d'évangélisation planifiée et intentionnelle par le partage de témoignages. Cette méthode est toujours encouragée, mais la cinquième leçon se concentrera sur les opportunités quotidiennes d'évangélisation que l'on a et que l'on ne voit pas ou qu'on ne saisit pas nécessairement. Les témoignages développés jusqu'à présent sont des outils fantastiques pour l'évangélisation, et ils doivent continuer à être utilisés comme les meilleurs outils pour l'évangélisation dans le contexte de la *laïcité*.

Cette session a pour but d'encourager chacun à réfléchir à la manière dont il peut utiliser cet outil plus fréquemment et s'en servir pour transformer les conversations en opportunités d'évangélisation. Dans son livre désormais classique *Tactics*, Gregory Koukl, apologiste et évangéliste, offre aux chrétiens des conseils pour les aider à évangéliser et à orienter les conversations vers Dieu. Le point principal de son livre est que les chrétiens doivent apprendre à poser des questions et donc à prendre l'initiative de l'orientation de la conversation.¹⁹ Bien que Koukl ait l'intention d'utiliser cette technique pour répondre à un commentaire qui est manifestement dirigé contre Dieu, notre foi ou la Bible, elle reste une compétence très importante pour les croyants dans les conversations de tous les jours, car elle les aidera à atteindre leur objectif de créer des occasions de partager leurs témoignages. Lorsque les croyants voient comment ils peuvent orienter une conversation vers Dieu, ils peuvent alors poser des questions qui conduiront la conversation vers une opportunité de partager leur témoignage et de répondre aux questions du mieux qu'ils peuvent.

Il ne s'agit pas d'une tentative de déformer les mots et d'entraîner quelqu'un contre son gré dans une conversation qu'il veut éviter à tout prix. Il s'agit plutôt d'une vigilance à l'égard des déclarations qui indiquent un besoin que les croyants nourrissent en Christ, ou des déclarations qui font directement ou indirectement référence à la foi et à Dieu.

2) Être prêt

Si les chrétiens sont appelés à être vigilants et à prêter attention à ce que disent leurs interlocuteurs afin de poser les bonnes questions, il s'ensuit que les chrétiens sont appelés à être prêts à tout moment et donc à s'engager dans l'évangélisation spontanée. La Bible est claire à ce

¹⁹ Gregory, Koukl, *Tactics*, 10th Anniversary Edition : A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions (Grand Rapids, MI : Zondervan, 2019), 1-28.

sujet : les croyants sont appelés à se tenir prêts à évangéliser, à entrer en action à tout moment. 1 Pierre 3:15 “Sanctifiez dans vos cœurs le Seigneur Dieu, et *soyez* toujours prêts à défendre, avec douceur et crainte, l’espérance qui est en vous, auprès de quiconque vous en demandera raison.”

Cette disponibilité est liée au point précédent, car les chrétiens doivent non seulement être prêts à répondre aux questions qui leur sont posées, mais aussi comprendre leur nouvelle identité et leur rôle d’ “ambassadeurs”, comme l’affirme Paul dans 2 Corinthiens 5:20 : “Nous sommes donc des ambassadeurs pour le Christ”.

Si les ambassadeurs du premier siècle étaient très différents des ambassadeurs d’aujourd’hui, ils ont en commun d’être des représentants et des interlocuteurs pour ceux qui cherchent à interagir ou à s’engager avec le pays qu’ils représentent. De la même manière, nous sommes appelés à être ces interlocuteurs, ces représentants sur terre qui pointent l’attention toujours vers Dieu et qui sont prêts à répondre et à présenter notre Dieu au monde éloigné de Dieu.

