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God of the Whole Earth Ministry Church Project:

Equipping Church Members to Engage Their Community

A Thesis Project Report Submitted to

the Faculty of the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

by

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Thesis Project Approval Sheet

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THE DOCTOR OF THE MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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The God of the Whole Earth Ministry (GWEM) Church study investigated how church members can gain confidence to share their faith when properly equipped. Sharing the gospel with others can be a problem for some people. Generally, the lack of skills and knowledge is the biggest problem for some people to share their faith. GWEM Church members were not equipped to share their faith. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to equip participants to share their faith. Skills were taught to help participants develop and use those skills to start meaningful and practical conversations to open up a dialogue with people. The study was conducted for ten weeks. Forty-six church members participated in the study. Although the reason for lack of confidence varied among the participants, the most common reason was the lack of skills and knowledge to engage in meaningful outreach conversations. Out of forty-six participants, 84.8% said lack of skills to begin significant outreach was the main problem. The remaining 15.2 % attributed their problem to other reasons. Participants applied skills learned before the end of the study and were given questionnaires to report changes in their confidence. After the community outreach, participants were asked if they felt the same way as before the teaching intervention. Out of the forty-six participants, 58.7 said they no longer felt uncomfortable sharing the gospel with others. The results show that by equipping participants with how to start outreach conversations can help participants overcome their lack of confidence to share the gospel.

Thesis project topic abstract length: 251 words

Key Words: Equipping, Evangelism, Gospel Conversations, Church Mission.

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Abbreviations

CO   *Community Outreach*

DMIN   *Doctor of Ministry*

ESV   *English Standard Version*

GC   *Great Commission*

GWEM *God of the Whole Earth Ministry*

LUSOD *Liberty University School of Divinity*

OC   *Outreach Conversation*

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Jesus commanded His apostles to make disciples of all the nations with the gospel and this forms the basis for God of the Whole Earth Ministry Church to equip its members to reach out to their community with the gospel. Notwithstanding, reaching out to the community requires one to first be equipped. The Great Commission (GC) found in Matthew 28:18-19 (instituted by Jesus) is the reason GWEM feels compelled to carry out the mandate of Jesus. Therefore, for GWEM Church members to carry out the mandate of Christ, they must be equipped to do so. The leadership of God of the Whole Earth Ministry Church (GWEM), in an effort to fulfill the GC of Jesus Christ, has committed itself to preparing church members to carry out the mandate of Christ.

The problem is that GWEM's members are not equipped to reach out to the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, this Doctor of Ministry (DMin) action project intends to teach and develop skills that will lead church members into outreach conversations. The equipping of the saints for outreach ministry is not limited to the pastor but includes all church members. Consequently, it is part of the pastor's responsibility to teach church members the skills for community outreach. As Jesus taught and modeled how to reach out to others with the gospel, so the pastor should do the same for his church members.

Many pastors seem to be overwhelmed by the personal needs of church members that they neglect equipping church members to carry out the GC as commanded by Christ. This study is an effort to remind pastors and church leaders of the GC's importance and show how pastors can get the whole church involved. Therefore, the GWEM Church Project is one way to

demonstrate how church members can get involved in the GC. The study will consist of eight weeks of lessons for the participants to take to prepare them to reach out to the community.

Ministry Context

Demographics & Location

GWEM is in Southeast Houston in Harris County, Texas. Southeast Houston has a population of 433,800, according to the U.S. 2020 census.[1] The ratio of males to females is almost 1 to 1, with the female population slightly higher than the males by 5,000. The male population makes up 49.41% of the total population of Southeast Houston, and the female population makes up 50.59% of the total population.[2]

Seventy-four percent of the population are born citizens, while 10% are naturalized citizens. The rest of the 16% of the people are non-United States citizens. The population is comprised of predominantly young people with a median age of 32 years.[3] Southeast Houston is primarily White (not Hispanic or Latino), which makes up the highest percentage of the total population. Hispanics are the second-highest percentage of the people.[4] Mixed race of both White and Hispanics make up the third-highest population by race distribution. African Americans make up the fourth-highest percentage of the people, followed by Asian, Native Americans, or people with a combination of two races.

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[1] "Southeast Houston Demographics," U. S. Census, accessed May 22, 2021, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts.

[2] "Southeast Houston Population," Point 2 Statistics, accessed May 22, 2021, https://www.point2statistics.com/US/Neighborhood/TX/Harris-County/Houston/Southeast-Houston.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

Geography of Southeast Houston

Southeast Houston is one of four major regions of Houston proper. As the name implies, it is in Houston's southeast region. Southeast Houston comprises of more than 20 subdivisions, one of which is the home of GWEM. GWEM is in the subdivision of Sunnyside in Southeast Houston. The cities of Humble and Springform are the northern boundary of Houston. The city of Pearland forms the southern boundary of Houston, while the city of Pasadena forms the eastern boundary. The city of Katy forms the western edge of Houston.

The city of Houston is a few feet above sea level and is on the Gulf Coast of Mexico. Houston's location on the Gulf Coast makes it prone to excessive water that overflows during hurricanes and other severe weather events. Water emptying from the Gulf into Southeast Houston makes it a trouble spot for frequent flooding. Flooding is a significant problem in Southeast Houston that disrupts regular businesses, including church gatherings. One way the city has addressed the flood problem in Houston is by constructing many bayous and Southeast Houston hosts the most of them. The bayous occasionally pose problems for Houstonians when they overflow due to hurricanes.

History of Southeast Houston

Houston was first settled in the 1900s. Shortly after the first settlement was established, war broke out between the settlers and the Mexican army, and the area was destroyed.[5] After the Mexican war, more wars followed, including the war in which Sam Houston fought. Sam Houston was the first president of the former Republic of Texas. The city of Houston also once suffered from diseases, including yellow fever. After all the troubles of war and illness, as time passed and the population increased, the city began to grow and experience prosperity.

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[5] "History of Houston," Britannica, accessed May 22, 2021, https://www.britannica.com/place/Houston.

Over time, Houston began to grow as a railroad center for both Texas and the United States.[6] Besides the railroad business, other businesses started to grow including seaport business and others, such as drilling oil. The Houston Ship Channel was a beacon of Houston's growth and prowess in the shipping and receiving business.[7] The city also has a space center which makes it an attraction to both residents and tourists alike. Houston is now an attraction to many from different states who come to the city to take advantage of its wealth and open economy. The city's status as the fourth largest city in the United States demonstrates that many are attracted to the town for multiple reasons. Incidentally, Southeast Houston is said to be the most populous of all the four regions of Houston.[8]

Employment and Household

There are about two hundred thousand jobs in Southeast Houston. White-collar jobs make up 70% of employment, while blue-collar jobs make up 30%. Fifteen thousand people are self-employed, while 80% of people work for a company or some business, including non-profit organizations. The remaining 5% are unemployed.

There are about 143,200 households in Southeast Houston. Of this number, 98,400 are family households, and 44,700 are non-households. The average number of people in a home is three. Homes that include children are 53,900, and those without children are 89,300. The average household income is $76,100, and the median income is $30,000.[9] Seventy-eight thousand one hundred people live below the poverty level in Southeast Houston. All members of GWEM are employed and reside in family households.

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[6] "History of Houston," Britannica.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] "Household Income," U.S. Census, accessed May 22, 2021, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts.

Education

There are two main universities located in Southeast Houston. These universities are the University of Houston and Texas Southern University. There is one high school district in the area: the Houston Independent School District (HISD). The HISD provides primary to secondary education for most children in Southeast Houston.[10] A small percentage of students (less than 3%) go to private schools and are homeschooled.

In Southeast Houston, where GWEM is located, about 43,800 people hold a bachelor's degree, and 19,800 have associate degrees. Seventy thousand people have a college education. Most of the Southeast Houston population have a high school education background (121,000), and 34,000 are high school dropouts and are involved in GED or related programs. GWEM has a cross-section of high school backgrounds, some college, associate degrees, and bachelor's degrees.

Churches and Religion

Southeast Houston is home to more than 200 churches.[11] Each church has an average congregation of 20 to 50 people.[12] Most churches in Southeast Houston are approximately 0.5 to 1.5 miles apart. GWEM is near five churches, all within 5-10 miles apart. With so many churches in the proximity of GWEM, one would think that most people are Christians, but the reality is quite the contrary.

Research conducted by GWEM revealed there are ten mosques, several Buddhist temples and other religious shrines in Southeast Houston. Also, community outreach indicates that one in

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[10] "Primary and Secondary Education," Texas Education Agency, accessed May 22, 2021, tea.texas.gov.

[11] "Churches in Houston," Texas Conference of Churches, accessed May 22, 2021, https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu.

[12] Ibid.

every five people encountered, admitted that they do not attend church but are affiliated with some Christian denomination.[13]

Most of the people surveyed by GWEM said they were not affiliated with any Christian denomination or religion.[14] Further probing by GWEM's leadership reveals that about 1% of people confessed that they are atheists. Considering the number of people who are not committed to attending church, people who affiliate with no Christian denomination, and those that consider themselves non-Christian, there is an excellent opportunity for members of GWEM to share the gospel with the community in Southeast Houston.

Contextual Ministry Questions

GWEM's membership runs between twenty-five to fifty. Church attendance fluctuates weekly. On average, twenty-five to thirty people attend church services and participate in church services and activities. Church membership is a mixed congregation of African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and White families.

Praise and Worship time is the spiritual rite that is most predictable and central to the congregation's culture and worship services. Most church members love the time of praise and worship during church services and participate fully. Praise and Worship time is a segment of the church service in which songs are sung by the congregation led by a five-member praise team. During Praise and Worship, musical instruments such as guitars, piano, tambourines, congas, etc. are used to enhance the worship experience.

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[13] "Pew Research Center," Religious Study, accessed September 25, 2021, https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/metro-area/houston-metro-area.

[14] Neil A Rowe, "Making My Faith My Own: Church Attendance and First-Year College Student Religious and Spiritual Development" (master's thesis, Iowa State University, 2014), 255.

The Praise and Worship time captures the interest and participation of members as they express praise and thanksgiving to God. The segment of praise and worship during church services is also the time when church members connect with each other as they dance, clap hands and beam with smiles. Praise and worship are activities most church members are excited about and enjoy.

The time of Bible study is the service or activity that is most instrumental in shaping the people who come to this service. As a young and growing congregation, people who attend Bible studies have many questions they want answered. Therefore, people who come to Bible studies see this as an opportunity to address their questions.

GWEM's logo has a symbol of the world map. The emblem reflects the message for which the church is named. It is derived from Isaiah 54:5, which proclaims that God is the "God of the whole earth," (translation). Therefore, members of GWEM see themselves as part of a more prominent family beyond the local church over which God rules all.

Members of GWEM value caring for one another. As a small church, each member strives to know each other by name. GWEM's members know that they are part of a family that is cared for and loved by others. Members enjoy being together and fellowshipping as a group and person-to-person levels.

The majority of GWEM members believe that attending church services and programs is an important opportunity for each member. However, most members do not feel that community outreach or gospel sharing is everyone's responsibility, including the pastor.[15] Instead, GWEM members believe that the pastors and those trained at seminaries should be the ones to reach out to the community with the gospel.

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[15] GWEM Church survey.

Historically, members of GWEM come from church backgrounds where community outreach with the gospel is not emphasized. According to GWEM's survey, some of those previous churches feature activities like church dues, catechism, and confirmation classes, which are the ministries that are stressed. Furthermore, they observed that they are not aware of any ministry in their previous churches that focused on sharing the gospel.

Most of the members acknowledged that church attendance and financial giving to the church were the only important responsibilities of church members. Many members indicated that they do not share the gospel with friends and relatives. Consequently, this knowledge gap in reaching out to others with the gospel became one of the main reasons to undertake the study.

Problem Presented

The problem is that GWEM members are not equipped for community outreach. The members of GWEM are diverse and include people that consider GWEM as their first home church. Membership also includes others that came from other churches. Many adults did not come to faith in Christ until late in life. About half of the congregation came from different denominations before coming to GWEM. The pastor of GWEM invited others to be part of the GWEM family.

Those who came from other denominations admitted that they were never exposed to the idea of reaching out to the community with the gospel; in their previous churches they only attended church services and programs. Therefore, the idea of reaching out to the community with the gospel was something they never heard or experienced.

Members of GWEM feel uncomfortable reaching out into the community with the gospel. There are many barriers to preaching or sharing the gospel.[16] Obstacles may include such

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[16] Reuel Howe, "Barriers to Dialogical Preaching," in *Partners in Preaching: Clergy and Laity in Dialogue* (Chicago, Il: , 2000), Religion Online, https://www.religion-online.org/book.

things as language barriers, cultural barriers, a lack of skill or training in the knowledge of God's Word, personality differences, etc. An obstacle for GWEM sharing the gospel seems to be related to a lack of skills to communicate the gospel boldly.

Members of GWEM also felt that the pastor is not the only one to share the gospel. They reasoned others could be trained to take the gospel to the community. Church members recognized trained people to share the gospel, such as those taught at seminaries and universities. However, the GWEM members do not think of themselves as the ones that can be trained to share the gospel. This distorted view of who can be trained to share the gospel makes this problem worth addressing.

The GWEM congregation loves the LORD and wants to serve Him, but they do not know how to do it. They are willing to be taught and acquire skills to prepare them to reach out to their community with the love of Christ. This assumption will be put to the test to find out whether they will engage and learn how to impact their community with the gospel of Christ.

The members of GWEM have acknowledged that no one ever told them, nor have they learned, about the need to be equipped for community outreach. Perhaps, as may be the case in some churches, the members thought that the congregation's role was passive. Passivity means an attitude of members to want to be ministered to with the Word of God but at the same time they do not think they have any obligation to minister the Word of God to others. This passive role of the church congregation was also expressed by regular attendance in church services and by faithful giving of tithes and offerings.

Although church members are active in church attendance and giving of tithes, they are passive when it comes to ministering to the spiritual needs of others. Therefore, the idea of equipping the congregants for ministry is a new concept that must be addressed for GWEM's

members. The preparation for launching out into the community can be seen from the life of

Jesus. Jesus allowed His disciples to live and walk with Him for three years.[17] Jesus knew that

His disciples were not ready to launch into the community without being fully equipped.[18]

Therefore, it took the disciples three years to learn from Jesus' teaching and example.

After three years of training with Jesus, supposedly the disciples had learned some

lessons of how to witness. While the disciples were with Jesus, He taught not only in Word, but

He also modeled what He taught. The apostle Paul adopted the same method from Christ. In

Philippians 4:9, the apostle Paul writes, "The things you have learned and received and heard

and seen in me, practice these things," (New American Standard Bible). Similarly, GWEM

members are not equipped to handle the task of engaging their community with the gospel of

Jesus.

Until recently, few churches considered the subject of equipping the congregation as a

significant concern of the church.[19] As important as the subject of equipping the saints might be,

it is believed that some pastors have devoted little or no time and investment in training their

parishioners to share their faith.[20] Part of the reason for this problem, according to Lynne Baab,

is that pastors place emphasis on addressing the physical and social needs of the congregation to

the neglect of also emphasizing the need for the gospel to be shared.[21] However, with the

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[17] Myrick C. Shinall, Jr., "Miracles and the Kingdom of God in Mark and Q: Christology and Identity among Jesus' Early Followers" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 2016), 278, PROQUESTMS Religion Database.

[18] Tucker S. Ferda, "Jesus and the Galilean Crisis: Interpretation, Reception, and History" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburgh, 2016), 381, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[19] Michael R. Stick, "Equipping the Laity of Winnetka Heights Baptist Church, Tulsa, Oklahoma, To Practice Personal Evangelism" (DMin thesis, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001), 11, Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN).

[20] Lynne M. Baab, *Nurturing Hope: Christian Pastoral Care in the Twenty-First Century* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2018), 204.

[21] Ibid.

changing times, many people have begun to realize that there is a need for the church to return to its mission.[22]

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this DMin action research project is to teach and develop skills that lead church members into outreach conversations. Jesus has made it clear in His Word that the community of believers are sent just as the Father sent Him (John 20:21). The task for reaching the community with the gospel is not reserved only for pastors or those who are trained at seminaries and universities. Jesus took ordinary men who were uneducated and modeled and taught them how to reach out to others with the good news.

It is the mind of God, according to Ephesians 4, that believers be equipped by pastors, teachers, etc. to reach out to others with the gospel. God does not want the saints to only sit down and listen to beautiful messages preached from the pulpit but to also get involved in ministering to people.

It is the goal of church leadership to change people's minds concerning the task of reaching out to others with the gospel. It is not just the responsibility of the pastor nor is it reserved for those who are trained in seminaries and universities. God has gifted each believer with gifts and has also given His Holy Spirit to help believers in the process of reaching out to their respective areas of influence with the love of Jesus.

Teaching and developing skills for church members to reach out with the gospel will require hard work and steadfastness. The Scripture says, "let us not be weary in well-doing,"

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[22] Christopher J. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 97.

(Gal 6:9, English Standard Version). Believers or church members are to labor with God in His vineyard. The Scriptures called believers as fellow workers together with God (1 Cor 3:9).

Finally, the GC popularly referenced in Matthew 28:18-20 is not restricted to the apostles as some may argue. Therefore, the mandate of Jesus to the disciples in the first century is as relevant and applicable to the church in the twenty-first century. The Scripture says, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news," (Isa 52:7, New International Version). The word "feet" seems to emphasize the importance of reaching out with the good news rather than sitting. Therefore, the mandate in Matthew 28:18-20 does not exclude anyone who is a believer, whether clergy or laity. If Jesus' commission is for all believers, then all must be equipped for the task of sharing the gospel. Consequently, each Christian plays a significant role in being the bearer of good news in the community God places them.

The Scripture says, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40, ESV). Teaching and equipping Christians with skills and knowledge in the Word may provide some confidence to share their faith. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit gives the believer the boldness to share his faith. In Acts 5, the disciples prayed for boldness to proclaim the Word, and the Holy Spirit granted the boldness to share their faith. In the case of this DMin action research project, it is the goal of this project to teach and develop skills that lead church members into outreach conversations.

In sharp contrast to what many churches see as the purpose for equipping, the Scripture clearly teaches the reasons why the saints must be fitted. According to Ephesians 4:12, "equipping of the saints is necessary for the purpose of service and edification of the whole body," (NKJV). The saints are prepared when they learn how to serve with the respective gifts God has gifted each one. The congregation is strengthened when they know how to edify or

build up the rest of the body of Christ. As Christopher Wright has written, "providing the body of Christ for the great commission is the most critical responsibility of church leaders."[23]

God has given different gifts to the body as He wills, according to 1 Corinthians 12. The facilities are to be used in proportion to the amount of grace God has given each one in the body.[24] Ultimately, it is the purpose of God that once the saints are equipped, a condition will be attained wherein the saints will come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God.

The equipping of the saints or church members is intended to lead and enable the saints to be established and reach maturity in spiritual matters like Jesus Himself was when He was in the flesh. The goal for equipping the saints is to prepare them to be effective witnesses for the Lord and establish them firmly in the Lord as mature disciples.

Basic Assumptions

It is the assumption of this student researcher that if church members are taught and developed on how to do outreach, then they will be equipped to engage their community. This assumption is based on interaction with GWEM members over the past three years. During a period of two years there was no intervention project put in place to prepare church members to engage the community. Therefore, this student researcher assumes that if such intervention of teaching skills is introduced, members' behavior and attitude will be impacted positively.

This student researcher also assumes that participants will cooperate without difficulty with the researcher. The researcher is making this assumption of peaceful cooperation with participants because the researcher has had a good working relationship with church members

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[23] Wright, *The Mission of God's People*, 105.

[24] Ircel Harrison, "A Word about: Equipping Leaders for Twenty-First Century Ministry," *Review & Expositor* 116, no. 4 (2019): 393.

for the past three years. This premise is also based on preliminary findings from church members that they will be willing to participate in the project.

Finally, this researcher assumes that the implementation of the study will be met with minimum resistance. This researcher is making this assumption because participants are easily accessible, willing to participate, and available. Implementation will be a smooth process because the researcher has not had difficulty in working with participants as a church congregation. Additionally, researchers will have all the resources needed to make the study a smooth process.

Definitions

The definitions used in this project might be words that may not mean the same thing to the reader, or meanings that the reader might be unfamiliar with. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify what the words mean for members of GWEM and this project. The researcher desires that the reader will use the meaning of the terms used in this project to understand what is discussed.

Outreach Conversation (OC): is defined as speeches or statements that church members will use to initiate or start conversation(s).[25] The conversations are intended to lead to discussions about spiritual matters that will point to Christ and His redemption for mankind.

The term *outreach conversation* describes the series of statements or speech that a GWEM member will use to initiate conversations and connect with anyone to share the good news of Jesus Christ. In a practical sense, outreach conversation is a tool or building bridge to communicate with others before sharing the Word of God.

Equip (equipping): In this paper the terms "to equip" and "providing" mean to be

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[25] Liana Puscas, Jennifer R. Kogan, and Eric S. Holmboe, "Assessing Interpersonal and Communication Skills," *Journal of Graduate Medical Education* 13, no. 2 (2021): 91.

empowered or to be prepared by acquisition of skills and knowledge.[26] Henrik Holmgaard has written extensively about equipping the saints. This researcher will be using the terms "fit" and "training" the way Holmgaard uses them.

The word e*quipping* is a word that is rarely used at GWEM. However, for this project the words, "fit" and "equipping," will be used to describe how GWEM members will be empowered and prepared to develop skills and acquire knowledge for community outreach.

Community Outreach (CO): refers to how GWEM members shall engage the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Going into the community with the gospel was a wake up for the GWEM congregation. As William Benke argued in his book, "There will come a time, a church must make the decision to follow the mandate of Christ in Matthew 28:18-19 by leading its congregation to reach out to the community with the gospel or risk losing even the small congregation it has."[27] From preliminary surveys, GWEM members were beginning to understand and anticipate what community outreach will look like. Community outreach also means GWEM is going into their respective communities and sharing the gospel with their neighbors.

Limitations

One limitation of the project is that the researcher shall be working with a small sample due to the size of the church membership. Therefore, results may be different if a large membership size was used. In addition, due to the unequal proportion of race distribution in GWEM, results may not be a proper reflection of race proportion in the general population.

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[26] Henrik Holmgaard, "Equipping the Saints Without a Theological Seminary," *Journal of European Baptist Studies* 19, no. 1 (2019): 68.

[27] William Benke, Le Etta Benke, Robert E. Stevens, and David L. Loudon, *Church Wake-Up Call: A Ministries Management Approach that is Purpose-Oriented and Inter-Generational in Outreach* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 32.

Another limitation is that researchers have no control over how participants may respond. For some reason, participants may not decide to attend training sessions as the intervention of the problem statement. Some participants may decide to attend all of the training sessions, or some may choose not to.

Researchers have no control over the outcome of the research as to whether it will impact behavior or attitude toward community outreach. Participants may or may not understand the content of the curriculum taught and it is unknown how much content the participants may be able to absorb or process.

Delimitations

One delimitation of this research project is that researchers shall be working exclusively with only GWEM members, and their family members and friends. The research shall not go beyond the boundaries of GWEM. Interventions of solution to the problem statement shall be carried out at GWEM.

The researcher shall be the lead teacher of a team of three people to teach the curriculum for the entire course of research. Two other members of the group shall assist the researcher. The curriculum for the intervention shall be exclusively designed by the researcher. The participants shall include both males and females over twelve years of age. Children less than twelve years of age shall not be included in the survey.

Other delimitations of the project will be the day of the week the teaching sessions will be held. The teaching sessions will be delimited to Saturday mornings. Saturday mornings are the church's regular assembly for community outreach. Usually, the church goes out every first and every third Saturday in the month for outreach. However, for the purpose of this research, participants will meet every Saturday for eight weeks.

The church outreach shall be divided into two sections. One section will be church group outreach. This means the church will go out as a group and do mass outreach. The second part of the community outreach will be done on an individual basis. Each participant will be expected to use the skills acquired and knowledge gained to engage friends and family members.

During individual community engagement, participants will seek to engage family members, those in their circle of influence, and others they come into contact with. The group community outreach area shall be delimited to a distance within a ten mile radius of the church location.

Thesis Statement

If church members are taught and developed on how to accomplish outreach, they will be equipped to engage their community. Training and developing skills to achieve outreach will provide church members with opportunities to engage their community. Engaging in the community is an art that can be learned. The first barriers to engaging the community will be identified in this project. Community varies in composition from area to area in terms of culture, socio-economic status, language, ethnicity, etc. All these will be taken into consideration as lessons are developed.

How a person overcomes barriers to reaching out into the community with the gospel depends on individual personality traits and training. Managing personality traits will require spiritual formation, and other spiritual disciplines can help an individual relate to others in their area of influence or the community. Personal fears or individual anxieties will also be considered as solutions will be sought to reach the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The importance of building relationships will also be highlighted in the plan for the community. People do not want the gospel to be "forced down their throat," no matter how good

the intention is.[28] Church members will be taught how to build a relationship and connect with people.

Jesus built relationships and easily connected with people. A classic example of this is Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:5-26. Jesus shows in His conversation with the Samaritan woman how to lead discussions and bring people to the truth. This will be the primary model that will be developed for teaching church members.

It is expected that after all efforts of training and developing skills to lead to conversions for community engagement, church members will be equipped to engage their community. Church members should be able to start and maintain conversation with their target person or group, to bring them to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Having an incredible vision or plan without execution or implementation is useless. The principles and knowledge gained during this research will be incorporated into this DMin project. For example, it has been learned that people must not complain about problems, but that people should know the skills and develop an approach to solve problems.[29] Action Research is an invaluable tool that will be used to find the solution to the situation that has been identified in this research.

Action research will allow this student researcher to adopt an attitude of inquiry that will enable him to engage, examine, explore, formulate answers, and devise responses to deal more effectively with each context that he encounters.[30] In the case of the problem identified at GWEM, attempts will be made to apply rational inquiry and principles learned from *Action*

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[28] Melissa Binder, "Evangelism Is Alive In," *Christianity Today* 61, no. 3 (April 2-17): 36-40.

[29] Ernest T. Swinger, *Action Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2014), 271-272.

[30] Ibid., 3.

Research. Therefore, it is anticipated that if the solution that has been identified is implemented, then GWEM members will be equipped to engage their community.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

This literature review covers three sections. These sections include (1) different approaches of equipping the saints to share the gospel, (2) the purpose for equipping, and (3) the outcome of equipping.

Approaches to Equipping the Saints

In his book, J. R. Woodward outlines five main ways to equip the local assembly to share the gospel.[31] According to Woodward, a missional environment must first be created. Woodward then describes how a missional climate is created. According to Woodward, missional culture is the environment in which members of the congregation hear about the importance of sharing the gospel, how the gospel should be shared, and creating the hunger and thirst for Christians to want to share the gospel.[32] This hunger and thirst are predicated on the premise that Christians must have the desire to please the Lord and to be rewarded by the Lord. He also argues that a missional environment is created when the pastor, by example and lifestyle, demonstrates before his congregation what it means to be missional-minded.

Secondly, the pastor should preach and teach about the importance of the GC and encourage his congregation to be actively involved in reaching out to the community with the gospel.[33] Thirdly, the pastor should have active missional programs or ministries ongoing in the church for congregational participation. Woodward further argues that the missional climate should be such that each church member's gift can be used.[34]

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[31] J. R. Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 281.

[32] Ibid., 80.

[33] Ibid., 101.

[34] Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture*, 77.

In terms of creating the missional culture and environment, Woodward identifies five different church leaders whom he emphasizes are responsible for creating the missional culture. He names these church leaders: apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors. According to Woodward, each church leader creates a specific temperament of the missional culture. For example, Woodward argues that apostles are dream awakeners, prophets are heart revealers, evangelists are storytellers, pastors are soul healers, and teachers are light givers.[35]

Woodward identifies two groups of people that he argues are fundamentally necessary for the process of equipping to take place. These two major groups of people are the equippers and the equipped. The equippers are people who give the training, and the equipped are those who receive the training. The equippers are recruited based on an interview. Woodward explains that from the interview, it would be determined who qualifies to be an equipper. After the equippers are selected, they go through training to enable them to equip others.

The equippers, according to Woodward, are the architects of the missional culture.[36] The process of equipping is divided into two components. These components are the repairing ministry and the preparing ministry. The actual equipping takes place in different environments. These environments are the classroom, the living rooms, and in the streets.[37] According to Woodward, the goal of equipping is to help people receive a deep theoretical foundation, integrate theory and practice, and to help people learn mentoring and also gain experience.

Equipping of the Christian community or the congregation is done in different ways by different people depending on a person's biblical orientation and theological roots.[38] For

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[35] Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture*, 150.

[36] Ibid., 225.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ryan LaMothe, "Discerning a Theological Orientation for Pastoral Psychologies of Care: Theologies of Subjugation and Theologies of Vulnerability," *Pastoral Psychology* 69, no. 4 (August 2020): 405-21.

example, Patrick Johnson, a pastor and author, views equipping the congregation differently from Woodward. Johnson advocates for equipping the whole assembly rather than dividing the congregation into two groups. He agrees with Woodward in creating a missional culture but his method is different.[39]

According to Johnson, the missional culture should be created primarily based on preaching as a witness to the world. He describes preaching as basically having a personal testimony of one's conversion. Johnson believes everyone who is saved has a testimony of their conversion to Christ. Therefore, he argues that the whole congregation should be involved in the process of being equipped to reach out to the community.

Johnson outlines eight steps for the congregation to be equipped. He calls these steps patterns. The steps include: 1) discerning of missional vocation, 2) biblical formation and discipleship, 3) taking risks as a contrast community, 4) practices that demonstrate God's intent to the world, 5) public witness of worship, 6) dependence on the Holy Spirit, 7) pointing toward the reign of God, 8) missional authority. Finally, Johnson concludes that the pastor should be the overall person to equip the rest of the church to share their faith.[40]

Equipping the congregation may also take the form of teaching the congregation intentional living for Christ that draws others to Christ. One person who believes in this kind of philosophy of equipping the congregation is Chris Folmsbee.[41] According to Folmsbee, every

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[39] Patrick W. T. Johnson and David J. Lose, *The Mission of Preaching: Equipping the Community for Faithful Witness* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 70.

[40] Ibid., 102.

[41] Chris Folmsbee, *Gladhearted Disciples: Equipping Your Congregation with Generous and Enduring Faith* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2015), 88, ProQuest Ebook Central.

Christian is the bearer of the good news. Therefore, every Christian should be prepared to live out the gospel's principles before the world.[42]

Folmsbee agrees with both Woodward and Johnson that the church should be missional and therefore create the environment for such.[43] Notwithstanding, Folmsbee contrasts the other authors by emphasizing the incarnational living of the gospel of Jesus. He argues that living out the gospel before the world is what should be the basis for equipping every member of the congregation because it is what lasts.[44]

Folmsbee describes what a glad-hearted disciple looks like and how he or she should be equipped. According to Folmsbee, glad-hearted disciples are people of mission and generous, enduring living who are not afraid to live out Christ in whatever environment they are placed. The environments could be urban, suburban, rural, or wherever they are; they are ready to demonstrate Christ to the world and by so doing, attract others to Christ.[45]

Finally, Folmsbee outlines several steps in which church members can be equipped. First, church members should see themselves as missionaries who are always ready to contextualize the gospel right where they are. Second, they should learn about others through intentional living rather than arguing. Third, church members should practice forbearance with those who do not believe. Fourth, they should ask and allow others to ask questions about God. Fifth, church members should learn to connect with people's sociological concerns and how they affect people. Finally, church members should depend on the Holy Spirit for guidance as they live their lives before the world.[46]

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[42] Folmsbee, *Gladhearted Disciples*, 60.

[43] Ibid., 83.

[44] Ibid., 100.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

Equipping church members is also done from the perspective of forming small groups. Joshua Rose, in his article, provides an insight into how that is done.[47] Rose argues that small groups provide the ideal environment where a church member can both learn and grow in the knowledge of Christ. He uses Ephesians 4:13-16 to support his argument for the basis of using small groups. According to Rose, the equipping of small groups varies by church, depending on the church's goals.

Although methods of equipping differ from church to church, two essential factors are common to all. These factors are a) to determine the educational objective and b) to design well-planned learning experiences.[48] According to Rose, the educational objective should be about the mission of God, which is winning those who are lost to God. He also says that learning experiences should be done in a God-centered community where members can support each other.[49]

Further literature review showed that some authors think that every church member is to take personal responsibility for his or her own learning. One supporter of this idea is Roderick Hewitt.[50] According to Hewitt, the key focus for equipping the church is on the local assembly. Hewitt's definition of the word "equipping" is a term that describes the educational process as the task of the whole church in a given place.[51] According to Hewitt, the educational process is

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[47] Joshua Rose, "Equipping Members for Ministry through Small Groups," *Christian Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (Fall 2017): 361.

[48] Ibid., 365.

[49] Ibid., 370.

[50] Roderick R. Hewitt, "Equipping Local Congregations in Mission--the CWM Experience," *International Review of Mission* 81, no. 321 (January 1992): 81–90.

[51] Hewitt, "Equipping Local Congregations in Mission," 83.

not a one time activity. Instead, Hewitt argues that the educational process is a continual process.[52]

Hewitt contrasts the equipping process with others in which usually a professional is hired to equip the rest of the church.[53] Instead, he argues that the process should involve a mutual equipping of one another within the church. Hewitt uses Ephesians 4:11-12 to support his argument. According to Hewitt, apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers, and pastors are God's gifts to equip the church for ministry and the building up of the church.[54]

Equipping church congregations for evangelistic outreach requires teaching and understanding of Scripture. Many books have been written about equipping in the last several years. Each author focuses on a specific concept related to the issue of equipping. The literature review covers themes ranging from building relationships to the types of approaches used.

In this literature review works of many scholars were reviewed. Works reviewed included articles, books, dissertations, and resources from discipleship training establishments and evangelistic movements associated with equipping. Therefore, this literature review will highlight the arguments and discussions of these scholars as it relates to equipping the saints for personal evangelism. Secondly, the literature review will examine different approaches and methods by different schools of thought on the subject.

Rick Richardson is a professor of evangelism at Wharton College and has written extensively on soul-winning and evangelism.[55] His work is grounded in orthodoxy but proven in experience. Richardson challenges the reader by provoking them to be creative and imagine new

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[52] Hewitt, 85.

[53] Ibid., 87.

[54] Ibid., 88.

[55] Rick Richardson, *Reimagining Evangelism: Inviting Friends on a Spiritual Journey* (Westmont, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006),

ways of reaching out to the community. He urges the reader not to be limited to one way of reaching out to people and advises them to discover workable ways of existing and known methods, finding what works in particular situations.

Jerram Barrs is a resident scholar at Covenant Theological Seminary. He is also a professor of Christian and Contemporary Studies. Barrs was a faculty member of the L'Abri fellowship in England for eighteen years. He has also written many books, one of which is *Learning Evangelism from Jesus.* Phyllis Le Peau is the author of many Bible commentaries published by Intervarsity Press. Le Peau is a voice for women and their contribution to the ministry. Le Peau is also the author of many books on soul winning. Her most popular book is called, *One on One: Winning Soul is Wise.*

Rudolf Schnackerburg is a German priest and professor emeritus of the New Testament at the University of Wurzburg in Germany. He has written several books and commentaries, one of which is a commentary on the book of Ephesians. Schnackerburg is known for his work emphasizing following Jesus' example in evangelism. Finally, Stephen S. Liggins is an established author known for his contributions to evangelism. One of his most popular books is *Many Convincing Proofs.* He is based in Australia and is a lecturer at Missionary Bible College. All of the works by the aforementioned authors support the GWEM Church's study by providing information with respect to approaches and the rationale for those approaches, in regard to reaching out to the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Purpose of Equipping

According to Ephesians 4:12, Christians are equipped for the work of ministry and the edifying of the whole body of Christ. In the local congregation, there are different ministries and

services wherein the Christian may be involved. For example, there is the laity or ministry in which each member may serve other than being a pastor or elder. Some of these ministries include reading of the Scriptures, serving as deacons, ministry of worship, ushering, Sunday school, etc.[56]

It is the work of the church leadership to equip the laity or congregation for their various ministries or services. For this research, the laity will all have one focus besides the individual work that they do; they each will focus on being equipped to share the gospel. In fact, this work of the church leadership emphasizes the overall mission of the church. It is this vein that Roland Allen writes that the laity is not only there to serve each other, but they have been called to serve the community in which Christ has placed them.[57]

The laity or congregation carries the torch of the gospel to the community they live in. The work does not rest on the pastor or elders but the congregation. That is why, according to Norma Everist, the congregation must show forth to the world the gospel of Christ with their lives.[58] Of course, to get the congregation to live out the life of Christ before the community, outreach requires a personal relationship with Jesus in addition to the preparation and equipping of the saints. Everist outlines two steps in equipping the congregation to live out the life of Christ before the world. First, each church must have a personal relationship with Christ. Second, each must be obedient to the Spirit of Christ and follow His commands in being a witness to the world.[59]

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[56] Judy Johnston, Kurt Konda, and Elizabeth Ablah, "Building Capacity Among Laity: A Faith-Based Health Ministry Initiative," *Journal of Religion and Health* 57, no. 4 (August 2018): 1276–84.

[57] Roland Allen, *The Ministry of Expansion: The Priesthood of the Laity* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2017), [page number(s)].

[58] Norma Cook Everist, "The Church's Vocation in Society through the Ministry of the Laity in the Languages of Their Daily Lives," *Dialog* 50, no. 2 (Sum 2011): 154–61.

[59] Everist, "The Church's Vocation in Society," 156.

The equipping of the laity for ministry cannot be overemphasized. Repeatedly, the laity is seen as the grass root for expanding the message of Christ.[60] For example, Susan Gillies writes the leadership of the church should empower the laity to share the gospel.[61] The gifts and talents of the laity in propagating the gospel should not be overlooked. Gillies then describes how the laity is the extension of the pastor to the community, just as the disciples were an extension of the ministry of Christ when Christ sent the disciples into the community, two by two in Luke 10.[62]

The purpose of equipping the saints, according to Ephesians 4:12, is not only to equip Christians to share their faith and for Christian ministry but also to build up the whole body. The whole body is built up through support for each other. Addressing the edification of the body of Christ, Akintola Olugbenga uses 1 Corinthians 14:26-33 to make his point. He argues that edification is the goal of congregational worship.[63] In his article, Olugbenga argues that the strengthening of the congregation is the responsibility of church leaders and that the congregation also has equal responsibility of strengthening one another.

On the other hand, Hyan-Ah Kim argues how music and rhetoric were used during the reformation for the edification of the church.[64] In his argument, he makes the case of how the humanist attempted to reconstruct the biblical way of edifying the body of Christ. Not all readers will agree with Kim's paper and his argument. Despite which side of the argument a reader may

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[60] Ibid., 158.

[61] Susan E. Gillies, and M. Ingrid Dvirnak, *Empowering Laity, Engaging Leaders: Tapping the Root for Ministry* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012), 285.

[62] Ibid., 287.

[63] Samuel Olugbenga Akintola, "Church Edification in I Corinthians 14:26-33 as the Goal of Congregational Worship," *Practical Theology (Baptist College of Theology, Lagos)* 10 (2017): 111–32.