Cela signifie que les croyants doivent être attentifs : la passivité n’est pas une option pour les croyants dans le travail d’évangélisation ! L’évangélisation spontanée n’est possible que si les croyants la planifient ! La spontanéité dans l’évangélisation est donc le fruit d’une planification et d’une préparation intentionnelles. Si les croyants veulent obéir à Dieu et être des ambassadeurs fidèles, ils doivent être préparés et vigilants. Aucun ambassadeur n’est parfait, et aucun ambassadeur n’a toutes les réponses, mais les ambassadeurs savent qui ils représentent et ils cherchent à être des représentants fidèles. Les croyants ne peuvent pas être prêts pour tout ce à quoi ils seront confrontés, mais ils peuvent être prêts à partager les raisons pour lesquelles ils suivent Jésus et à partager du mieux qu’ils peuvent ce qu’ils savent de Dieu.

Il est donc évident que la mission d’évangélisation exige plus que des efforts superficiels, c’est une mission globale, être ambassadeur est une réalité quotidienne et cela nous rappelle notre

témoignage au monde. En outre, il convient de noter que, puisque notre évangélisation est constante, nos actions et nos paroles sont examinées et comparées à ce que nous disons croire. Bien que ce dernier point ne soit pas nécessairement lié au devoir de partager spontanément l'Évangile, il est important que les croyants se souviennent que leur vie quotidienne et leurs actions ont un impact sur leur crédibilité et leur capacité à partager l'Évangile. L'absence d'une vie chrétienne correcte n'est pas seulement un facteur négatif potentiel pour l'Évangile, mais elle peut aussi être un facteur positif potentiel pour l'Évangile, car les non-croyants se demanderont comment ou pourquoi les croyants agissent comme ils le font, ce qui fournira au croyant des occasions d'annoncer l'Évangile.

Conclusion :

En conclusion, il est important que les croyants soient toujours prêts à annoncer l'Évangile, et qu'ils recherchent et créent des occasions de conversations sur l'Évangile. Ce devoir n'est pas facile et exige que les croyants se soucient réellement des autres, de ce qu'ils vivent et de ce qu'ils disent. Les croyants sont appelés à poser les bonnes questions, à saisir les opportunités et à répondre aux questions. Cela peut se faire en grande partie en partageant son témoignage et en le vivant avec ceux qui sont perdus.

Qui, quand et où ?

Le « Qui, Quand et Où » de cette semaine exigera une réflexion créative, car chaque participant sera invité à tenter de partager son témoignage de manière spontanée. Dans cette section, il vous est demandé de réfléchir aux personnes avec lesquelles vous pouvez créer une opportunité d'évangélisation spontanée cette semaine. Choisissez une ou deux personnes avec lesquelles vous allez essayer de partager votre témoignage de manière spontanée. Cela nécessitera un plan ;

vous devrez réfléchir à un moment et à un lieu pour que cela se produise et prier pour que l'occasion se présente.

Comment faire ?

Dans les sessions précédentes, le partage de témoignage a été présenté comme un moyen d'évangélisation *respectueux de la laïcité*. Dans la session pratique de cette semaine, chacun d'entre vous devra trouver des idées pour partager son témoignage ou l'Évangile de manière impromptue.

[illegible]

Temps d'engagement

Dans cette section, il vous est demandé de vous engager devant le reste du groupe à réaliser votre section “comment faire”. Lors de la prochaine session, il vous sera demandé de partager avec le groupe la façon dont les choses se sont déroulées. Vous vous engagez également, en tant que membre du groupe, à soutenir, encourager et prier pour les autres membres du groupe et à vous abstenir de tout jugement s'ils ont du mal à respecter leur engagement.

REPAS DE FIN

Sixième session

Temps de Partage

Chaque session comprendra un temps de partage au début. Ce temps de partage a pour but d'encourager le groupe dans son engagement d'évangélisation durant la semaine. Chaque participant sera invité à partager la manière dont son engagement d'évangélisation a été mis en œuvre et ses résultats. Si vous n'avez pas partagé l'Évangile cette semaine, ce n'est pas le moment pour les autres de vous juger, ni pour vous de juger les autres. Nous devons nous soutenir et nous encourager les uns les autres.