[64] Hyun-Ah Kim, "Music, Rhetoric, and the Edification of the Church in the Reformation: The Humanist Reconstruction of Modulata Recitatio," *Journal of Early Modern Christianity* 4, no. 1 (2017): 1–20.

find themselves regarding the role of music as it edifies the body of Christ, there is room for

further research on the issue. However, it can be easily deduced that, according to Kim,

humanists attempted to reconstruct church edification through different methods.[65]

Edification is not only needed for church evangelism, but edification can also benefit

small groups within the local assembly to meet spiritual and physical needs of each other. Jeffrey

Burns did a study at his Baptist Church in Indiana in which he investigated the impact of

edification on small groups.[66] He wanted to know whether his church would have been able to

cope with Covid-19 interrupting church attendance and the ministering to church members.

After the study, Burns found out that the edification of small groups paid off. He found

that it was better to minister in small groups than in a larger assembly and easier for members of

the small groups to minister to each other.[67]

Finally, another purpose for equipping the saints is to enable Christians to discern and

make good decisions for Christ. According to David Ford's idea of discernment through

decision-making, he argues that the edification of the saints leads to discernment.[68] He describes

discernment as sound judgment or testing. Ford traces the good judgment or testing by the

Christian to the function of the Holy Spirit. Further discussing the term "discernment," Ford uses

1 Corinthians 12:10 when he argues how the word is used. He concludes by applying to

Christians who need discernment to obey and follow Christ.[69]

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[65] Ibid., 10.

[66] Jeffery Burns, "The Biblical Mandate for Identifying and Edifying Small Group Leaders for a New Small Group Ministry at Gasburg Baptist Church in Mooresville, Indiana" (DMin diss., Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2021) [page 35], ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[67] Ibid., 47.

[68] David V. Ford, "Equipping the Saints: Best Practices in Establishing a Five-Fold Equipping Ministry Team" (DMin diss., Asbury Theological Seminary, 2022), [51], ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[69] Ibid., 70.

The Outcome of Equipping

As a way of quick review, this researcher discussed the different approaches to equipping. He also examined the purpose of equipping. Now in this section, this researcher will discuss the outcome or result of equipping the saints. Referring to Ephesians 4:12-13 as the fulcrum for this review, there are four items highlighted in the verses. First, the equipping of the saints. Second, for the work of ministry and edifying of the saints. Third, so that all will come together in unity of faith and the knowledge of Christ, and fourth, a perfect man and attaining to the maturity of Christ.

Considering the different parts of Ephesians 4:12-13, this research will discuss the heading for the literature review, which is the outcome of equipping. The outcome or result of equipping the saints is that all believers will come to the unity of faith and knowledge of Christ and be an established and mature Christian.

God desires that all who come to Him, although they start as a baby, should be able to grow up just as a baby will grow up and become a full adult (1 Pet 2:2-4; Heb 5:12). Growing up and becoming established in Christ is the outcome of equipping the saints. For example, Robin Schofield describes how Christians must come together as a body and become mature Christians.[70] He then outlines how becoming a mature Christian can arm the Christian to navigate through, and handle challenges.[71] Although Schofield primarily examines Christian maturity in diversity, the primary focus he argues, is that Christians should be equipped so that

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[70] Robin Schofield, "'Unity of Faith Amid Diversity of Opinion:' Sara Coleridge and Frederick Denison Maurice in Dialogue," *Literature and Theology* 33, no. 2 (June 2019): 167.

[71] Ibid., 170.

they will be able to handle unity of faith in the diversity of opinions, cultural backgrounds, language, and other situations that tend to divide Christians.[72]

The Trinity models unity of faith. Although the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct Beings, they are one in essence – they are united. Juan Scannone helps his readers to appreciate this concept of unity in diversity, as illustrated by the Trinity.[73] According to Scannone, although the Trinity is three distinct persons, they all have different functions. They do not only have different functions, but they are united in oneness.

Perhaps, Scannone's argument for the unity of faith is supported by Jesus' prayer in John 17, where Jesus prayed for all believers to be one just as He and the Father are one. Again, examining Ephesians 4:12-13, one may see why reaching unity in Christ is preceded by first equipping the saints. The Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:11 reasons, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (NKJV). One may assume that a Christian who is still a baby is ill-equipped to handle the unity of the faith.

The Bible has a unity of theme and purpose, and the messages it teaches are unified although diversified in applications. Russel Sisson makes the case that the Bible is unified both in faith and knowledge.[74] He uses the epistles of John to make his case and maintains that the epistles are not only connected to the Gospel of John but are also connected to the whole Bible.

Finally, Ruben Mendoza expounds on Ephesians 4:13, using the Philippines as a context for evangelism. He argues that the church should not only be engaged in social work in the

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[72] Schofield, "Unity of Faith Amid Diversity of Opinion," 168.

[73] Juan Carlos Scannone, "Rethinking an Ontology of Unity, Starting from Trinitarian Faith," *Claritas* 9, no. 1 (2020): 9–18.

[74] Russel B. Sisson, "Unity in Faith and Fullness of Knowledge in the Johannine Epistles," *Biblical Research* 61 (2016): 77–95.

community, but the church should also be involved in the mission of the church. He then focuses on the laity whom he believes should be equipped to evangelize the Philippines.[75]

Theological Foundations

The Bible provides support for how Christians are to be equipped for the very work God has called them to do. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, men were called and set apart by God to carry on specific duties and responsibilities.

Old Testament Pattern

Adam and Eve

In the beginning, after God created Adam, God gave him the responsibility to tend to the garden which God had planted (Gen 2:15). Although no man taught Adam how to manage the garden, God Himself equipped Adam with the skills and knowledge to keep the garden. Robert Hinckley, an author on the purposes/functions of the biblical characters, wrote that God created Adam with the ability to tend the garden.[76] Hinckley then highlights what that ability was that God put in Adam in order to plant the garden.[77] Finally, Hinckley notes that Adam was the first man God ever equipped to serve Him.[78]

After God had made them male and female, God blessed them and said: "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion…" (Gen 1:28, NKJV). God's command to man was impregnated with the ability and power to do what God had said. This means God's

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[75] Ruben Mendoza, *Assuming All That Is Asian: Becoming a Truly Local Church in Dialogue* (East Asian Pastoral Review, 50(1)), 2013), 20.

[76] Robert M. Hinckley, Jr., "Adam, Aaron, and the Garden Sanctuary," *Logia* 22, no. 4 (Reformation 2013): 16.   .

[77] Hinckley, Jr., "Adam, Aaron, and the Garden Sanctuary," 16.

[78] Ibid., 18.

order to Adam was filled with the knowledge and passion for Adam to do what God had commanded. For example, in his commentary on the book of Genesis, Gordon Wenham writes that God's command to Adam to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and have dominion, was not only a command to do, but it also gave Adam the ability to accomplish what God had said.[79]

It is worth noting that whatever God says, it is done. For example, it is written in Psalm 33:6, 9: "By the word of the Lord, the heavens were made…For He spoke and it was done" (NKJV). In the same way, God's command to Adam was filled with the ability and the power to do what had been commanded. Also, God's command to Adam made Adam a partner with God in enforcing God's rule over the earth. Later, in the New Testament, that partnership between God and Adam would be seen between Christ and the church to enforce the kingdom rule in the earth (1 Cor 3:9).

Noah

Besides Adam, God equipped other people in the Bible. In Genesis 6, God partnered with another man for the salvation of the earth. He prepared and trained Noah to build an ark. Noah was a preacher of righteousness with no engineering skills. However, God provided Noah with engineering skills to build an ark.[80] Mark Wilson, in his article, describes how God had equipped Noah for the task.[81]

It is essential at this point to note that Noah's ark was not so much about engineering skills, but it was about God's plan of salvation to save the world in Noah's time from

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[79] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, vol. 1, Word Biblical Commentary, ed. John D. W. Watts (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 153.

[80] Mark W. Wilson, "Noah, the Ark, and the Flood in Early Christian Literature," *Scriptura* 113 (2014): 10.

[81] Ibid., 16.

destruction.[82] The Scripture says salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9). Therefore, God is the real architect of salvation, not man. Noah was only a partner with God in saving the earth. The Scripture also says, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (Ps 127:1, ESV). Therefore, God equipped Noah to build the ark.

The Construction of the Tabernacle

The building of the tabernacle is another example of how God equipped men in the Old Testament. The word equipping is used here in the general sense, which means to supply with the necessary skills for a particular purpose. For instance, God provided a man named Bezalel with knowledge, skills, wisdom, and understanding to build the tabernacle (Exod 25). Bezalel could not have done the work he did on the tabernacle without being equipped by God. God was the visionary and architect of the tabernacle. Therefore, Bezalel was only an instrument in God's hands. In his commentary regarding Bezalel building the tabernacle, Hershberger, notes that God anointed Bezalel with all kinds of skills and artistic work to construct the tabernacle.[83] Moreover, God made Bezalel the chief contractor over all the other artists and craftsmen.

Although Bezalel headed the construction of the tabernacle, Moses was the one with whom God shared His vision of the structure of the tabernacle. God revealed the whole plan for the construction of the tabernacle to Moses on the mountain. "And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle…" (Exod 25:8-9, NKJV). As great as Moses was, it was not Moses whom God equipped to build the tabernacle. Rather, it was Bezalel. Moses was only shown the plan.

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[82] St. Ambrose, trans. Brian P. Dunkle, SJ, *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 140, *Treatises on Noah and David* (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2020), 167, ProQuest eBook Central.

[83] Ervin N. Hershberger, *Seeing Christ in the Tabernacle* (Harrisonburg, VA: Vision Publishers LLC, 2010), 183, ProQuest eBooks Central; David Guzik, *Enduring Word Bible Commentary* vol? (City, State: Intervarsity Press, 2006), 191.

The tabernacle represented God's presence among the people of Israel.[84] The tabernacle was the place God met with His people Israel. God warned Moses strongly to follow the pattern God had revealed to him. This paper is in no way a substitute for the tabernacle's detailed description and function. The making of the tabernacle is a one-way example of how God equips people.

Abraham

In Genesis 12, the Scripture describes another man who God equipped to train his children to serve God. God called out Abraham from a heathen culture to go to a city that He promised to give him. The Scripture says Abraham journeyed not knowing exactly what city God had in mind (Heb 11:8). The Scripture says that by faith Abraham made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign land. Abraham's son Isaac and grandson Jacob did the same thing by making their homes in the promised land like strangers living in a foreign land (Heb 11: 9).

Abraham was a type of the church in the Old Testament: "the called out one." God said that through Abraham He would bless the whole world (Gen 22:18). God showed how Abraham was to train his children. The Scripture says, "For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him" (Gen 18:19, NKJV).

Since God was going to bless the world through Abraham, God put a plan in place in which Abraham was empowered to teach his children and household to fear the Lord. Incidentally, God became Abraham's teacher, and Abraham became the teacher of his children

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[84] Peter Enns, *NIV Application Commentary: Exodus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 405.

and his home. Abraham was commanded and equipped by God to teach his family to follow the ways of God.

In Genesis 12, God called Abraham out of an idolatrous nation to follow Him. God wanted to ensure that Abraham never went back to idolatrous living and that Abraham instructed his family in the ways of the Lord. Discussing the life of Abraham, Wenham describes how God chose Abraham out of a pagan culture to make Himself known to the world.[85] Abraham was also to be a channel through which God would bless the nations. Wenham writes, "It was through Abraham God had promised to bless all the nations. God's choice of Abraham would make Abraham the father of multitudes as God had promised."[86] Although there is an agreement among many scholars that the coming of Christ fulfilled the prophecy of Abraham's as a blessing to the nations (Gal 3:29), some Bible commentators believe otherwise.[87] These commentators believe that the sign had a fulfillment in Abraham's time as well as fulfillment in Christ.[88] They further argue that Abraham was to be a witness to his children as well as to the nations that surrounded him. Both views support the same idea that Abraham was to be a blessing to the nations. Therefore, it can be argued that God did equip Abraham to be a witness for Him to the world.[89]

As Abraham's descendants increased and multiplied and became a great nation, God continued to show His people how to equip the next generation. Because Israel was surrounded

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[85] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 160.

[86] Ibid., 165.

[87] Richard Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 41, *Galatians*, (City, state: Colombia World Books, 1990), 501.

[88] Gerhard Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1973), 210.

[89] J. Gerald Jantzen, *Abraham and the Families of the Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Bondman Publisher, 1993), 209.

by heathen nations, he wanted to ensure that His people did not forget their roots in Him. Therefore, God gave Israel a strategy to equip their children with the knowledge of Him.

In Deuteronomy 11:19, God gave Israel a two-point strategy for equipping His people. The first principle was for Israel to hide the Word in their hearts. The second principle was for Israel to also teach their children His Word. God specifically instructed Israel how they were to teach their children. They were to teach their children when they walk by the road, when they lie down and when they rise. The teaching was intended to be a way of life.

In his commentary concerning God's command to Israel to teach their children, John Currid writes that when Israel was about to enter the promise land,[90] Moses reminded Israel of the importance of holding on to God. Currid further reports that Moses also warned Israel that it would be to their detriment if they forsook God and followed the gods of the land they were going to possess.[91]

As has been discussed, all throughout the Old Testament, God provided guidance for His people to stay in fellowship with Him. God also went a great length in equipping His people for the work He wanted done. The primary outcome of God was related to His kingdom and His righteousness (Matt 6:33). For example, systematic theology provides an understanding of the overall story of the Bible and how it applies to the church and ministry in general. In this regard of understanding the overall story of the Bible, Michael Lawrence discusses in his book how the central theme of the Bible is revealed and developed in history.[92]

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[90] John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2006), 124.

[91] Ibid, 127.

[92] Michael Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church: A Guide for Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Publishing, 2020), 56.

Before closing the chapter about equipping in the Old Testament, justice will not be done if the role of the Holy Spirit is not mentioned. All throughout the Old Testament, God's Holy Spirit was working with God's people to help them perform the tasks given. For example, in Zachariah 4:6, God told Zachariah that his task would be accomplished not by his own power but by the Holy Spirit of God.

In the New Testament, the role of the Holy Spirit in equipping people for the tasks appointed is further developed. For example, the Holy Spirit convicts sinners of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-9). On the other hand, the one who is witnessing is empowered by the Holy Spirit to be effective in sharing the gospel. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said to His disciples, "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth," (NKJV).

<div style="text-align:center">New Testament Pattern</div>

The New Testament provides several examples of how God worked to equip the believers for the work of ministry. The New Testament builds on the principles the Old Testament teaches regarding equipping believers. Some of these principles are reliance on God and obedience to God. Additionally, the New Testament emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in equipping believers: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor 3:5-6, NKJV).

John the Baptist

The New Testament introduces the forerunner of Jesus Christ in the person of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was a man who did not do miracles as Jesus did. However, John the Baptist was a man attested by God in his ministry that even Jesus came to be baptized of John (Matt 3:13-17). In his commentary, D. A. Carson writes that John the Baptist's ministry was honored by the Lord.[93] He further writes about the fact that John was set apart in the womb and went in the power of the Holy Spirit just as John's father, Zacharias the priest, had prophesized about him at his birth.

John's success in ministry was evidence of how God equipped him. The Scripture teaches that John was filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born (Luke 1:15). The mention of the Holy Spirit before John's birth is consistent with the Apostle's letter according to 2 Corinthians 3:5-6, that the believer's sufficiency is of the Lord's.

Carson, in his commentary on John the Baptist, writes that John's ministry was so impactful that it even attracted the critics of his day, which were the religious leaders.[94] He also notes that the religious leaders were afraid to arrest John for fear of the people. The people knew that John was a prophet attested by God.[95] Carson discussed further that John was humbled, for he did not receive the honor when the people wanted to hail him as the Christ; rather, John pointed the honor to Christ. John depended on God and not on his own ability.

Similarly, part of the process of being equipped to preach the gospel or to reach out into the community requires reliance on God and not on one's own ability. The life of John the

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[93] D. A. Carson, Walter L, Liefeld, and Walter W. Wessel, *Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984), 120.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 130.

Baptist's experience provides insight as to how the Holy Spirit works alongside the believer to be effective in ministry and reach out to the community.

Jesus Christ Equipped as Son

A similar trend of relying on God through fasting and praying was seen in the ministry of Jesus. Before Jesus began His ministry, He spent much time fasting and praying. The Scripture records that Jesus spent forty days and forty nights in the wilderness fasting and praying (Luke 4:1-2). Jesus, as a model for the believer, demonstrated not only how the believer should live but also how the believer should serve God. Carson in his commentary on John's gospel writes, that Jesus was God in the flesh. Although Jesus' divinity is very much revealed in the book of John, Carson writes that Jesus submitted to God as Son.[96] Therefore, soul winners can do the same.

Jesus' forty days and forty nights of prayer were followed by testing. After Jesus was tested, He walked in the power of the Holy Spirit.[97] In other words, Jesus' ministry was authenticated by the power of the Holy Spirit after He was tested. Luke's Gospel describes Jesus' empowerment by the Holy Spirit as follows: "Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region" (Luke 4:14, NKJV).

Since this research focuses on how to equip the church for soul-winning, Jesus provides the model of how a believer is equipped by God to carry on His work. In his article, Malam Nel discusses how equipping church members for outreach is vanishing from the modern church.[98] He argues that there is a shift from the emphasis on kingdom principle taught by Jesus, which includes teaching others to be effective witnesses for Christ.

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[96] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel of John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1991), 22.

[97] Ibid., 85.

[98] Malan Nel, "Discipleship: The Priority of the 'Kingdom and His Righteousness,'" *Hervormde teologiese studies* 73, no. 4 (2017): e1-e9, database for article?

Jesus spent time in prayer and fasting, which demonstrated His reliance on God the Father. Jesus as a man, had to learn to rely on the Father for His ministry. The Scripture says although being God, He never made Himself equal with the Father but took the nature of a servant to obey God even to die on the cross (Phil. 2:5-8). In his commentary on Jesus' submission to the Father, Grant Osborne writes: "Though fully God and fully Man, Jesus chose to humble Himself before the Father to fulfill His mission to die for the sins of the world."[99] Osborne further writes that Jesus' submission to God also demonstrated His love for God and love for the world.[100]

One could argue that Jesus' reliance on the Father to carry on His work says something about the nature of a servant. A servant does not carry on his own wishes and desires but the wishes and desires of the one who is over him. Jesus said, "I can of Myself do nothing…. because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me" (John 5:30, NKJV).

Since this thesis focuses on equipping church members for evangelism or for members to share their faith, this researcher would like to observe that Jesus' attitude of reliance on God the Father demonstrates that Jesus, as the God-man, had to be equipped for His earthly ministry. By being equipped as a man, Jesus provides a model for every believer to be equipped before launching into ministry or the community for outreach (1 Pet 2:21).

Jesus also recognized the role of the Holy Spirit in His preparation for ministry, which is vital for the equipping process. In Luke 4, Jesus announced that the Spirit of God was upon Him to do several things, one of which was to preach the good news to the poor. Acts 10:38 also describes the role of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life to carry on His earthly ministry. Therefore, the

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[99] Grant Osborne, *Philippians: Verse by Verse* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2017), 76.

[100] Ibid., 91.

role of the Holy Spirit is significant for the equipping process because it is impossible to do anything without His presence.

Hebrews 5:8 says, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered" (NASB). Being equipped for the work God for the believer is sometimes associated with pain. Later in His ministry, Jesus would warn His disciples of the cost of following Him or being His disciples (Luke 9:57-62). For example, Jesus said, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26, NKJV).

Jesus Equips the Apostles

When Jesus was about to choose His disciples, He resorted to prayer to seek guidance from His Father. Jesus chose twelve people who became His twelve apostles. These twelve apostles lived with Jesus and He taught them and modeled His life before them.

Jesus worked with His disciples for three years.[101] These twelve men, called apostles, came from different backgrounds. Some of them were fishermen by trade. Notwithstanding, God in the person of Jesus took three years to develop new skills utterly different from fishing and other crafts the disciples were used to. During those three years, Jesus equipped the apostles to fish for men instead of fishing for fish. Part of the process of being equipped is to follow the footsteps of Jesus. Jesus told His apostles, "follow me, and I will make you [rest of verse?]," (passage reference, translation). According to Anna Case-Winters, Jesus transforms people who are willing to follow Christ.[102] Those who are hesitant to follow Christ do not experience a transformed life.

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[101] Francis J. Moloney, "The First Days of Jesus and the Role of the Disciples: A Study of John 1:19-51" (*Australian Biblical Review* 65 2017), 67.

[102] Anna Case-Winters, *Matthew* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 70.

Jesus said to His disciples, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21, NKJV). Jesus' instruction was direct. Jesus as a Son or a Man, had been equipped by the Father, according to Acts 10:38: "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power" (NKJV). Jesus was passing the mantle to His disciples to continue His work. For example, Jesus came into the world knowing fully well He would suffer and die on the cross. He knew He was not coming to a world that would easily receive Him. Therefore, knowing the hostility of the world towards God, Jesus warns His disciples and He tells them as the Father has sent Me so am I sending you.

Jesus then tells His disciples how He is sending them. Jesus said, "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves" (Matt 10:16, NKJV). Case-Winters, in her commentary on Matthew 10, writes that Jesus prepared His disciples to be aware of persecutions that would follow them because they were His followers.[103]

Jesus recognized the importance of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the process of equipping. He left instructions with the Apostles to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit. The writer of Acts records Jesus' instruction to the Apostles in the following way: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

After Jesus's ascension the disciples were left with the task of equipping others to assist with the work. The first group the disciples empowered and equipped were the deacons (Acts 6:1-15, ESV). Although the deacons attended to tables, they were also equipped to minister the Word. Examples of deacons who did tasks besides tending to tables were Stephen and Philip.

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[103] Ibid., 79.

Pauline Epistles & the General Epistles

When the apostle Paul joined the band of apostles after his conversion on the Damascus Road, he expanded work of ministry beyond the role of the deacons. Following the example of Jesus, the Apostle Paul wrote, "The things which you have heard me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful people who will be able to teach others also" (2 Tim 2:2, NASB). Paul builds on the idea that each person in Christ has been called and set apart to be conformed to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29).

Finally, the apostle Paul concludes his letter about how each believer can be equipped for the work of ministry or service. In his letter to the church at Ephesus, the apostle explained that God has appointed the fivefold ministry offices in the body of Christ to carry on the task of equipping the saints. After mentioning by whom the saints shall be equipped, the apostle gave the time frame in which the process of equipping will take place.

Many authors have addressed the subject of equipping the saints according to Ephesians 4. One such author who examined Ephesians 4 is John Davis.[104] According to Davis, every believer is in the "ministry" as the text puts it. Therefore, Davis argues that equipping is for everyone who is a believer in Christ. Davis's argument dismisses the claim by some who argue that equipping is only reserved for special people in the body of Christ. This student researcher agrees with Davis that equipping is for anyone who has come to faith in Christ and is part of the local congregation. Regarding the involvement of the local church in evangelism, Daniel Smith

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[104] John Jefferson Davis, "Ephesians 4:12 Once More: 'Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry?'" *Evangelical Review of Theology* 24, no. 2 (2000): 57.

writes, "the work of evangelism should not be left to the pastor or special committee, but the whole church should be integrated into the process of evangelism."[105]

God does not call a person without equipping that person to do the work for which He calls them. The word "equips," or its synonyms, is found in several places in the Bible. The passage of Scripture that is commonly associated with the word "equip" is Ephesians 4:11-12. The apostle Paul, at the beginning of Ephesians, exalts the believers to walk worthy of the vocation that God has given to each one.

Each person that God calls to follow Christ is gifted by God to function according to the grace God has apportioned for that person. Paul makes it clear that although each believer has been apportioned with certain gifts to function, God has also set aside leaders in the church, namely, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the believers.

According to Ernest Best's commentary on Ephesians 4, the goal of equipping the saints is to help the saints to grow up and become mature for service. He further explains that service, or the work of ministry, is not for the immature but for those who are established in the truth.[106] Best is a respected evangelical scholar who has written many commentaries on the New Testament.

In his commentary on Ephesians 4:11-13, Best describes the process of equipping as "necessary and important for spiritual development"[107] The best ideas on maturing saints are consistent with Scripture and corroborate with other passages of Scripture. For example, the writer of the book of Hebrews describes the difference between a spiritual baby and a spiritual or

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[105] Daniel Allen Smith, "A Pastor's Approach to Discipleship and its Effect on the Local Church: A Three-Step Approach to Biblical Discipleship," (DMin thesis, Liberty University, 2014), 24, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[106] Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (London, UK: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 1998), 201.

[107] Ibid, 210.

mature Christian or adult. The Scripture says, "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb 5:13-14, NKJV).

Christ has left a mission for the church leaders whose primary function is designed to equip the rest of the saints for service. Each saint or church member is developed and strengthened in areas that are unique to each saint.[108] Best explains that Paul's major theme of the book of Ephesians is about the church and the believer's identity in Christ. However, to bring out the identity of Christ in the believer, Best asserts the believer should be equipped.[109] Best refers to this process as equipping or establishing the saints.[110]

In the same way, GWEM has concluded that its members cannot evangelize the world without first being equipped. God has not left the body of Christ without the necessary human resources or instruments to equip the saints. In every ministry or church, God has provided leaders to equip the rest of the believers. According to 1 Corinthians 1:5-7, the Apostle Paul wrote that Christ has enriched the church with all spiritual gifts in such a way that the church does not lack what it needs for thriving.

The apostle Paul highlights the truth that the local assembly of Christ is equipped with the right leadership to carry on the equipping. Writing to the Corinthians, the apostle says, "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God, which was given to you by Christ Jesus, that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, even

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[108] Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians*, 205.

[109] Ibid., 207.

[110] Ibid.

as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift" (1 Cor 1:4-7, NKJV).

The local assembly falls short of no gift as far as gifts of leadership to the church are concerned. Christ has gifted the local assembly with everything it needs to flourish. According to Harold Hoehner's commentary, "Ephesians provides the model for the strengthening of the church for service."[111] Therefore, church leaders are great assets to the church.[112] Hoehner writes further, "Every believer has a unique role to play in the body of Christ. However, through the process of equipping, the uniqueness of the believer is identified and harnessed."[113] This researcher believes that GWEM as a local assembly of Christ has been gifted by Christ to provide the necessary equipping for its members to function as Christ would like it to function. Consequently, GWEM is drawing its motivation and precedence from the pages of the Scriptures: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (1 Cor 11:1, KJV).

There is an important truth to understand as it relates to the equipping of the saints. In as much as Christ has given to the church—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints—the work of equipping ultimately rests in the hands of Christ and not the gifts of church leadership that Christ provides. E. D. Mbennah in his article provides support for the maturity of the believers.[114]

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[111]Harold W. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 350, ProQuest Ebook Central.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., 360.

[114] E. D. Mbennah, "The Goal of Maturity in Ephesians 4:13-16," *Acta Theologica* 36, no. 1 (06, 2016): 110-32, 30.

According to Mbennah, "Spiritual maturity is the bridge between the new identity in Christ and the moral code of the Christian life."[115] He further writes that, "The new identity in Christ should work hand in hand with the moral code of Christ's life." Mbennah argues that one cannot claim maturity without the Christian moral code.[116] In other words, Mbennah is arguing that spiritual maturity must match Christian character. Spiritual gifts must go together with Christian character. Therefore, one may infer from Mbennah's argument that there should be a balance between spiritual maturity and Christian character without the emphasis of one over the other.

Since the day of John the Baptist, the kingdom of God has been forcefully advancing and only those who are focused and not deterred make progress (Matt 11:12). Just as it was true in the day of John the Baptist, it is true for the church today. The Scripture says, "everything written in the past, was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope" (Rom 15:4, NIV).

For the church to function in its maximum strength, the saints will have to be equipped for the task. Therefore, persevering under hardship or discipline is part of the process of equipping. Jesus Christ was an example of perseverance under hardship or discipline. The Scripture says, "though He was a Son, *yet* He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Heb 5:8-9, NKJV).

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[115] E. D. Mbennah, "The Goal of Maturity," 35.

[116] Ibid.

Christian maturity is a subject Carson examines extensively in his book.[117] Carson used the Corinthian Church as a context and he discussed how the apostle Paul emphasized the importance of spiritual discipline. He writes that subjecting oneself to spiritual discipline is part of spiritual maturity. Carson then further writes that virtues of humility, gentleness, and obedience to God and His Word are hallmarks to Christian maturity. Like Mbennah, Carson supports the balance between Christian maturity and spiritual gifts.[118]

Besides Jesus giving gifts of leadership to the church in the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip the saints, Jesus is also interceding for the believers to be equipped in accordance with His will. According to Hebrews 13:21, the Spirit of Christ, praying through the writer of the book of Hebrews, prays that God may equip the believers in every way to do His will.

According to Mbennah, the goal of equipping as Paul writes in the book of Ephesians, is that all believers will be established and matured in Christ. The believer who is established is the one who is not easily swayed by false teaching. These mature believers examine every teaching with the Word of God.[119] This kind of maturity is like that of the Berean Church. According to the Scripture, "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11, NKJV).

The equipping of the saints begins with Christ and ends with Christ. Hebrews 12:2 states, "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith…" (Heb 12:2, NKJV). Christ is the

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[117] D. A. Carson, *A Model of Christian Maturity: An Exposition of 2 Corinthians 10-13* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 301, ProQuest Ebook Central.

[118] Ibid., 30.

[119] Mbennah, "The Goal of Maturity," 20.

ultimate giver of the gifts of leadership to the church. Although the church leadership equips the saints, it is Christ by His Spirit who works through the church leadership as well as the saints. Moreover, Christ intercedes for the believers as they go through the process of equipping. The Scripture says, "Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen," (Heb 13:20-21, NKJV). This intercession by Jesus Christ is further discussed by Dave Earley in a subsequent discussion in this paper. [120]

Theoretical Foundations

Practices and approaches for equipping the saints for soul-winning or community outreach are based on theories and models adapted by various scholars and church leaders. Each model has its own strengths and weaknesses. Under this section of the thesis, several theories and models are examined. Each model is examined by looking at its description, its strengths, its weaknesses, and its use.

Four Tools Approach

Dave Earley in his book, *Pastoral Leadership Is*, examines the role of the pastor in church and ministry.[121] One of the things Earley discusses in the book is the role of the pastor to equip the saints for evangelism. According to Earley, his model is based on the Pauline model.[122]

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[120] Dave Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is*: *How to Shepherd God's People with Passion and Confidence* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2012), 251..

[121] Ibid., 16.

[122] Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is*, 16.

Earley argues that there is no mention of committees, hospital visitations, or performing funeral services, etc. as emphasized in the West as the primary role of the pastor.[123]

Earley then discusses the example of Paul in shepherding as it relates to equipping the saints. Earley identifies four principles that Paul uses to equip those who were under his oversight. He outlines these principles as prayer, teaching the Word, intentional training or leading, and the use of small groups.

Earley is an expert on pastoral leadership and has written extensively on the subject. In *Pastoral Leadership Is*, he identifies four tools that are used to equip the saints.[124] He names the tools for equipping as prayer, the Word of God, intentional training, and connection with other members of the body of Christ.

According to Earley, prayer is the first tool available to the pastor to equip the saints. Using prayer as a tool for equipping the saints, Earley gives a typical example of what that prayer looks like. He describes prayer as seeking God for guidance every step of the way. By praying regularly and consistently, the believer will be effective in carrying on his or her work. Earley notes that prayer saves time. He explains that some try to do the reverse. In other words, some people attempt to do it in their own strength and when they fail, then they seek God for help. Then Earley used the end of the book of Hebrews to highlight a typical prayer for equipping the saints. The prayer highlights that the Great Shepherd Jesus should equip the saints to do what is good and pleasing to the Lord.[125]

The second tool Earley discusses for equipping the saints is the Word of God. He uses 2 Timothy 3:16 to make his case. He argues that the aim of 2 Timothy 3:16 is that the saint can be

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[123] Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is*, 17.

[124] Ibid., 26.

[125] Ibid., 35.

equipped for every good work.[126] Early discussed how the Word of God is used for instruction, counsel, rebuke and to equip the saint for every work of righteousness. The third tool for equipping the saints according to Earley is intentional training. The student should train in such a way that the student becomes like the trainer or master. Earley uses Jesus words in Luke 6:40 to support his claim: "but everyone, when he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (NASB).[127]

The fourth tool Earley recommends for equipping the saints is the tool that connects members. Earley writes that it is difficult for any pastor or church leader to equip the members if there is disunity in the church. To solve the problem of disunity, Earley recommends healthy small groups in the church in which members can get along with each other.

The strength of Earley's Pauline model is based on the example of the apostle Paul. The key elements of the model, such as prayer and teaching of the Word, are pillars that a leader can use to develop and equip his congregation. However, the weakness of this model may be rooted perhaps in the unpreparedness and immaturity of the congregation at the time to receive the truth or teaching. For example, the writer of Hebrews argues that "by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again…for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the Word of righteousness, since he is a child" (Heb 5:12, 13, ESV).

Another weakness of Earley's emphasis is his argument that a pastor is not called to do hospital visitations and the other routines that pastors are normally involved with. Some scholars or pastors may challenge Earley's interpretation or misinterpret his argument; that it lacks compassion for the flock because it ignores the physical and emotional needs of the church

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[126] Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is*, 50.

[127] Ibid., 60.

members. For example, Vhumani Magezi, in his paper on pastoral care writes, "Pastors are

required by virtue of their calling to demonstrate compassion and love for the flock."[128] This

compassion and love is expressed by identifying with the flock in their grief and loss.

Identification with the flock in times of grief and loss includes ministering funeral rites.

Also, in the critique of Earley's approach, Collin Adams questions Earley's reference to

the South Korean Church of Paul Cho as a model to be followed.[129] According to Adams, the

South Korean Church is not a good example to follow because of unbiblical support in its

theology. Therefore, according to Adams, Earley's reference to the Korean Church to support his

argument is unsubstantiated.

<div align="center">Four Stranded Strategy Approach</div>

Holmgaard, in his research, outlined four stranded strategies that can be used to equip

leaders in the church.[130] Although Holmgaard's target groups are pastors and leaders of the

church, the application can be made to the laity. The rationale for including the laity is because

of the word "equip," which is key to this research. The word Holmgaard uses is the same word

that is used in Ephesians 4:12. The word "equip" comes from the Greek word εξοπλίζω, which is

transliterated as *exoplizo*. It means to "perfect" or "to build up."[131]

The four stranded strategies Holmgaard outlined are the following: involvement of the

local church, regional learning community, a network of free church scholars, and reestablishing

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[128] Vhumani Magezi, "Pastoral Care to Migrants as Care at the 'in-between' and 'liminal' Home Away from Home: Towards Public Pastoral Care to Migrants," *Verbum Et Ecclesia* 40, no. 1 (2019): 5.

[129] Collin Adams, "Book Review: Pastoral Leadership Is," *9 Marks Journal*. Accessed October 19, 2021. https: https://www.9marks.org/review/pastoral-leadership.

[130] Holmgaard, "Equipping the Saints Without a Theological Seminary," 70.

[131] Gregory K. Beale, Daniel Joseph Brendsel, and William A. Ross, *An Interpretive Lexicon of New Testament Greek: Analysis of Prepositions, Adverbs, Particles, Relative Pronouns, and Conjunctions* (Grand Rapids, MI: HarperCollins Christian Publishing, 2014), 168, ProQuest Ebook Central.

the relationship and collaboration. Considering the local church strategy, participants are placed in practice and apprenticeship in local congregations to learn. The principle underlying this strategy is that the best way to learn is to serve as an apprentice under someone who is already functioning in that capacity.

The second strategy for equipping, according to Holmgaard, is the creation of a regional learning community. The strategy is to allow members to meet monthly in a network. The third strategy is the creation of free network scholars. The principle for this strategy is to develop, equip, and contribute with knowledge and oversight.[132]

Holmgaard's fourth strategy for equipping the saints is reestablishing the relationship and collaboration. In Scandinavia, a project was carried out in which people were allowed to attend church education programs without any inducements.[133] It was on a pure voluntary basis. Therefore, Holmgaard saw the need for a strong network between church educational programs and other programs to strengthen the equipping process.

The strength of Holmgaard's approach is that it provides an opportunity for those without seminary or higher education training to be equipped for service in the ministry. The training is less costly compared to obtaining training at universities. However, this approach also has its weakness. According to Index Theologicus, a review board of European Baptist churches, Holmagaard's model is now outdated because the situation in Europe has changed.[134] Many, if not most, churches are now able to train their leaders in seminaries and universities.

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[132] Holmgaard "Equipping the Saints Without a Theological Seminary," 95.

[133] Ibid., 83.

[134] Index Theologicus. A Review: "Equipping the Saints Without a Theological Seminary." *Journal of European Studies.* Vol 19. 2019, 88. (Accessed October 19, 2021; https://ixtheo.de/Record),

The second reason Holmagaard's model is outdated, according to the European Baptist Churches review board, is "studying academic theology, could potentially be a great advantage for the free church movement, but at the same time challenge free churches to engage with academic work as a practice."[135] Although Holmagaard's approach may be outdated in Europe because many can now afford to train leaders at universities, the model can be of great benefit in places of the world where churches cannot afford to train leaders at seminaries and universities.

Daniel Smith's 3-P Model

The biblical model for equipping the saints is a model many church leaders attempt to follow. Smith, in his doctoral thesis, describes the 3-Ps model. The 3-Ps model describes three phases of personal spiritual growth and development. The three phases of spiritual growth and development, according to Smith, are personal formation, personal transformation, and personal application.[136] Smith explains that the pastor, as well as congregations, before they witness for Christ, all parties, i.e., the pastor as well as the member of congregation must have gone through the process of personal formation, personal transformation, and personal application.

Smith's 3-P model seems to have scriptural support. A person cannot give or pass on what he or she does not have. A good example of this argument can be seen in the book of Acts when Peter, James, and John encountered the paralyzed man outside at the temple called Beautiful Gate. Peter said to the paralyzed man, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have, I give you," (Acts 3:6, NIV).

Regarding Peter's declaration to the paralyzed man, it can be argued that a person cannot give what he or she does not have. A person cannot share Jesus with someone if they do not have

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[135] Index Theologicus, A Review, 88.

[136] Smith, "A Pastor's Approach to Discipleship," 160.

a personal relationship with Christ. According to Smith, a life that is personally and spiritually formed, transformed by Christ and the principles of God's Word applied, is the person who is ready to share Christ with others.[137]

Another example that illustrates the point of Smith's justification for personal formation, personal transformation, and personal application of God's Word (for the purpose of sharing Christ with others) is found in 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also," NKJV). Therefore, Smith's argument for personal formation and transformation seems to corroborate with the principle illustrated by 2 Timothy 2:2. The principle is that those who share Christ with others must first be spiritually ready or mature.

The strength of Smith's 3-P's model is that it helps an individual to grow and develop spiritually. On the other hand, the weakness of the model is it emphasizes only the personal spiritual development of the believer without involving others who are leaders or more mature in the process.

According to Ephesians 4, God has given gifts to the church in the form of pastors, teachers, etc., for the purpose of equipping the saints. Therefore, one can argue that personal development and personal transformation without the help of others, as Ephesians 4 commands, is a limitation in the equipping process. Smith's 3-Ps model seems to suggest a student has the workbook but does not have a teacher while in the process of equipping and learning.