Leçon 6 : Révision du manuel

Objectif

L'objectif est qu'à l'issue de la session 6, chaque participant **comprenne** l'évangélisation et la *laïcité*, **intègre** sa responsabilité de toujours évangéliser et de le faire de la manière la plus appropriée aux circonstances et à la *laïcité*, et **témoigne** spontanément de sa foi.

Il s'agit de la dernière session du séminaire et d'une session de synthèse de tout ce qui a été abordé jusqu'à présent. Les participants seront invités à faire part de leurs réflexions et de leurs questions sur les différentes sessions ou sur l'ensemble du séminaire. Lors de chaque récapitulation, les participants seront invités à faire des commentaires et à dire si cette session a été utile ou non.

1) Récapitulatif de la session 1

En France, la *laïcité* garantit aux croyants le droit de partager leur foi, même si la compréhension culturelle de la *laïcité* semble promouvoir l'absence de telles manifestations de foi. Les croyants

reçoivent l'ordre d'aller évangéliser, d'aller partager l'Évangile, et doivent le faire par amour pour les âmes perdues et pour le Christ.

2) Récapitulatif de la session 2

Les croyants peuvent lutter contre l'influence négative de la *laïcité* culturelle et restrictive en défendant la *laïcité* historique et libertaire qui est conforme à la doctrine biblique de la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat. Ils doivent aussi garder à l'esprit que cette opinion et leur évangélisation peuvent leur coûter, mais qu'ils sont appelés à suivre Dieu et à vivre en paix avec tous les hommes autant qu'ils le peuvent.

3) Récapitulatif de la session 3

Les croyants peuvent et doivent partager l'Évangile en utilisant leurs témoignages, car ce sont des outils puissants pour l'évangélisation. Les témoignages sont un excellent moyen de partager l'Évangile sans franchir la ligne du prosélytisme en France et ils sont des outils puissants pour le partage de l'Évangile. Ils offrent également aux chrétiens un moyen utile et accepté de partager l'Évangile et ouvrent des opportunités pour les gens de chercher plus loin avec des questions et des objections qui permettront au croyant de s'engager en douceur dans une forme de prosélytisme.

4) Récapitulatif de la session 4

Il existe de nombreuses objections à l'évangélisation, mais il est important que le croyant se souvienne que l'évangélisation n'est pas facultative pour les croyants et que les diverses objections qui pourraient être formulées à l'encontre de l'évangélisation ne sont pas puissantes.

5) Récapitulatif de la session 5

Les chrétiens doivent réfléchir à la manière dont ils peuvent utiliser leurs témoignages spontanément et s'en servir pour transformer les conversations en opportunités d'évangélisation. Par conséquent, les croyants devraient toujours être vigilants à l'égard des déclarations qui indiquent un besoin que les croyants ont trouvé satisfait en Christ, ou des déclarations qui font directement ou indirectement référence à la foi et à Dieu. Les croyants sont des ambassadeurs, et être ambassadeur est une réalité quotidienne qui nous rappelle notre témoignage au monde !

Temps d'engagement

Dans cette section, il vous est demandé de vous engager devant le reste du groupe à réaliser votre section "comment faire". Comme il s'agit de la dernière session, vous ne pourrez pas partager avec le groupe comment vos efforts d'évangélisation se sont déroulés au cours de la semaine. Cependant, il est de votre devoir en tant que croyant de vous engager dans l'évangélisation chaque semaine et de partager avec vos frères et soeurs ce que Dieu fait à travers vous dans votre évangélisation. Vous vous engagez également, en tant que membre du groupe, à soutenir, encourager et prier pour les autres membres du groupe et à vous abstenir de tout jugement s'ils ont du mal à remplir leur engagement.

REPAS DE FIN

Sixième session

Temps de Partage

Chaque session comprendra un temps de partage au début. Ce temps de partage a pour but d'encourager le groupe dans son engagement d'évangélisation durant la semaine. Chaque participant sera invité à partager la manière dont son engagement d'évangélisation a été mis en œuvre et ses résultats. Si vous n'avez pas partagé l'Évangile cette semaine, ce n'est pas l'occasion pour les autres de vous juger, ni pour vous de juger les autres. Nous devons nous soutenir et nous encourager les uns les autres.