<div align="center">The Nigerian Model or Pluralistic Model</div>

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[137] Smith, "A Pastor's Approach to Discipleship," 161.

In the Nigerian Model, Felix Enegho and Friday Imekhai examine how evangelism can be carried out in a society as diverse as Nigeria.[138] In their paper, the two Nigerian Christian scholars discussed how to overcome the challenge of a multicultural, multilingual, multiethnic, and multi-religious society like Nigeria.[139] The two scholars' thesis is based on the account of Pentecost written in Acts 2. Enegho and Imehkai make their argument from the Pentecost account based on the phrase "each heard them in their own language."[140]

The two scholars define language in their paper to refer not only to the spoken language but also to refer to the method in which to communicate the gospel. According to Enegho and Imehhkai, the gospel can be communicated effectively when witnesses of Christ understand the language of the people to be evangelized. The two scholars concluded that in a pluralistic society like Nigeria, the best way to communicate the gospel is to know the language of a specific group of people and communicate to them in their language.[141]

The strength of the Nigerian model is its emphasis on understanding the language of the people and communicating to them that way. Notwithstanding, the flip side of the model is the challenges involved in learning the language of the people. Challenges include, but are not limited to, the learning style and ability of the individual. These challenges include cultural and ethnic barriers, duration of learning and other challenges that normally come with learning a new language.[142]

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[138] Felix Ehimare Enegho and Friday John Imekhai, "Language and Christian Evangelism in a Pluralistic Society: The Nigerian Model," *Svensk Missionstidskrift* 96, no. 4 (2008): 340.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Ibid., 341.

[141] Ibid., 348.

[142] Deborah A. Streicher, "The Christian Way of Life: It Begins with Immersion: Becoming Fluent in the Language of Faith through the Lens of Learning a Language," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 46, no. 1 (2019): 45-49.

Another shortcoming of the Nigerian Model is the emphasis placed on the literal meaning of "understanding the language of the people." Although in the book of Acts the visitors at Pentecost each heard the apostles speak in his own language, one cannot assume a person has to learn the language of every place one intends to evangelize, as Enegho and Imehkai have argued.

For example, Lynn Losie, in her paper, argued that language barrier can be overcome through partnership for the sake of mutuality and reciprocity without having to learn the language of people with a different language.[143] Losie is a Korean American Christian scholar who has worked many years with churches in immigrant communities. Losie adds that just as the Holy Spirit was a unifying player on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit works in practical ways in modern times to help witnesses of Christ overcome the language barrier.[144]

For example, according to Losie, one of the ways the Holy Spirit works is by helping witnesses of Christ work through partnerships with others with a foreign language. Secondly, witnesses of Christ can overcome the language barrier by providing structural and every other support, including the use of translators or interpreters, to bridge language barriers. Therefore, Losie's argument challenges Enegho and Imehkai's argument that understanding a foreign language is the only way to carry on Christian witness in diverse societies, like Nigeria.

Learning from Jesus' Example

Jerram Barrs reasons that believers are to do evangelism as Jesus did it.[145] He refers to Jesus as the greatest evangelist ever and His example is worth emulating. Barrs' primary point is that evangelism should be practiced according to Scriptures and Jesus should be the main

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[143] Lynn Allan Losie, "Paul's Speech on the Areopagus: A Model of Cross-Cultural Evangelism: Acts 17:16-34," in *Mission in Acts: Ancient Narratives in Contemporary Context*, ed. Robert L. Gallagher and Paul Hertig (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004), 235.

[144] Ibid, 237.

[145] Jerram Barrs, *Learning Evangelism from Jesus* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2009), 46.

example.[146] Barrs does not give any specific formula or specific steps to follow, however, Barrs examined the different ways Jesus evangelized to different people. For example, Jesus witnessed to Nicodemus in John 3, Jesus witnessed to the Samaritan woman in John 4, the witness to the woman caught in adultery in John 7, the witness of Jesus to the Pharisee leader in Luke 14, and many other examples. In each example, Barrs highlights the lessons that can be learned from Jesus 'example.

Although Barrs does not highlight any specific formula to do evangelism from the different ways Jesus witnessed different people, he outlines the following principles from Jesus' example: "Believers should make friends with sinners as Jesus did; believers should encourage intentional and intimate fellowship with unbelievers; believers' interaction with unbelievers should be motivated by mercy and love."[147]

The strength of this model is that it is based on the Scriptures and particularly on Jesus' example. Barrs' model also provides flexibility and a variety of ways a person can witness depending on the situation or circumstance. One particular approach of Christian witness may be feasible in one situation but not feasible in another situation. Therefore, knowing which approach applies to what situation requires skills, practice, and experience.[148] Most importantly, to get a better handle of a specific approach to use requires sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. The Scripture says, "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God" (Rom 8:14, ESV).

Regarding the application of different approaches to Christian witness, Luke Cawley has made this observation: there is "no one step that fits all solutions to do evangelism."[149] He claims

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[146] Ibid., 50.

[147] Ibid., 66.

[148] Ibid., 80.

[149] Luke Cawley, *The Myth of the Non-Christian: Engaging Atheists, Nominal Christians and the Spiritual but Not Religious* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2016), 30.

that the believer must be flexible and be willing to employ an approach that fits a particular situation. In his book, Cawley demonstrates different ways a person can contextualize the message of the gospel to connect with different people. The weakness or flip side of the diversity of approaches discussed above is that it is possible for a person to use the wrong approach in a situation with undesirable consequences.

This student researcher will be employing a combination of approaches for equipping GWEM members. The research will look at the strengths and weaknesses of each model and apply the ones most suitable for GWEM's setting and context.

The Four Tools Approach proposed by Earley is an approach that this project might consider. The approach has been tested by others and the results are very promising. Therefore, GWEM will be adopting certain techniques that will be beneficial for the project. For example, the project shall adopt the tool of prayer. This researcher shall pray the prayer of Hebrews 13:21 for each participant and for the whole project.

Secondly, GWEM's project shall also adopt components of the Four Stranded Strategy Approach. The approach uses teaching and modeling techniques for the learners. The project researcher believes that teaching and modeling what is taught is a great tool that can be used in research.

The GWEM project shall also incorporate components from the 3-Ps Model, the Nigerian model, and the Jesus' example model. For example, from the 3-Ps Model, participants shall be encouraged to adopt disciplines of personal formation, personal transformation, and personal application of the Word of God. The strength of the Nigerian Model is that it emphasizes understanding the langue of a target group. Therefore, GWEM shall take advantage of members

who can speak the language of others. Finally, the project shall encourage flexibility in adapting different approaches that fit a particular situation.

In conclusion, the project shall adopt techniques from every approach wherever appropriate. The strengths and weaknesses of each approach will be taken into consideration while at the same time maximizing the benefits of each approach to the project. Moreover, the project will utilize its unique approach while at the same time incorporating components from other approaches.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

GWEM is a young church in Southeast Houston, a thriving municipality. There is a great opportunity for ministry because of the dense population and flourishing economy. The city is very diverse and is an attraction to many from all over the United States and the world. Most places in the United States are relatively cold compared to Southeast Houston's weather throughout the year. The warm weather of Southeast Houston also attracts people from other states. Another attraction of Southeast Houston is its economy in terms of relatively lower prices and affordability of basic items such as food, clothing, housing, etc.

Although Texas has been classified by some as the Bible belt of the United States, Southeast Houston remains to be seen to exemplify or demonstrate that classification as a city that practices Judeo-Christianity. Southeast Houston is similar to what is described in Acts 17:22 when Paul perceived that the people of Athens were very religious but not serving the true God. Southeast Houston can be described as Athens. Although some people believe Southeast Houston is part of the Bible Belt of America, many of the residents' lives do not demonstrate that the Bible is in them. Additionally, there is the concern that although some of the people living in Southeast Houston claim to be Christians, only a tiny fraction of them attends church worship services regularly.

Southeast Houston is also the location of Satan Temple and other religious organizations such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, etc. With the plethora of different religions in Southeast Houston, the attraction of many people to the city, many people claiming to be Christians, but they do not attend church, problems already enumerated as it relates to the true practice of Judeo-Christianity, the opportunity remains great for a young church like GWEM to make an impact in winning souls for Christ.

As great as the opportunity is for GWEM to make an impact in the city to win souls for Christ, members of GWEM do not know how to win souls for Christ in the community. Therefore, this research aims to equip members of GWEM by learning how to win souls for Christ, bring them into the church, and help them grow in the knowledge of Christ and become faithful disciples to continue winning souls for Christ. The Scripture reads in 2 Timothy 2:2 that believers should find faithful men who can also teach others the things they have been taught. In this way, the process of winning souls and creating disciples continues unabated.

The researches intervention is designed to address the problem of lack of skill by GWEM members to take advantage of the great opportunity to win souls in the Southeast Houston area. Almost all GWEM members said that they never share their faith with anyone. Most GWEM members said they never share their faith because they never had the confidence to do so, even though they would have liked to share. Connected to the lack of confidence to share the gospel with others was rooted in the fact that the church members did not know how to start a conversation with someone they wanted to share their faith with. It is predicted that if church members are taught how to start a conversation that leads to talking about Christ, they will be able to share the gospel in that way.

To resolve the specific problems identified in this research and to improve particular areas of organizational functioning identified in the diagnosis, the intervention design looked at the following elements: the purpose and objective of the project intervention, the tasks to be done and steps taken to do the tasks, and the people involved in the project. Other elements of the intervention plan are a discussion of the places where activities will occur, the timeline and duration of activities, and ethical issues related to informed consent.

Finally, the recipe for this intervention is also made up of the resources required, the types of data that will be collected, the tools used for gathering information, and the analysis and evaluation of procedures. Therefore, in view of the foregoing, the intervention for the GWEM should proceed in the manner as described in the following chapter.

Intervention Design

The problem is that God of the Whole Earth Ministry Church (GWEM) members are not equipped for community outreach. The members of GWEM include people who are young in the faith. Many of them did not come to faith in Christ until late in their adult lives. About half of the congregation came from other denominations before coming to GWEM. Others were invited by the pastor of GWEM to be part of the GWEM family.

The purpose of this DMin action research project is to teach and develop skills to lead church members into outreach conversations. Jesus has made it clear in His Word that the community of believers are sent just as the Father has sent Jesus (John 20:21). The task for reaching the community with the gospel is not reserved for only pastors or those who are trained at seminaries or universities. Jesus took ordinary men who were uneducated and modeled and taught them how to reach out to others with the good news.

If church members are taught and developed on how to share their faith, they will be equipped to engage their community with the gospel. Teaching and developing skills of how to do outreach will equip church members to engage their community. Engaging the community is an art that can be learned. First, barriers to engaging the community will be identified in this project. Community varies in composition from area to area in terms of culture, socio-economic status, language, ethnicity, etc. All these will be taken into consideration as lessons are developed. Second, the research will also identify biases and find ways to work around or

manage any biases that will impact the research. Lastly, the research will monitor the COVID-19 protocol recommended by the CDC to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus; because of the COVID-19 protocol in place, the research will find ways to overcome any way it may impact the implementation of the intervention design.

<center>Tasks</center>

The primary tasks will include teaching and developing skills that will lead GWEM members into outreach conversations. Secondary tasks will include issuing consent forms, doing interviews, issuing questionnaires, distributing fliers, recruiting participants, and presenting the plans to participants for input and support. The tasks are intended to make it easier for teaching sessions to be done and for participants to have access to the teaching and all the teaching materials.

The task of teaching and developing skills: teaching materials, including Bibles, lesson plans, notebooks, pencils, pens, laptops, overhead projectors, and other teaching aids such as video recorders and other media technology. The teaching materials shall be gathered and stored in a safe place to be used for each teaching session. Each participant shall be encouraged to bring their own laptops. Those who do not have a laptop will be provided with one. Writing materials shall be provided for all participants.

One person, preferably the researcher, shall keep and store the teaching materials. The researcher shall be the lead instructor of the materials and probably be assisted by one or two others. The assistants may be an assistant pastor or an associate pastor. In cases where it is necessary, the second assistant may be the head of the deacon board or additional minister in the church.

The task of issuing consent forms shall be given to the researcher or pastor, with one or two of his assistants, who may also be responsible for issuing the consent forms. The consent forms are divided into two categories: there is one consent form for adults, and the other is for children twelve years old or younger. Adults are required to sign the consent themselves or a proxy. This shall not be the case with children twelve years or younger. A parent or guardian will be required to sign the consent form for their children. Please see Appendix A for the sample of the consent form.

The task of distributing fliers shall be given to the researcher and one or two assistants. Fliers shall be distributed to both GWEM members and their friends. Fliers will be given out both at the church location and to the homes of church members who cannot make it to the church to receive fliers. The fliers will contain information describing the research, who can participate, the start date, the location, and other basic important information about the research.

The task of interviewing and conducting a focused group shall be given to the researcher and one assistant. The task of video recording shall be given to one volunteer. The video recording shall be used mainly to update any participant who may miss a teaching session. The task of distributing questionnaires shall be done by the researcher and one assistant.

Preparing meals for teaching sessions shall be the responsibility of volunteers from the church social and hospitality department and other interested volunteers. The items to prepare for the meals shall be sponsored by GWEM and the researcher. Donations of food items to prepare shall be accepted by interested church members. The meal shall be prepared in the GWEM kitchen.

The task of reaching out into the community to apply lessons learned shall be modeled by the researcher and completed by the participants. The researcher shall model how it looks to start

a conversation and maintain one for the purpose of leading others to the knowledge of Christ. After modeling outreach conversations, participants shall be allowed to follow the example of the researcher.

Participants

The people involved in the project shall be members of GWEM, and friends and family of the members of GWEM. The constitution of the participants shall come from every department and group of the church. These groups are the men's department, women's department, social and hospitality department, and the young and adolescent group.

The activities will occur in the church auditorium as well as in the community. The teaching sessions will last for six weeks and shall be held in the auditorium of the church. The teaching sessions will stop for a thirty-minute break to have lunch in the same church auditorium. The second place the activities will take place during the project is in the community. Community outreach will occur within a five- to ten-mile radius of GWEM.

Strategies

The intervention will include the following core components/strategies: identification and recruitment of the participants; who is going to implement what, where, and when; what will be the responsibility of the participants; what are potential barriers, and how will they be overcome; what resources are available, and what resources will need to be found; how will the plan be evaluated; and what mechanism is in place for feedback.

Members of GWEM, including family members and friends, are the potential participants that will be recruited for the implementation of this project. Before implementing the project, consent forms will be issued to every GWEM member to indicate their willingness and commitment to participate in the project. In addition to the consent forms that will be given to

GWEM members, extra copies of consent forms will also be given for family members and friends.

The consent form will include the following questions: name, sex, address, member of GWEM Church; willingness to participate in the project; and liability/lawsuit release while participating. The signature and date of completion will form the last line on the consent form.

The consent forms will be given to church members three Sundays before the actual date of the project. Members will be asked to return the consent form on or before a specific date before the study begins. Members twelve years of age or over will be the target group to participate in the project. The church will provide little incentives for members to return their signed consent forms before the turn-in date deadline.

Who is Going to Implement What, Where, and When?

The Scripture says, "And He Himself gave some to be apostles,[150] some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry…" (Eph 4:11-12, NKJV). According to Ephesians, God has defined leaders of the church as responsible for equipping the saints. Therefore, the pastor of GWEM will be the one to implement the teaching sessions designed for the project.

<div align="center">Teaching Intervention</div>

The teaching sessions shall consist of eight lessons for the period of eight weeks. The teaching sessions shall be divided into two phases: phase 1 and phase 2. Phase 1 shall consist of lectures using PowerPoints and other teaching aids. Phase 1 shall run for six weeks followed by the practical for the last two weeks.

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[150] Mark G. Bilby and Anna Lefteratou, "A Dramatic Heist of Epic Proportion: Iphigenia among the Taurians in the Acts of the Apostles," *Harvard Theological Review* 115, no. 4 (10, 2022): 496.

The teaching sessions shall be carried out at the auditorium of GWEM. The sessions will be held twice weekly on Saturdays and Tuesdays. On Saturday, the time shall be from 9 a.m. to 12 noon CST. On Tuesday, teaching shall begin at 7 p.m. and end at 8:30 p.m. Each teaching session shall have two sub-sessions. The first sub-session shall be exclusively teaching with PowerPoint and teaching aids. The second sub-session shall be a demonstration of the content of the lesson. During this session, participants shall be divided into small groups of five to demonstrate an understanding of what they have learned in that session. It is worth noting that the researcher shall first model the lesson taught for that session before members of the small groups demonstrate to one another the lesson taught for that session.

The two-week practical session shall be when the participants go into the community to practice what they have learned over the prior six weeks. Participants should be divided into small groups of five people. Each group shall be allotted an area to engage with the community. Each person in the group will be given the opportunity to share the gospel with an individual or group of people based on the teaching/training they have had.

What Will Be the Responsibility of the Participants for the Project?

The participants shall be responsible for attending each session twice a week. Each participant will be provided with stationery, namely writing pads and pens. Participants with laptops and tablets will be encouraged to bring those items to each session. Participants will also be encouraged in each session to ask questions and participate in the modeling and demonstration of lessons learned.

In putting into place an intervention for this project, this researcher foresees potential barriers that could hinder the success of the implementation. Barriers could be on the personal level, general level, or overall level of implementation. For example, individuals may decide not

to continue the training/teaching due to illness or personal matters. In this case, the project has

put into place a plan to video record each teaching session. Therefore, for participants who may

not be able to continue due to illness or some personal reason, the project shall make the

recording of that session available.

For those who may not be able to come to each session because of transportation, the

research will have transportation available to take care of that barrier. There may be some people

who may not be able to come to the scheduled time for the teaching sessions because they may

be experiencing financial hardship to find meals for that day. For this barrier, the project is

putting in a plan to have hot meals served on each day of each teaching session.

The barrier could be due to bad weather, which might prevent people from attending the

sessions. The researcher has put in place a backup plan to host the meeting virtually should the

project run into the problem of weather problems that may prevent people from meeting. The

researcher may be unavailable for a teaching session due to unforeseen circumstances. The

researcher has planned lessons, which an assistant can teach should that situation happen.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other

focus group members may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group. Please

see Appendix A for details of ethical issues. Notwithstanding, efforts will be made to hold every

participant to the highest standard to help keep confidential every discussion held in the focus

group.

Graciously, the human resources needed to help in this project are volunteers from

GWEM. The project has an auditorium in which to carry on the teaching sessions. The project

has limited resources to print teaching materials and other stationeries for paperwork. However,

the project will need additional funds and technical assistance to prepare meals for each section.

The project will need additional resources to provide meals during teaching sessions. The project will also need technical assistance for video recording. The project will need additional logistic resources for group community outreach.

Data Collection

This researcher will use a combination of questionnaires and interviews to collect data. Questionnaires will be given to all participants to answer certain questions. This will be followed by interviews via small groups. The small groups are select groups among the participants that will be asked specific open-ended questions about confidence before and after intervention.

Also, triangulation will be employed by this researcher to collect data. This means the research will be using interviews, focus groups or small groups and questionnaires. Questionnaires will be given to every participant to answer certain questions. Interviews will be selected randomly. Also, information shall be obtained from small groups to obtain more in-depth answers as they relate to the intervention.

This researcher will keep a reflection journal during the entire project to bracket any biases. The reflective journal is like a guide or toolbox that the researcher can use to help him navigate his way throughout the project. Stringer outlines tools for action research.[151] In writing this project, the researcher realized that there were many things about action research that he had no idea about. It put him in a better state of mind to write this project. Therefore, in the execution of the project, this researcher will keep his reflective journal handy.

Evaluations

The project has put into place a mechanism to evaluate and obtain feedback about its progress. The project will have an internal ongoing evaluation as well as external evaluation. The

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[151] Stringer, Ernest T. *Action Research*, 3rd edition (Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications, 2007), 25.

internal evaluation is as follows: when more than half of the total number of people that signed up for the project are in attendance for each meeting, it will be considered that the project is doing exceptionally well. However, this same consideration will occur if half of the people that originally signed up are participating. On the other hand, when less than half of the people that signed up for the program are in attendance for any single teaching session, the project will be doing fairly. When less than ten people attend any meeting, the project will be doing poorly.

The external evaluation shall be a three-fold process. First, external evaluation shall be feedback from professors and mentors. Second, certain colleagues and fellow coworkers in ministry shall be asked to give their candid and professional evaluation along the way as the project unfolds. Lastly, the project shall have feedback based on the number of people that have been reached by the project and how they have responded to the engagement by GWEM members.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

The GWEM project will take about ten weeks to implement. This time includes two weeks of preparation and eight weeks to implement the intervention design fully. Everything is being done, including waiting for approval from IRB. In the meantime, every effort is being made to follow and incorporate the comments and corrections from the professor of DMIN 830.

Second, teaching materials and materials to do the research are being gathered while waiting for preliminary approval from the professor of DMIN 830. This researcher will let participants of GWEM know when he has gotten approval from Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

When the project is underway after approval, measures will be put in place to have the project evaluated while it is ongoing. Evaluations will be done simultaneously while the project

is in progress as well as three months after the project. Efforts are now being made to have volunteered observers evaluate when the project gets started.

Finally, the GWEM auditorium that will be used for the teaching sessions has been secured and set aside for the time of the project. During the period of project teaching sessions, GWEM will remain closed to all other programs both by the membership and requests from outside of the membership.

GWEM members were the participants identified for the study. The participants were selected based on the specific problem associated with GWEM. The problem was that GWEM members were not equipped to engage in practical conversations with others as a bridge to share the gospel with unbelievers.

Although GWEM members were selected for this project, the researcher is persuaded that the problem of reaching out to others with the gospel is not unique only to GWEM. Other churches might also have that challenge; therefore, this study can be ostensibly helpful for the general Christian community.

For example, some churches have complained of a drop in church attendance as well as church membership. According to an article, "Church Attendance on Decline," church attendance has been rapidly declining for the last several years since the 1990s.[152] The decline in church attendance, the author observes, among other things, has occurred because Christians stopped reaching out to unbelievers. Instead, the author observes that churches have been sitting and hoping people would attend church.

The church must be proactive. That is why Christ, as the Commander-in-Chief of His church, has commanded Christians to go into all the world and make disciples. Jesus' command

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[152] "Church Attendance on the Decline," *The Christian Century* 113, no. 26 (September 11, 1996): 843–44.

implies that the believer must initiate the engagement rather than sit and hope people will enter the church.

The GWEM study is one attempt to address the rapid church decline and spur Christians to engage in practical conversations as a bridge to share the gospel with unbelievers. GWEM members were the perfect pick for the participants for the study. The church members were ideal for the following reasons. First, the participants were within reach and could easily be contacted and followed up with any activity related to the study. Also, the researcher had a friendly rapport with the participants. The friendly rapport with the participants helped to ease any concerns that the participants may have had. The good relationship between the researcher and the participants also opened the door for the free exchange of ideas without manipulating or exploiting each other.

The participants also represented a cross-section of age groups. Ages range from twelve to sixty. Participants were also from different racial backgrounds. Forty-six participants in all participated in the study; thirty participants were female, and sixteen were men. Initially, fifty people were recruited for the study. As part of the recruitment process, fifty people were invited to be part of the study by giving letters as well as sending emails.

All fifty people agreed to take part in the study by indicating yes or no on the back of the recruitment letter issued. However, only forty-six participants attended the meeting set up in the second week to issue consent forms. At the meeting, participants were given consent forms. In the same meeting, participants were informed about everything pertaining to the study as well as the responsibilities and duties of the participants.

In the second meeting of the second week, participants were gathered to discuss the tasks that participants were expected to perform. In the same meeting, participants were given

questionnaires to answer certain questions. Each set of questionnaires contained eleven questions (see Appendix E). Out of the eleven questions, one specific question was asked about how comfortable each participant was in sharing the gospel. On a scale from one to ten, with ten being very comfortable and one being very uncomfortable, 84.8% of the participants said they were uncomfortable sharing their faith because they lacked the skill and knowledge to engage in practical outreach conversations.

The remaining 15.2% of responses varied with respect to the degree of comfort to share the gospel. The data were mainly collected by questionnaires and group interviews. The responses to the questionnaires were securely stored in a briefcase with a combination in which the researcher alone had the code for the combination. The briefcase containing the questionnaires and other pertinent data of the study were securely saved in the cabinet of the researcher's office. Only the researcher has the keys for the office and the cabinet that contains the briefcase.

<p style="text-align:center">Cross-Checking the Data</p>

This researcher used the triangulation tool to cross-check the collected data. The research used questionnaires, group interviews, and field notes to cross-check the data. According to Tim Sensing, the researcher sometimes may have to use triangulation to cross-check data.[153] Cross checking of data is important to ensure the accuracy of the data. Additionally, to the three ways of collecting data already mentioned, the researcher also used personal observation to receive feedback on how participants were doing as the study progressed.

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[153] Tim Sensing, *Qualitative Research: A Multi-Methods Approach to Projects for Doctor of Ministry Theses* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 67-8.

Two evaluation mechanisms were used as the research was implemented. The first evaluation of the study was an in-house and self-evaluating assessment of the program. According to the self-evaluation, the attendance of participants for each teaching intervention was essential. The teaching intervention was carried out for eight weeks excluding two weeks, which were used for recruitment, giving out consent forms, and an information section for the participants.

The self-evaluation was done in the following manner: out of the forty-six participants that signed the consent forms, whenever thirty or more participants attended a teaching section, the study would be classified as excellent. On the other hand, an attendance of half of the participants in one section would mean the study would be classified as good. Notwithstanding the attendance of less than half of the participants, but greater than ten, the study would be classified as fair. Finally, with an attendance of fewer than ten participants in a meeting, the study would be classified as poor. On average, more than thirty-five participants attended each teaching for the eight-week teaching sections. Therefore, it can be said that overall the attendance was excellent.

The other evaluation that was done for this study was at the end. At the end of the study, participants were asked two basic questions by means of a questionnaire: "How comfortable are you now after this teaching intervention and trying it out in the community," and "Was the teaching intervention helpful?" After the second question, a follow-up question was asked: how was it helpful?

<div align="center">Teaching Intervention</div>

After having known that the participants were not equipped to engage unbelievers in practical and meaningful outreach conversation, an eight-week teaching intervention was

developed and introduced to address the problem.[154] The Scriptures says it is not the desire of

God that His people be ignorant (1 Thess 4:13). The Scriptures also exhort the Christian to be

taught in the Word so that the Christian might be equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:16).

Concerning the value of teaching as it relates to developing confidence, Seyfi Keman has written

on the subject as well.[155] According to Keman, acquisition of knowledge and skills puts a person

in a position to do well. Also, Seyfi argues that knowledge gives confidence and boldness.[156]

The teaching sections were held in the church's auditorium for eight weeks. Teaching

sections were designed for two hours weekly. The two hours were spread over a two-day period.

Therefore, the participants met for one hour, two times a week. Each teaching section was

divided into three sub-sections. The first thirty minutes were allotted for teaching. The next ten

minutes were allotted for questions and answers. The last twenty minutes were set aside to

demonstrate and model the lesson taught for that section.

The materials used for the teaching included Bibles, a book on communication, laptops,

screen projectors, TV monitors, a podium, notepads and pens, and a PA audio system. The

researcher was the only speaker for all the teaching sections. The name of the book used in

teaching was titled, *Tuning Every Conversations into Gospel Conversations*, by Jimmy

Scroggins.[157] The lessons were taught clearly and audibly, along with three main TV monitors

that kept the speaker in sight before the participants. The speaker taught by using PowerPoint

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[154] See Appendix D.

[155] Seyfi Keman, "The Missing Dimension of Modern Education: Values Education," *Kuram Ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri* 9, no. 1 (Winter, 2009): 279-95.

[156] Ibid.

[157] Jimmy Scroggins, *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2016).

slides. The PowerPoint slides were made up of short notes, illustrations, examples, and main points.

The question and answers section of the teachings allowed participants to ask questions and encouraged participation from participants. The Q&A sections were very engaging. From the researcher's personal observation, the participants were enthusiastically engaged. Most participants had so much energy that it was difficult for anyone in the room to ignore. Most of the participants were excited to make contributions to the discussion. This meant participants were either willing to answer the questions of others or had more questions to ask. The participants seem to be interested in the teaching sections. Some even suggested that the duration of the teaching sections be increased. Despite the participants' interest and requests to increase the teaching time, this researcher denied the request and stuck to the original time allotment.

The section for demonstration and modeling of the lessons taught was another time of fun for the participants. Real-life scenarios were created to allow participants to demonstrate how they would approach a potential target when sharing the gospel. Modeling is important to teach and follows what the Apostle Paul wrote: "Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ" (1 Cor 11:1, NKJV). The speaker first demonstrated and modeled how he would approach a real-life scenario. After the speaker modeled a particular skill, participants were allowed to practice that skill. Bernadette Knewstubb discusses the importance of modeling in her book.[158] This author is a research Fellow in Victoria University of Wellington's Faculty of Education. According to Knewstobb, modeling enhances learning by helping the learner to remember the lessons learned.[159]

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[158] Bernadette Knewstubb, "The Learning-Teaching Nexus: Modeling the Learning-Teaching Relationship in Higher Education," *Studies in Higher Education* 41, no. 3 (2016): 525.

[159] Ibid.

In the tenth week of the study, the participants were allowed to go into the community and apply the lessons learned. The participants went in groups of two. This was adopted from Jesus' example in the Scriptures. In Luke 10, Jesus appointed seventy disciples and then sent them out two by two into the community to share the gospel. The disciples were prepared to reach out because they had witnessed how Jesus did. Carlson, in his commentary on the Luke 10 passage, writes that when Jesus, in His earthly ministry, took time teaching His disciples and modeling skills of the kingdom principles before them.[160] However, Jesus also took time to encourage people to practice what they had heard Jesus teach and what they had seen Him do.

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[160] D. A. Carson, *A Model of Christian Maturity: An Exposition of Luke 10:1-10* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), [255-265], ProQuest Ebook Central.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The problem was that God of the Whole Earth Ministry Church (GWEM) members were not equipped for community outreach. Therefore, the research's aim was to address the lack of skills by GWEM members to start a meaningful and practical conversation to share the gospel. This researcher designed an intervention plan that consisted of eight weeks of teaching. The teachings were structured so that participants would be equipped with the skills to start a simple conversation and share the gospel after the intervention.

The research projected that GWEM members were a perfect fit for the study based on three reasons. First, GWEM members would be readily available for the study. Second, it was expected that participants would be easily contacted for feedback. Third, because it was anticipated that church members would be interested in the research project. It turned out that all three expectations were realized. From the beginning of the study, more than 75% of the participants were available for every meeting that was scheduled for the study. The participants' availability for every session during the study was not surprising because GWEM members are known for their consistency in attending meetings. Additionally, the researcher had the contacts of the participants, and they respond to the researcher promptly, so communicating with them was simple.

It is important to note that although the researcher has the respect and confidence of the participants as a pastor, the participants were free to make themselves available. At the beginning of the research, a meeting was held in which it was made clear to the participants that they were under no obligation to attend sessions if they did not feel the need. Also, it was made clear to participants that the relationship between them and the researcher would not be jeopardized based on their participation in the study. The participants also showed interest in the research, as

was predicted. The interest of the participants was measured by their attendance at the teaching sessions and by the responses from a short survey.

Intervention Design Implementation

Concerning attendance at each teaching session, the researcher estimated that if more than half of the participants attended any meeting, it would be interpreted that they were interested in the study.[161] Incidentally, more than 70% of the participants attended each session during the study. With regards to the class participation index as a measure of participants' interest, the result was quite surprising.[162]

More people displayed their interest in the study by enthusiasm demonstrated through Q & A segments. For each segment, there were more questions asked than expected. During the teaching section, the study had a volunteer who monitored the number of questions participants asked. It was projected that participants would ask fewer than five questions. However, during the study, participants asked an average of six and a half questions. Studies have shown that when people have an interest, they ask a lot of questions as compared to those who may not have an interest, and therefore, they may ask fewer or no questions at all.[163]

There were several tasks performed by both the researcher and the participants. The researcher sent emails and recruitment letters, distributed flyers and posters, and taught. The participants were responsible for accepting or rejecting the invitation to participate in the study; they were to read and acknowledge the consent form; they were to attend each teaching session and participate fully by listening and asking questions. Participants were also required to answer

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[161] See Figure 4.6.

[162] See Figure 4.6.

[163] "Learning by Asking Questions," accessed on April 2, 2023, https://openaccess.thecvf.com/content_cvpr_2018/papers/Misra_Learning_by_Asking_CVPR_2018_paper.pdf.

the questionnaire and surveys and they were given the task of going into the community with other participants to practice the skills learned during the teaching intervention.

Forty-six people participated in the project. All participants were members of The God of the Whole Earth Ministries (GWEM). There were twenty-nine female participants (63%) and seventeen male participants (37%). The ages of the participants ranged from twelve years old to seventy years old. There were two common denominators among the participants: the first is that all participants indicated that they had accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and second, all participants also indicated that they were not confident or comfortable sharing their faith with others.

This study defines the phrase "not confident" to mean any level of discomfort or state of being uncomfortable with sharing the gospel with another person. The levels of discomfort or state of being uncomfortable with sharing the gospel were rated as follows. Participants were asked how comfortable or confident each participant was when sharing the gospel with others. They were asked to rate their level of comfort on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being the least comfortable and 10 being the most comfortable. In other words, the rate of being comfortable on the scale increases from 1 to 10.

For this research, numbers rated on the scale were divided into groups. Numbers rating between 1 and 4 were considered least comfortable. A number rating of 5 was considered average, and a number rating between 6 and 10 was considered comfortably above average. All participants rated their level of comfort at five or less. See Table 4.4 for the breakdown of the participants' level of comfort at the beginning of the project.

Further probing the reason why participants rated themselves at the level of discomfort to share their faith, the following reasons were given. Participants were given three categories of reasons to choose from to explain why they thought they might not be comfortable sharing their

faith. Category 1 reason: "I am uncomfortable sharing my faith because I do not know how to start the conversation or discussion when I want to share my faith." Category 2 reason: "I do not know enough Scriptures or Bible verses to share my faith." Category 3 reason: "Others." By stating "Others," it meant a reason that was not given either in Category 1 or Category 2. Interestingly, the research found that although all participants were uncomfortable sharing their faith, each had a desire to share their faith or the gospel.

Thirty-nine participants, or 84.8%, attributed the reason for being uncomfortable sharing the gospel to the reason listed in Category 1.[164] Six participants, or 13.1%, said they were uncomfortable sharing the gospel because of the reason listed in Category 2. Those who stated that they were uncomfortable sharing their faith because they felt they did not know enough Scripture were listed in Category 2. The remaining 2.1% of participants said the main reason they were not comfortable was because of the reason listed in Category 3, which is another reason not listed in Categories 1 or 2. Participants were asked what they thought about sharing their faith. They were not given specific reasons to choose from, but rather, they were asked to give their opinion. The answers of the participants varied. Almost every participant thought it was a good idea to share the gospel with others, however some felt it was too intimidating to share the gospel. Therefore, they thought it was not a good idea to share the gospel with everyone since they thought it was intimidating to share the gospel. Others thought it was a good idea to share the gospel and they did not think it was as intimidating as others felt. Some thought that sharing the gospel with others should be reserved for people who had the "gift" to share the gospel. This was a small number, making up less than 1% of the participants.

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[164] Please see Table B for breakdown of categories of reasons.

Participants were explicitly asked whether they thought church members should share the gospel with others. Twenty-one participants thought church members should share their faith with others. Nineteen participants thought it was not the duty of church members to share the gospel. The remaining six participants were not certain. While probing further into the subject of who should share the gospel, the participants were asked whether they thought it was only the duty of the pastor to share the gospel or it was the responsibility of both pastor and church members. Fifty percent of the participants thought that it was only the duty of the pastor to share the gospel. On the other hand, forty-eight percent thought it was the responsibility of both the pastor and church members to share the gospel. However, about 2% of the participants did not know whether it was the duty of either the church members or pastor to share the gospel.

The researcher also wanted to know whether participants had any previous experience in sharing the gospel with a neighbor or a friend. Ninety-five percent of the participants said they had never told anyone about the gospel. This percentage of participants who had never shared the gospel with anyone seems to support the argument that many do not share their faith for various reasons. On the other hand, 5% of the participants said they attempted at least one time to share the gospel with a family member, a friend, or a neighbor. According to this, 5% said they had shared the gospel at least once and did so by inviting a friend to church service or church revival meetings.

The participants were asked what they thought about acquiring skills and knowledge to share the gospel with others. Some of the responses included that some thought that acquiring skills and knowledge was helpful to the Christian who desired to share the gospel but lacked the skills; others wondered how much of an impact acquiring knowledge and developing skills would have on a person to share the gospel. Other participants said they thought that sharing the gospel was only reserved for those who had the "gift." By "the gift," participants meant that they

believed some people had a special "gift" to share the gospel, like an evangelist. Additionally, they thought others like themselves had to be trained first since they did not have "the gift." Despite the different responses given by the participants, they seemed to be open to the idea that acquiring skills and knowledge could make a difference when sharing the gospel.

Since participants' views differed about acquiring skills and knowledge to share the gospel, as has already been discussed, the researcher decided to probe the matter further. Therefore, participants were asked whether they would be willing to learn skills and acquire knowledge to share the gospel. Interestingly, all participants said they were ready to learn skills and acquire knowledge to share the gospel. What is worth noting is that not only did participants say they were willing to learn, but they were enthusiastic as well about learning how to share the gospel with confidence.

After the eight-week teaching intervention and one-week outreach in the community, the participants were asked to rate their level of comfort in sharing the gospel. First, the researcher asked if participants noticed any change in their level of comfort in sharing the gospel after the teaching intervention compared to their level of comfort before the teaching intervention. Seventy-five percent of the participants said they thought there was a change in their level of comfort. On the other hand, 10% of the participants felt there was not a significant change in their level of comfort after the teaching intervention. The remaining 15% of participants said they were unsure whether there was a change.

Finally, the participants were asked whether they thought the study was helpful in any way after participating in the study. Surprisingly, all participants agreed that the study was helpful to them in some way. When asked explicitly in what way the study was helpful to them, the researcher received several answers. Some said the study was "an eye-opener to witnessing." Others said they realize that the art of sharing the gospel can be learned. A good number of the

participants said they thought it was a wonderful experience to go out with others in the community to share the gospel. Also, others said the study provoked them to try sharing the gospel as frequently as possible.

The GWEM study was one attempt to address the problem of equipping Christians to share the gospel. The church members were ideal because (1) the participants were within reach and could easily be contacted and followed up with any activity related to the study, and (2) the researcher had a friendly rapport with the participants. The close connection with the participants helped to ease any concerns that the participants may have had. The good relationship between the researcher and the participants also opened the door for a free exchange of ideas without any manipulation or exploitation of each other.

The participants also represented a cross-section of age groups. Ages ranged from age twelve to age seventy. Participants were also from different racial backgrounds; forty-six participants participated in the study; thirty participants were female, and sixteen were men. Initially, fifty people were recruited for the study. As part of the recruitment process, fifty people were invited to be part of the study by giving letters as well as sending emails.