Leçon 6 : Révision du manuel

Objectif

L'objectif est qu'à l'issue de la session 6, chaque participant **comprenne** l'évangélisation et la *laïcité*, **intègre** sa responsabilité de toujours évangéliser et de le faire de la manière la plus appropriée aux circonstances et à la *laïcité* et **témoigne** spontanément de sa foi.

Il s'agit de la dernière session du séminaire et d'une session de synthèse de tout ce qui a été abordé jusqu'à présent. Les participants seront invités à faire part de leurs réflexions et de leurs questions sur les différentes sessions ou sur l'ensemble du séminaire. Lors de chaque récapitulation, les participants seront invités à faire des commentaires et à dire si cette session a été utile ou non.

1) Récapitulatif de la session 1

En France, la *laïcité* garantit aux croyants le droit de partager leur foi, même si la compréhension culturelle de la *laïcité* semble promouvoir l'absence de telles manifestations de foi. Les croyants

reçoivent l'ordre d'aller évangéliser, d'aller partager l'Évangile et doivent le faire par amour pour les âmes perdues et pour le Christ.

2) Récapitulatif de la session 2

Les croyants peuvent lutter contre l'influence négative de la *laïcité* culturelle et restrictive en défendant la *laïcité* historique et libertaire qui est conforme à la doctrine biblique de la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat. Ils doivent aussi garder à l'esprit que cette opinion et leur évangélisation peuvent avoir un prix pour eux mais qu'ils sont appelés à suivre Dieu et à vivre en paix avec tous les hommes autant qu'ils le peuvent.

3) Récapitulatif de la session 3

Les croyants peuvent et doivent partager l'Évangile en utilisant leurs témoignages, car ce sont des outils puissants pour l'évangélisation. Les témoignages sont un excellent moyen de partager l'Évangile sans franchir la ligne du prosélytisme en France. Ils constituent des outils puissants pour le partage de l'Évangile. Ils offrent également aux chrétiens un moyen utile et accepté de partager l'Évangile et ouvrent des opportunités pour les gens de chercher plus loin avec des questions et des objections qui permettront au croyant de s'engager en douceur dans une forme de prosélytisme.

4) Récapitulatif de la session 4

Il existe de nombreuses objections à l'évangélisation, mais il est important que le croyant se souvienne que l'évangélisation n'est pas facultative pour les croyants et que les diverses objections qui pourraient être formulées à l'encontre de l'évangélisation peuvent être facilement récusées.

5) Récapitulatif de la session 5

Les chrétiens doivent réfléchir à la manière dont ils peuvent utiliser leurs témoignages spontanément et s'en servir pour transformer les conversations en opportunités d'évangélisation. Par conséquent, les croyants devraient toujours être vigilants à l'égard des déclarations qui indiquent un besoin que les croyants ont trouvé satisfait en Christ, ou des déclarations qui font directement ou indirectement référence à la foi et à Dieu. Les croyants sont des ambassadeurs, et être ambassadeur est une réalité quotidienne qui nous rappelle notre témoignage au monde !

Temps d'engagement

Comme il s'agit de la dernière session, vous ne pourrez pas partager avec le groupe comment vos efforts d'évangélisation se sont déroulés au cours de la semaine. Cependant, il est de votre devoir en tant que croyant de vous engager dans l'évangélisation chaque semaine et de partager avec vos frères et soeurs ce que Dieu fait à travers vous dans votre évangélisation. Vous vous engagez également, en tant que membre du groupe, à soutenir, encourager et prier pour les autres membres du groupe et à vous abstenir de tout jugement s'ils ont du mal à remplir leur engagement.