All fifty people agreed to take part in the study by indicating yes or no on the back of the recruitment letter distributed. However, only forty-six participants attended the meeting that was set up in the second week to issue consent forms. At the meeting, participants were given consent forms and were informed about everything pertaining to the study, as well as the responsibilities and duties of the participants.

In the second meeting of the second week, participants were gathered to discuss the tasks that participants were expected to perform. In the same session, participants were given questionnaires to answer specific questions. Each set of questionnaires contained eleven questions (see Appendix E). Out of the eleven questions, one specific question was asked as to

how comfortable each participant was in sharing the gospel and rated on a scale from 1 to 10, with 10 being very comfortable and 1 being least comfortable. All participants reported they were not comfortable, although they gave different reasons why they were uncomfortable. A little more than eighty-four percent (84.8%) of the participants reported they were uncomfortable sharing their faith because of a lack of skill and knowledge of how to engage in practical outreach conversations. This percentage of participants (84.8%) reported levels of comfort between levels 1 and levels 5. No participant reported levels of comfort above level 5.[165]

The remaining 15.2% of responses varied with respect to the degree of comfort in sharing the gospel. The data were mainly collected by questionnaires and group interviews. The responses to the questionnaires were securely stored in a briefcase with a combination in which the researcher alone had the code. The briefcase containing the questionnaires and other pertinent data of the study was securely saved in the cabinet of the researcher's office. Only the researcher had the keys to the office and the cabinet that contains the briefcase.

This researcher used the triangulation tool to cross-check the collected data. The data were gathered from questionnaires, group interviews, and field notes analysis.[166]According to Sensing, the researcher sometimes may have to use triangulation to cross-check data.[167] Cross-checking of data is vital to ensure the accuracy of the data. Additional to the three ways of collecting data already mentioned, the researcher also used personal observation to get feedback on how participants were doing as the study progressed.

Two evaluation mechanisms were put in place as the study was implemented. The first evaluation of the study was an in-house and self-evaluating assessment of the program.

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[165] See Table 4.5 for more information.

[166] Sensing, *Qualitative Research*, 65.

[167] Ibid., 67-8.

According to the self-evaluation, the attendance of participants for each teaching intervention was essential. The teaching intervention was carried out for eight weeks, excluding two weeks used for recruitment, giving out consent forms, and an information section for the participants. For self-evaluation as was proposed for the study, the results in determining as to whether the study did well during the study are as follows: Overall, the study did good because at least half of the participants were in attendance during the whole ten weeks of the study. Of course, about five weeks out of the ten-week period, the study had more than half of the participants in attendance. There were only two occasions were attendance dropped below half of the participants. It is also worth noting that during the entire ten -week period, no participant dropped from the study.. Although no participant was motivated by any financial compensation, yet participants were motivated by the love of Christ to participate in the study to the end

The end of study evaluation revealed that more than half of the participants reported that after receiving the teaching and trying it out, the experience was very helpful. Little over 5% of the participants reported they were not sure whether the experience was helpful. A follow up question of how helpful the intervention was there were different answers. The most common answer of how helpful the intervention was this: most of the participants said the teaching show them how to start conversations and build relationships that made them comfortable to share the gospel.

The teaching intervention paved the way for participants to receive knowledge and skills about how to share their faith. The exercise of siting for eight weeks and learning how to share the gospel with others was worthwhile. It was worthwhile because it provided a great opportunity to focus on the subject of sharing the gospel which is rarely done from the pulpit during the GWEM Church regularly church services and programs. Most of the time, the pastor

of GHWEM Church directed attention to other church spiritual and physical needs. However, the study provided a great opportunity to focus on equipping participants to share their faith.

In the implementation of the teaching intervention, the church auditorium was exclusively used for that purpose as planned. Normally, people from other religious groups and/or businesses engage the auditorium to carry out functions during the month. However, during the time of the teaching intervention, only GWEM Church members had access to the facility for the research. The teachings went ahead as planned which means the research did not experience any interruption due to bad weather or other unforeseen events which could prevent the teachings from being carried out. Moreover, participants were in attendance for every teaching session. This researcher want to note that although the study never experience any significant setback in implementation of the teaching intervention, it was only one time, the study experienced power outage for about twenty minutes. Not knowing how long the power was going to be off, instead of disbursing and going home, the participants were encouraged to stay and pray for a while. It was while praying, power came back on to everyone surprise and joy.

The lessons for teaching were taught and clearly in English. Every participant was English speaking and therefore there was no need for a translator or interpreter. The participants were comfortable with the teaching materials and teaching aids such as notebooks and pen and brochures with class lessons and activity each day. From observation, some participants both listened and took notes from the teachings. Few only listened and never took down notes. Those who took notes frequent refer to their notes to ask question. On the other hand, those who did not take notes but only listened asked few questions. If they did ask questions, it was usually about

content that discussed in the teachings. All in all, the teaching materials and aids made learning easy for both researcher and participants

The exchange of questions and answers phase during the teaching intervention provided opportunity for participants to be clear on some of the content as well as general questions that was taught. The results from questions and answer were very interesting in that it brought out some of the myths about sharing the gospel. Some participants thought it sharing the gospel was only for people who went to Bible school or had seminary degree. Others, however, thought it was a special committee in the church that was responsible for sharing the gospel. Some of the participants were not clear why church members should share the gospel, according to them, since Jesus according to Matthew 28:18-19, (NKJV), commanded the apostles and not ordinary people. That question was addressed appropriately by referencing relevant Scriptures. This researcher will not go into detail of this argument because of the sake of time. Suffice it for now that all believers in Christ has the responsibility(y of sharing the hope they have in Christ when anyone asks them. According to (1 Peter 3: 15, NIV), "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

Modelling helps some people learn easily and to remember as well. Paul writing to the Philippians wrote, "the things which you have both learned and received and heard, and seen in me do," (Philippians 4:9, NKJV). The participants were given the opportunity to practice how to share the gospel based on what they had learned and what they had seen modeled. Some participants were able to demonstrate the skills of sharing the gospel easily after they had seen it modeled. However, others needed more practice to get comfortable. The more the participants practiced, the better they became in demonstrating skills of sharing the gospel. Participants

where given the liberty to give feedback and provide suggestion about the skills of others and suggest how each person could improve.

The participants were excited to go into the community to share their faith after the eight weeks of teaching. Some of the participants said they had never felt so motivated to apply what they had learned from the teaching. Therefore, for them - going into the community in pairs with a fellow church member was not only exciting for them, but it made it more comfortable for them to share their faith with the support of a fellow church member. Each member in the group of two took turns to share the gospel with people in the community. While one person was sharing the gospel, the other participant would observe and note the performance of the other. After that engagement, both participants would then share feedback of how they did in sharing the gospel.

Finally, we want to examine this teaching plan, and discuss its importance to equip Christians to share their faith. A closer look at the teaching plan itself outlines seven fundamental principles that can help answer the questions that have been raised. The first principle the teaching plan reveals is that Jesus is the one who has commanded believers to share their faith, according to Matthew 28:18-20. Focusing on knowing who has given the command to share the gospel is vitally important because it answers the question to whom the believer owes his obedience.

Luke 6:46 says, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (NASB). Therefore, if the believer sees Jesus as his Lord or Master, they will do what Jesus says. Jesus' command differs from what the church says or what man says. Sometimes what the church or man says is quite different from what God says. For example, the church or man might say attendance in catechism class is necessary to become a church member. The distinction between Christ's command and the church or man's command is meant in no way to dishonor the church

or man. Christians must recognize that Christ is the one who commands the believer to share the gospel according to Matthew 28:18-20.

The book of Acts provides further guidance as to the one to whom Christians owe their allegiance and obedience as far as sharing the gospel is concerned. A critical look at the passage of Acts 4:19 is worthwhile. According to the passage, the question of allegiance arose when the apostles were commanded or ordered to stop preaching the gospel. The apostles answered that they would obey God rather than man. Therefore, the passage provides the basis for the argument that believers must be aware that they owe their obedience to Christ.

Another reason why it is essential for Christians to know that it is Christ who gives the command to share the gospel is that it demonstrates love for Christ. John 14:15 says, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (NASB). The teaching plan emphasizes knowing and understanding who is giving the commands. If the believer knows it is Christ who is giving the command, and if the believer loves Jesus, they will obey Him.

The second principle of the teaching outline is that Jesus' Word to the Christian is a command and not a suggestion. Jesus' Word is not optional or discretional but imperative. This second principle is emphasized in the teaching because some tend to think that believers are not under any obligation to share the gospel. Some even argue that they do not have the gift to evangelize; therefore, it is not binding on them to share the gospel. However, the Bible says quite the opposite.

Scripture compares the Christian to a soldier who takes commands from his commanding officer. In the military, orders are given, and they are not suggestions. Once the orders are given, they are carried out by those to whom they are given. The commands are not debatable when they come from a higher ranked individual. In the same way, Jesus' commands, according to Matthew 28:18-20, are not meant to be debatable. Scripture teaches that those who carry out the

command of Jesus are those who desire to please Christ. Therefore, the teaching plan emphasizes the point that one of the best ways to please Christ is to carry out His command of Matthew 28:18-20.

The third principle of the teaching plan is that Jesus commands Matthew 28:18-20 for every Christian without any exceptions. Until now, the command of Matthew 28:18-20 was debatable. Some believed that the command was only for the apostles. One person who refuted the claim that the GC was only meant for the apostles was William Carey.[168] Carey was a Baptist minister who fought hard to convince his Baptist superiors that the GC was meant for ministers today.

Darren Cronshaw is another person who claimed that the GC is for everyone. He agrees with Carey that Jesus did not intend for the GC to end with the apostles. He points out that had the GC ended with the apostles, the gospel would not have spread through the centuries. Therefore, he concluded that sharing the good news with the world is not only the responsibility of the leaders of the church but every Christian.[169] Also, according to Bryant Ball, "The church is the created community of the kingdom that is responsible for sharing the gospel without any Christian being excluded."[170]

The fourth principle of the teaching plan is that Christ has equipped the church leaders to prepare other Christians for the work of ministry, including sharing the gospel. This is laid out in

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[168] H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1997), 179-187.

[169] Darren Cronshaw, "A Commission 'Great' for Whom? Postcolonial Contrapuntal Readings of Matthew 28:18–20 and the Irony of William Carey," *Transformation*, *33*(2), (2016): 110-123.

[170] Bryant W. Ball, "Jesus and the Great Commission," 2015, accessed April 4, 2022, https://research.avondale.edu.

Ephesians 4:11-13. Below are seven steps that this researcher has developed to equip church members to share their faith with others.

A.   Pray – spend time in prayer asking guidance from the Holy Spirit about the person or community you want to share your faith with.

B.   Learn a little about the community or person with whom you want to share your faith.

C.   Greet.

D.   Introduce yourself.

E.   Start with a question that might get the person's interest. The question should be related to something that the person can identify. It could be related to everyday interests or in something you think the person might be interested.

F.   Connect with what interests the person with Christ. The Scripture says Christ is in all things and fills all. Pray for wisdom to make the connection from the normal earthly ideas and experiences to connect it to heavenly things.

G.   Give the person an opportunity to decide for Christ if time permits.

A good reminder is that it is essential to be in close fellowship with the Holy Spirit and let Him lead a person, according to F. F. Bruce.[171] According to Bruce, a typical example is the case of Philip in Acts 8:26-39. Philip had no idea what was going on, but the Holy Spirit led him to meet an Ethiopian Eunuch in his wagon leaving Jerusalem. Led by the Holy Spirit, Philip asked the Ethiopian Eunuch, "Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30-35, NKJV). Here is the importance of asking a question to start a conversation to share the gospel, which has been highlighted in the teaching plan.

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[171] F. F. Bruce, "Philip and the Ethiopian," *Journal of Semitic Studies* XXXIV, no. 2 (1989): 377–386.

The fifth principle of the teaching plan is the subject of giving rewards for sharing the gospel. The teaching plan considered that rewards can be a motivation to carry out the Lord's command, besides being motivated by love, which Scripture also teaches (2 Cor 5:14-15). According to Daniel 12:3, "Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever" (NKJV). Besides the reward of shining like stars in the firmament, Jesus also is coming with His reward to give every person according to what each has done (Rev 22:12-14). Concerning rewards for Christian service, Paul Powell writes that with regards to those who give their service for the kingdom.[172] Although the context of Jesus' teaching is against the background of the Beatitudes, according to Matthew, Powell contends that no service is done unto the Lord that goes unrewarded.[173]

This researcher projected that after the research was completed, the results would be in the direction that the researcher anticipated. This meant that after the research intervention, the participants would have an understanding and the skills to do community outreach. As was expected, all forty-six participants demonstrated some understanding of sharing the gospel and how to do it. Each participant was asked to share the gospel with a friend and neighbor. After sharing the gospel with a friend or neighbor, participants were asked to answer a questionnaire about whether they were comfortable sharing their faith. Second, they were to answer whether they thought they did poorly, good, or excellent in sharing their faith with a neighbor or friend. Out of the forty-six participants, all said they felt comfortable to some degree in sharing their faith. Although more than 50% felt they were very comfortable sharing, 25% felt a little bit timid but not uncomfortable. The question as to whether the participants thought they did poorly, fairly, good, or excellent in sharing their faith with a friend or neighbor, 65% reported that they

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[172] Paul W. Powell, Rewards in collection of Sermon Ideas, 1992, 28.
[173] Powell, Rewards, 28.

did good, 30% reported they did fairly, and 5% reported they did excellent. No one reported that they did poorly.

The researcher predicted that the barriers that once prevented participants from sharing their faith would be overcome. Typically, the number one barrier was fear for most of the participants. In as much as participants were able to some degree overcome the fear of sharing their faith, there are other barriers that participants are yet to be equipped for. For example, the language barrier, cultural barriers, etc., are areas where participants would need more training. This research did not examine other barriers due to the length of the study and the focus of the research.

The research predicted participants would see and capitalize on opportunities to share their faith with their neighbors and friends, an opportunity that many of them had never known or experienced. Scripture says, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6, NKJV). Although, the participants did not suffer death because they lacked knowledge and skill about how to share their faith with their neighbors and friends, they will now have an appreciation for taking advantage of the opportunity to share their faith, as is reflected in the overwhelming response from the survey referenced above. From the survey, participants were able to share their faith with neighbors and friends and all participants reported that they did well in sharing their faith. Even though the research did not specifically ask whether the participants would have appreciation to share their faith with their neighbors and friends, this researcher thinks participants' experience during the research will give them a boost to have such appreciation. Participants have now been given tools from the research that may influence how they respond to others with the gospel.

Finally, this researcher projected that the selection of the participants for the study would be happy to partake in the study and comply with all guidelines of the study freely and without

any compensation. The compliance and participation of participants were far beyond expectations. The research was conducted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and this researcher thought that perhaps participants would somehow have some difficulty being fully involved and engaged in the study. On the contrary, out of the fifty participants who signed up for the study, forty-six participants were actively involved with the study and completed it. This researcher does not know for certain why participants' response to the study was overwhelming beyond expectation. Perhaps the COVID-19 pandemic might have played a role in participants' responses.

A possible reason why the COVID-19 pandemic might have influenced participants' response could be that restrictions due to COVID-19, which kept most people from partaking in other outdoor activities like going to a job or school, served to promote the study as an alternative for people to go out. However, this hypothesis needs to be tested. Perhaps a study could be done by another researcher to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on research carried out at the peak of the pandemic.

Overall, this research provides a good indicator that participants who have no understanding or skills about how to share their faith can do so after they have been equipped. Fifty participants were selected for the study. Out of the fifty participants, forty-six participants were actively involved and stayed until the end of the study. All forty-six participants were from God of the Whole Earth Ministries located in Houston, Texas. The participants ranged from twelve years old to sixty-five years old.[174]

The problem the research investigated was that the members of God of the Whole Earth Ministries did not know how to share their faith with others. Almost all the participants at the

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[174] See Table 4.2 for age ranges.

beginning of the study said that they were not comfortable sharing their faith with others.[175] Among the reasons given for not being comfortable sharing their faith was that participants did not know how to start or begin a conversation that would lead to a productive discussion in sharing the gospel with others.

To address the problem of participants not knowing how to share the gospel with others, an intervention was designed and introduced. After the intervention was introduced, this researcher measured and analyzed the results.[176] Interestingly, those participants who had a high level of not being comfortable sharing their faith later discovered that their level of not being comfortable sharing their faith was reduced or absent. This meant that their level of comfort shifted from not being comfortable at the beginning to having some degree of comfort or confidence to share their faith after the intervention. Besides using the index of levels of comfort in sharing the gospel to evaluate any measurable change in the understanding and attitude of participants, the researcher asked participants whether the research was helpful in any way in changing their minds about sharing their faith. Eighty percent reported it was very helpful, 15% reported it was helpful to some degree, and 5% reported that they were not sure it was helpful or not.[177]

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[175] See Table 4.4 for the participants' levels of comfort before the project.

[176] See Table 4.5 for the participants' levels of comfort after the project.

[177] Please refer to table.

SEX	TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
MALES	17	37%
FEMALES	29	63 %

Table 4.1. Number of Male vs. Female Participants

Age group (years)	Total number (people)
60-70	2
50-59	9
40-49	10
30-39	11
20-29	10
13-19	2
12	2

Table 4.2. Breakdown of Age Groups
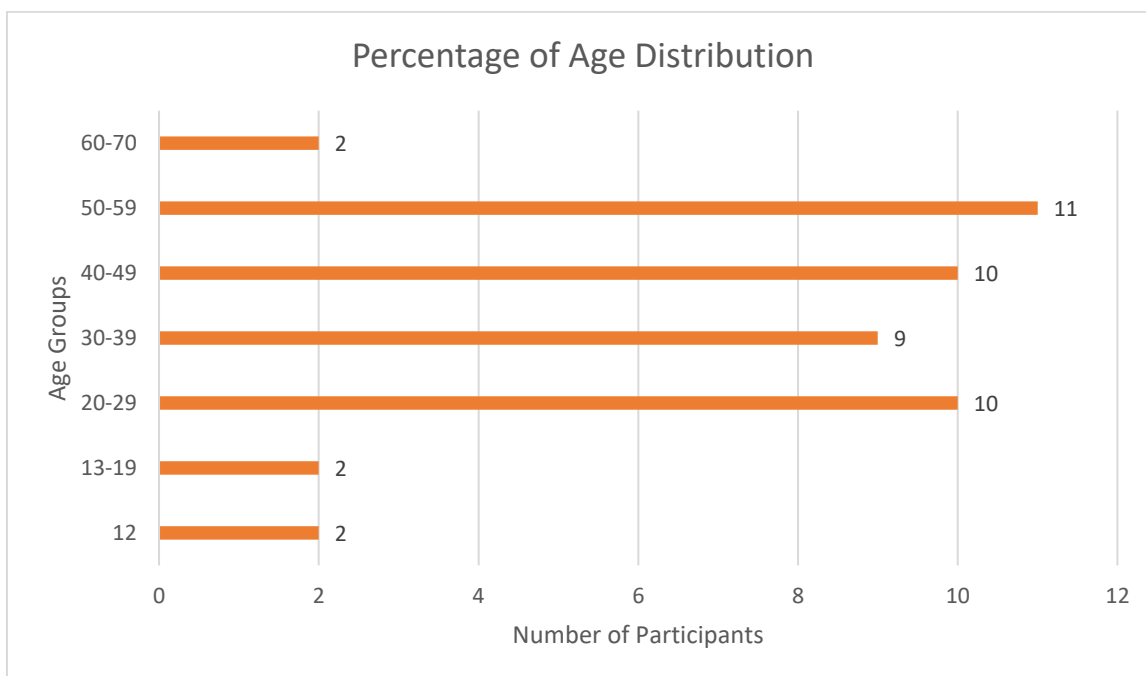
Figure 4.1. Percentage of Age Distribution.