REPAS DE FIN

APPENDIX J

TRANSLATION OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS D'ENTRETIEN

1. Qu'est-ce que l'évangélisation pour vous ?
2. Décrivez comment vous envisagez l'évangélisation.
3. Comment pensez-vous que la société perçoive votre foi ?
4. Comment pensez-vous que la société perçoive le fait de partager sa foi ?
5. Qu'est-ce que *la laïcité* pour vous ?
6. En quoi êtes-vous d'accord avec elle ?
7. En quoi êtes-vous en désaccord avec elle ?
8. Parlez-moi d'un moment où vous avez eu l'impression qu'il y avait un conflit entre *la laïcité* et l'évangélisation dans votre vie.
9. Comment percevez-vous la manière dont notre société traite les différentes confessions ?
(catholicisme, islam, évangéliques, juifs, etc.)
10. Donnez votre avis sur certaines lois ou propositions de lois concernant l'Islam et la *laïcité*
? (Voile, prières de rue, financement par l'Etat, etc.)
11. Avez-vous d'autres remarques ?

APPENDIX K

TRANSLATION OF LIKERT SURVEY

Laïcité et évangélisation Enquête de Likert

Question 1 : Les chrétiens doivent partager leur foi régulièrement, même en public.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 2 : Je partage régulièrement l'Évangile.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 3 : La foi est une affaire privée.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 4 : *La laïcité* est une bonne chose pour la religion.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 5 : *La laïcité* est contre la religion.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 6 : *La Laïcité* est neutre vis-à-vis de la religion.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 7 : *La laïcité* est un obstacle à l'évangélisation.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 8 : Les adeptes de diverses confessions devraient s'abstenir de manifester publiquement leur foi en raison de la *laïcité*.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 9 : *La laïcité* interdit aux adeptes des différentes religions de partager leur foi.

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 10 : Lorsque *la laïcité est un obstacle* à l'évangélisation, les chrétiens doivent quand même évangéliser.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 11 : Je sais comment partager l'Evangile.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

Question 12 : Je sais comment partager l'Evangile dans le contexte de la *laïcité*.

| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Tout à fait d'accord | En Accord | Ni l'un ni l'autre ou N/A | Pas d'accord | Pas du tout d'accord |

APPENDIX L

TRANSLATION OF CONSENT FORM

FORMULAIRE DE CONSENTEMENT

Consentement

Titre du projet : Contrecarrer les effets négatifs de la *laïcité* sur l'évangélisation

Chercheur principal : Jonathan Laase, Doctorant, Liberty University

Invitation à participer à une étude de recherche

Vous êtes invité(e) à participer à une étude de recherche. Pour participer, vous devez être un fidèle de l'Eglise Evangélique Baptiste de Draguignan. Vous devez également être âgé de plus de 18 ans. La participation à ce projet de recherche n'est pas obligatoire.

Veuillez prendre le temps de lire l'intégralité de ce formulaire et de poser des questions avant de décider de participer ou non à cette recherche.

Sur quoi porte l'étude et pourquoi est-elle réalisée ?

Le but de l'étude est de former les croyants de l'Eglise Evangélique Baptiste de Draguignan par le biais d'un séminaire avec une *laïcité* biblique qui contrebalance les effets négatifs de la *laïcité* sur l'évangélisation.

Que se passera-t-il si vous participez à cette étude ?

Si vous acceptez de participer à cette étude, je vous demanderai de faire ce qui suit :

1. vous serez interviewé(e). (30 min.)
2. vous devrez revoir la transcription de l'entretien.
3. vous participerez à 6 réunions différentes, une fois par semaine pendant environ (75 min.)
4. il vous sera demandé lors de ces réunions de suivre un temps d'enseignement, puis de préparer un court témoignage en vue de le partager avec d'autres membres du groupe, et en semaine avec des non-croyants. A deux reprises, il vous sera demandé de le faire autour d'un repas.
5. il vous sera demandé de planifier ces occasions de partage de témoignages.
6. il vous sera demandé de partager avec le groupe la manière dont le partage de témoignages s'est déroulé (ou s'il s'est déroulé tout court).
7. il vous sera demandé de participer à un brainstorming sur la manière de partager spontanément l'évangile, puis d'essayer d'appliquer cette méthode dans votre vie quotidienne au cours de la semaine précédant la présentation du rapport au groupe.
8. il vous sera demandé de prier pour que les membres de votre groupe aient de l'audace.
9. il vous sera demandé de répondre à une enquête à la fin de l'intervention.

Comment cette étude pourrait-elle vous être utile, à vous ou à d'autres personnes ?

Les avantages directs que les participants devraient s'attendre à recevoir en prenant part à cette étude comprennent une meilleure compréhension de la *laïcité* et un plus grand désir de partager l'évangile avec des outils pour le faire de manière efficace.

Les avantages pour la société comprennent la propagation de l'évangile à vos voisins et à la communauté. Une voix chrétienne pour répondre à la vision restrictive de la *laïcité*. Et une thèse pour aider les pasteurs et les églises à travers le pays à équiper leur peuple avec des outils pour faire face à (/ relever) ce défi.

Quels sont les risques que vous pourriez encourir en participant à cette étude ?

Les risques encourus par la participation à cette étude sont minimes, ce qui signifie qu'ils sont équivalents aux risques que vous rencontreriez dans la vie de tous les jours.

Je tiens à préciser que si, au cours de cette étude, je recevais des informations concernant la maltraitance d'enfants, la négligence d'enfants, la maltraitance de personnes âgées ou l'intention de se nuire ou de nuire à autrui, je serais alors tenu de les signaler aux autorités compétentes.

Comment les informations personnelles seront-elles protégées ?

Les dossiers de cette étude resteront confidentiels. Les rapports publiés ne contiendront aucune information permettant de vous identifier. Les dossiers de recherche seront conservés en toute sécurité et seul le chercheur y aura accès.

-Les réponses des participants seront gardées confidentielles en remplaçant les noms par des pseudonymes.

-Les entretiens se dérouleront dans un endroit où d'autres personnes ne pourront pas entendre la conversation.

-La confidentialité ne peut être garantie dans les groupes de discussion. Bien que cela soit déconseillé, d'autres membres du groupe de discussion peuvent partager ce qui a été discuté avec des personnes extérieures au groupe.

-Les données recueillies auprès de vous peuvent être utilisées dans le cadre d'études futures et/ou partagées avec d'autres chercheurs. Si les données recueillies auprès de vous sont réutilisées ou partagées, toute information susceptible de vous identifier, le cas échéant, sera préalablement supprimée.

-Les données seront stockées sur un ordinateur verrouillé par mot de passe. Au bout de sept ans, tous les enregistrements électroniques seront supprimés.

-Les enregistrements seront stockés sur un ordinateur verrouillé par mot de passe jusqu'à ce que les participants aient examiné et confirmé l'exactitude des transcriptions, puis ils seront

supprimés. Le chercheur et les membres de son comité de doctorat auront accès à ces enregistrements.

La participation à l'étude est-elle vraiment au libre choix de chacun(e)?

Oui, vraiment, votre décision de participer ou non n'affectera pas vos relations actuelles ou futures avec Liberty ou l'Eglise Evangélique Baptiste de Draguignan. Si vous décidez de participer, vous êtes libre de ne pas répondre à une question ou de vous retirer à tout moment sans que cela n'affecte ces relations.

Que devez-vous faire si vous décidez de vous retirer de l'étude ?

Si vous décidez de vous retirer de l'étude, veuillez contacter le chercheur à l'adresse électronique indiquée dans le paragraphe suivant. Si vous décidez de vous retirer, les données recueillies auprès de vous, à l'exception des données du groupe de discussion, seront détruites immédiatement et ne seront pas incluses dans cette étude. Les données du groupe de discussion ne seront pas détruites, mais vos contributions au groupe de discussion ne seront pas incluses dans l'étude si vous décidez de vous retirer.

Qui devez-vous contacter si vous avez des questions ou des inquiétudes concernant l'étude ?

Le chercheur chargé de cette étude est Jonathan Brian Laase. Vous pouvez lui poser toutes les questions que vous souhaitez maintenant. Si vous avez des questions plus tard, nous vous encourageons à le contacter par courrier électronique à l'adresse [REDACTED].

Vous pouvez également contacter le parrain de l'étude, le Dr Seth Bible, à l'adresse [REDACTED]

À qui vous adresser si vous avez des questions sur vos droits en tant que participant à une recherche ?

Si vous avez des questions ou des inquiétudes concernant cette étude et que vous souhaitez parler à quelqu'un d'autre que le chercheur, nous vous encourageons à contacter l'IRB. Notre adresse physique est la suivante : Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515 ; notre numéro de téléphone est le 434-592-5530, et notre adresse électronique est la suivante : irb@liberty.edu.

Clause de non-responsabilité : L'Institutional Review Board (IRB) a pour mission de veiller à ce que les recherches sur des sujets humains soient menées de manière éthique, conformément à la réglementation fédérale en vigueur. Les sujets abordés et les points de vue exprimés ou évoqués par les étudiants et les enseignants-chercheurs sont ceux des chercheurs et ne reflètent pas nécessairement les politiques ou les positions officielles de Liberty University.

Votre consentement

En signant ce document, vous acceptez de participer à cette étude. Assurez-vous de bien comprendre l'objet de l'étude avant de signer. Une copie de ce document vous sera remise pour vos dossiers. Le chercheur en conservera une copie avec les dossiers de l'étude. Si vous avez des questions sur l'étude après avoir signé ce document, vous pouvez contacter l'équipe de l'étude en utilisant les informations fournies ci-dessus.

J'ai lu et compris les informations ci-dessus. J'ai posé des questions et j'ai reçu des réponses. Je consens à participer à l'étude.

J'autorise le chercheur à m'enregistrer dans le cadre de ma participation à cette étude.

Nom du sujet en caractères d'imprimerie

Signature et date

Les catégories de données à caractère personnel pour lesquelles il vous est demandé de consentir à l'utilisation par le chercheur principal sont votre nom, votre adresse, votre âge, votre sexe, vos convictions politiques, religieuses et philosophiques.

Confidentialité des données personnelles et dispositions relatives au partage des données

Les dossiers de cette étude resteront confidentiels. Les dossiers de recherche seront conservés en toute sécurité et seul le chercheur y aura accès. Le chercheur principal peut partager vos données personnelles avec des tiers, y compris le sponsor du chercheur et l'école.

Dispositions relatives au stockage des données et à vos droits

Vos données à caractère personnel seront stockées conformément aux exigences de conservation des dossiers applicables aux activités de recherche et aux réglementations des Health and Human Services (HHS) aux États-Unis. En vertu du RGPD, vous avez le droit de demander l'accès à vos données à caractère personnel, de les rectifier, de les effacer et d'en limiter le traitement. Vous avez également le droit de révoquer ce consentement à l'utilisation de vos données personnelles. Si vous estimez que le chercheur principal a enfreint le RGPD, vous avez le droit de déposer une plainte auprès de l'autorité de contrôle européenne compétente.

Votre consentement

Veillez signer et cocher la case souhaitée, dater et renvoyer ce formulaire au chercheur principal.

Je consens à ce que Jonathan Laase utilise mes données à caractère personnel aux fins décrites dans le présent avis et je comprends que je peux retirer mon consentement à tout moment en utilisant les coordonnées fournies ci-dessus dans le présent avis.

☐ Donne son accord

☐ Ne donne pas son consentement

Nom en lettres manuscrites de la personne qui donne son consentement

Adresse de la personne qui donne son consentement

Signature de la personne qui donne son consentement

Date d'entrée en vige

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IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 9, 2023

Jonathan Laase
Seth Bible

Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY22–23–1693 A Plan to Counteract the Negative Effects of *Laïcité* on Evangelism

Dear Jonathan Laase and Seth Bible,

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 that your study does not meet the definition of 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 project is not considered human subjects research because it 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. 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.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office