Number of Participants	Levels of Comfort	Comments
20	Level 7	Two points above average
11	Level 9	Very comfortable
5	Level 5	Average
5	Level 8	Three points above average
5	Level 6	One point above average

Table 4.3. Levels of Comfort after Research Intervention

In Table 4.3, levels of comfort are on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 being least comfortable and 10 being most comfortable. After the research intervention, no participant's level of comfort was below average of level 5.
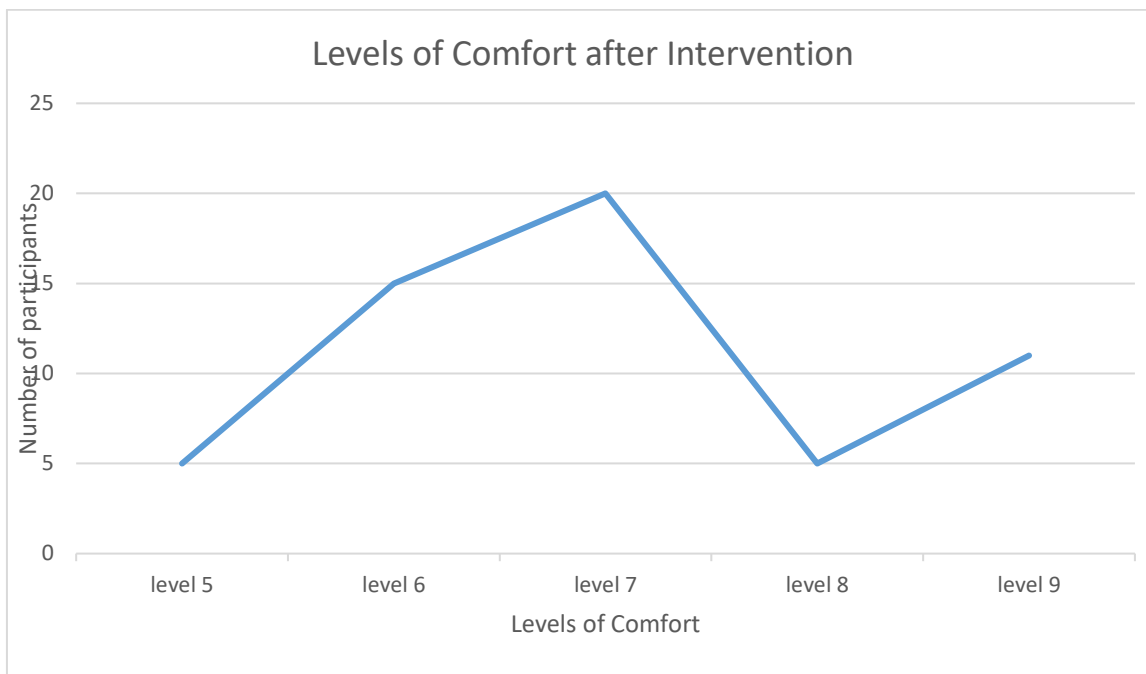
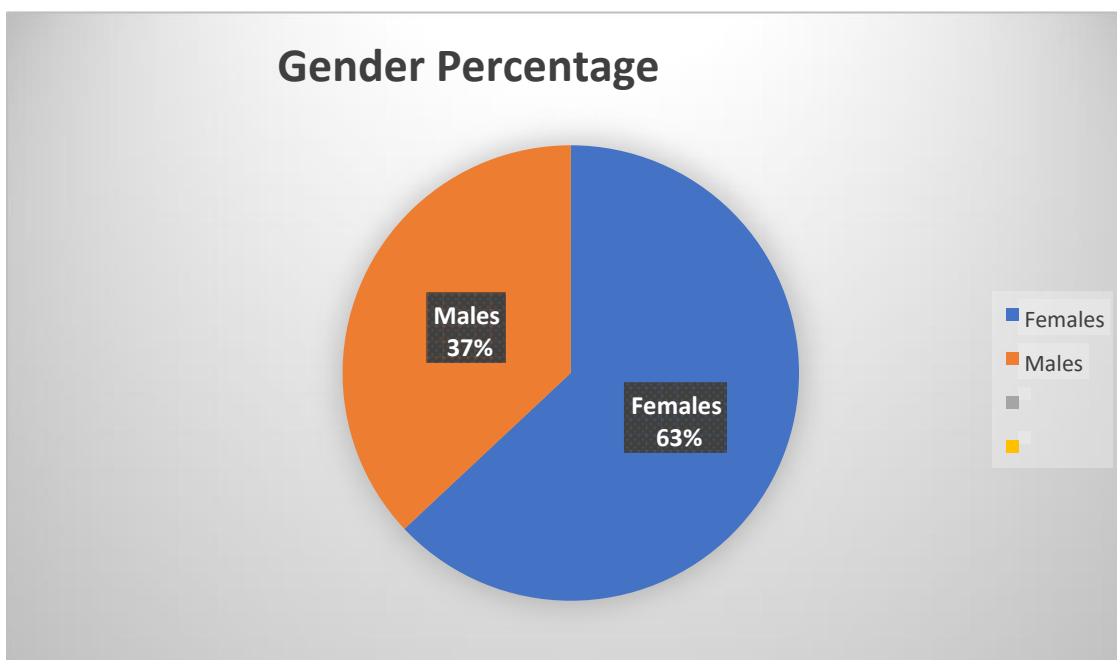Figure 4.2. Levels of Comfort after Intervention.

Figure 4.3. Gender Percentage of Participants.

Total number of Participants	Level 1 Comfort	Level 2 Comfort	Level 3 Comfort	Level 4 Comfort	Level 5 Comfort
10	✓	-	-	-	-
15	-	✓	-	-	-
12	-	-	✓	-	-
7	-	-	-	✓	-
2	-	-	-	-	✓

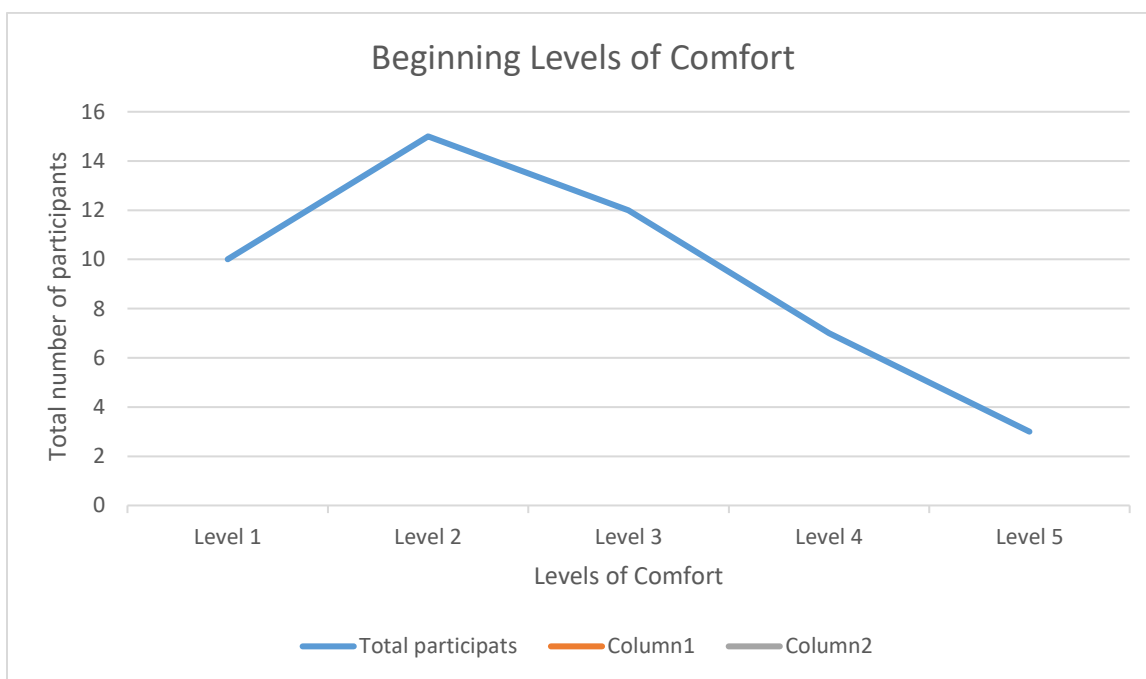Table 4.4. Levels of Comfort Before Research.
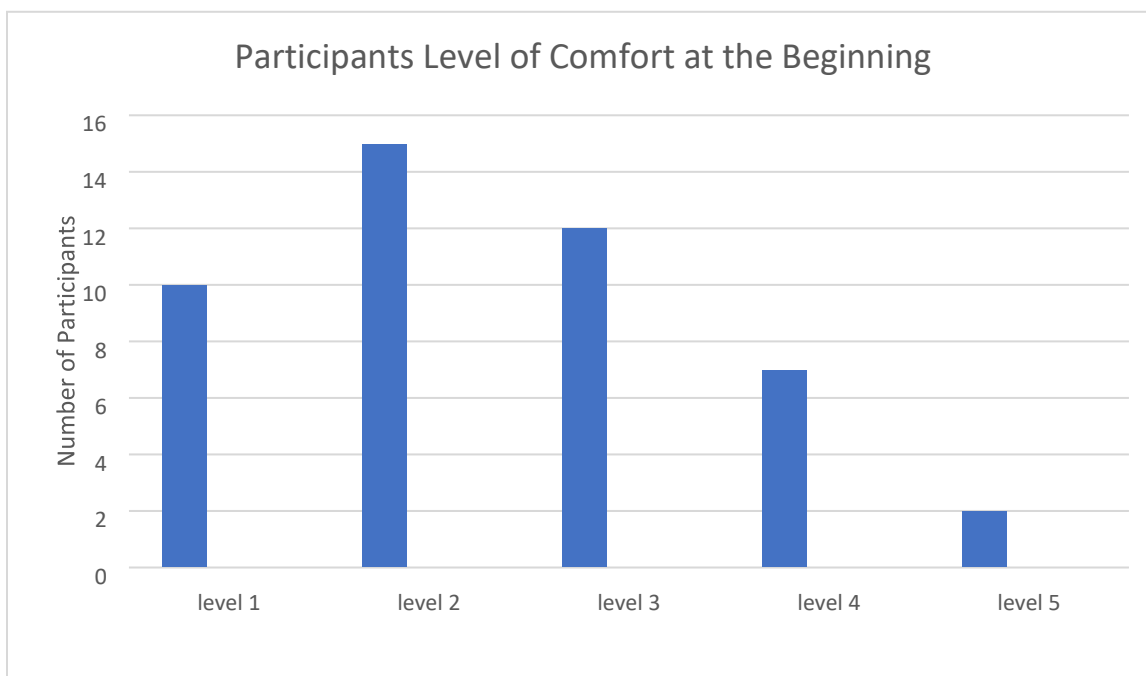

Figure 4.4. Levels of Comfort Before Research, Part One

Figure 4.5. Levels of Comfort Before Research, Part Two.

Levels of Comfort (Confident)	Levels of Comfort (Confidence)
10	Very Comfortable or Confident
9	
8	
7	
6	
5	Average
4	
3	
2	
1	Least Comfortable (least confident)

Table 4.5. Breakdown of Levels of Comfort.

In table 4.5, levels of comfort increase from level 1 to level 10. All participants were between levels 1 and 5. No participant was above level 5.
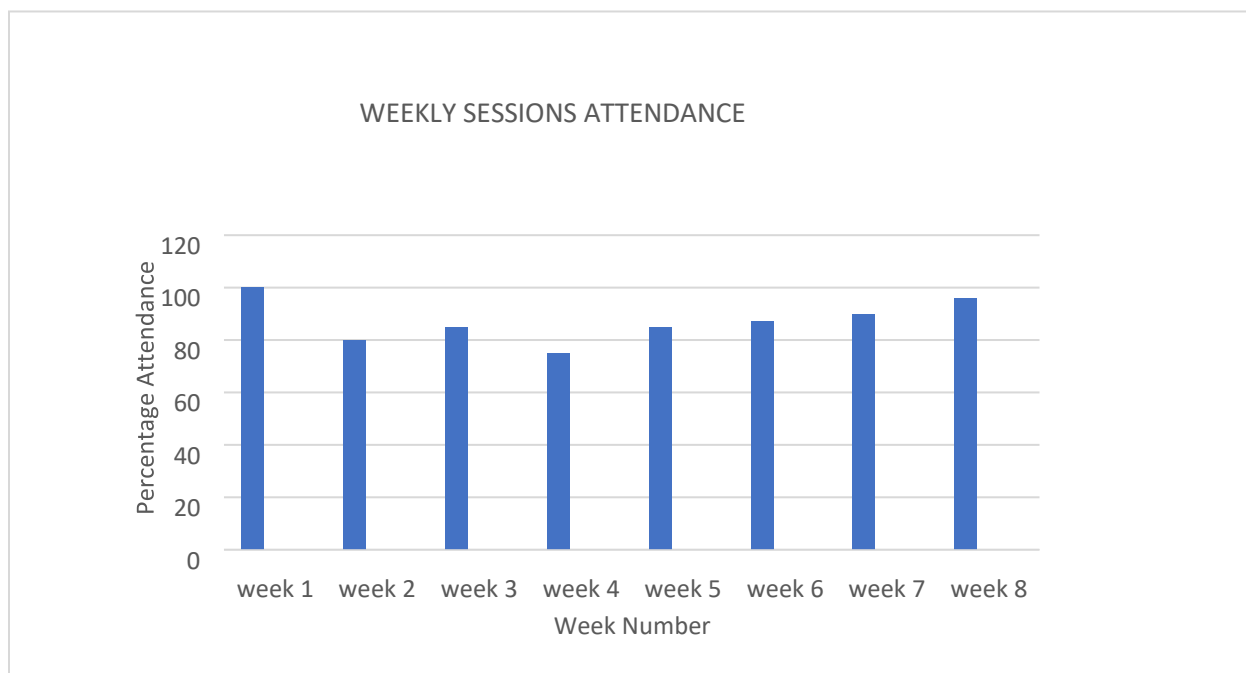
Figure 4.6. Weekly Attendance.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to share their faith in Christ with others. Sharing the gospel with others was not only a unique problem with GWEM but also is a problem of other churches and Christians in general. For example, one author noted that some Christians hesitate to share their faith because of fear, apathy, lack of knowledge and skills, and lack of compassion.[178] Although the Word of God has the potential to spread, some churches, including GWEM, did not experience the impact of the spreading of the gospel. The spreading of the gospel is closely associated with growth and an increase in the number of people who come to Christ. For example, the Scripture records that on the day of Pentecost, after Peter had preached the gospel, three thousand people were added to the believers (Acts 2:41). One author observed that if the gospel is effectively communicated with the help of the Holy Spirit, it has a way of impacting growth and increasing the church.[179]

The study was the motivation behind the desire to see growth, experience increase, and make an impact in the community. As a church, the leadership and members were concerned about why the church was not experiencing growth and an increase. As the church thought about it, they discovered that members were not reaching out to the community with the love of Jesus through the gospel. Therefore, a pilot project was conducted to identify why members were not reaching out to the community with the gospel. The following consensus was reached from the pilot project conducted by GWEM. Most members did not share their faith because they felt uncomfortable doing so. Consequently, this led to the design of the study to address the problem.

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[178] Mark Teasdale, *Evangelism for Non-Evangelists : Sharing the Gospel Authentically* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 27.

[179] Whiteman, Darrell L., "Effective Communication of the Gospel amid Cultural Diversity," *Missiology,* 12.3 (1984): 275–285.

GWEM membership runs between twenty-five to fifty. Church attendance fluctuates from Sunday to Sunday. On average, twenty-five to thirty people attend church services and participate in church services and activities. Church membership is a mixed congregation of African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and White families. Most GWEM members believe that attending church services and programs is an opportunity for each member. However, most members do not feel that community outreach or gospel sharing is everyone's responsibility, including the pastor.[180] Instead, GWEM members believe that pastors and those trained at seminaries should be the ones to reach out to the community with the gospel.

Historically, members of GWEM come from church backgrounds where community outreach with the gospel is not emphasized. According to the GWEM survey, churches from which some have come say activities like church dues, catechism and confirmation classes are ministries that are stressed. Furthermore, they observed that they are not aware of any ministry in their previous churches that spoke about sharing the gospel.

Most of the members acknowledged that church attendance and financial giving to the church is the only important responsibility of church members. Most members have indicated that they do not share the gospel with friends and relatives. Consequently, this knowledge gap in reaching out to others with the gospel became one of the main reasons to undertake the study.

Many pastors seem to be so overwhelmed by the personal needs of church members that they neglect equipping church members to carry out the GC as commanded by Christ. This study is an effort to remind pastors and church leaders of the GC's importance and show how pastors can get the whole church involved. Therefore, the GWEM project is one way to demonstrate

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[180] GWEM Church survey.

how Church members can get involved in the GC. The study included eight weeks of lessons for the participants to prepare them to reach out to the community.

Study Findings Considering the Theological and Theoretical Frame

It seems to this researcher that participants have been impacted by the study by following observable change in conversation and behavior. Before the study, participants were only interested in coming to church and partaking in church programs and activities were only indoors or restricted to church campus. Now at the end of the study, there is conversation among participants expressing desire to attempt putting into practice what they have learned. Participants are no longer talking about what the church can do for them but what they can do for Jesus by sharing Jesus with others in their community.

Although it may take a little while to see the full benefit or impact of the study, it seems that right now, participants are aware that the laity or church membership also has the responsibility of making Jesus known to their neighbors and friends. This researcher has also observed that the model Jesus demonstrated by sending His disciples two by two or in pairs has shown to be very helpful for the participants. Some of the participants who reported at the start of the study that they were not comfortable sharing the gospel alone, the paring has helped them to team with others to share the gospel without being uncomfortable. The pairing of participants before reaching out with the gospel also provides support and encouragement that each participant needs.

Since learning is so vital in equipping, this is why a ten-week teaching plan was designed to equip church members with knowledge and skills on how to share their faith. As mentioned earlier, being equipped sometimes comes with pain and/or sacrifice. Again, the Scripture says Jesus learned from the things He suffered (Heb 5:8). Similarly, during the period of

learning/teaching in equipping church members, many of them made great sacrifices to attend the weekly sessions. At the time the teaching sessions were conducted, the world was locked down due to COVID-19. This made it difficult for the movement and gathering of people. Despite these challenges, participants made the sacrifice to attend the weekly sessions.

The eight-week intervention by teaching was developed and introduced to address the problem.[181] The Scriptures say it is not the desire of God that His people be ignorant (1 Thess 4:13). The Scriptures also exhort the Christian to be taught in the Word so that the Christian might be equipped for every good work (2 Tim 3:16). Concerning the value of teaching, as it relates to developing confidence, Keman has written on the subject as well.[182] According to Keman, acquiring knowledge and skills puts a person in a position to do well. Keman also argues that ability gives confidence and boldness.[183]

The teaching sessions were held in the church auditorium for eight weeks. Teaching sessions were designed for two hours weekly. However, the two hours were spread over two days, which meant 1 hour per day for two days in a week. Therefore, the participants met for one hour, two times a week. Each teaching section was divided into three sub-sections. The first thirty minutes were allotted for teaching. The next ten minutes were allotted for questions and answers. The last twenty minutes were set aside to demonstrate and model the lesson taught for that session.

In the tenth week of the study, and the eighth week of the teaching intervention, the participants were allowed to go into the community and apply the lessons learned. The participants went in groups of two. This example was adopted from Jesus' example in the

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[181] See Appendix D.

[182] Keman, "The Missing Dimension of Modern Education," 279-95.

[183] Ibid.

Scriptures. In Luke 10, Jesus appointed seventy disciples and then sent them out two by two into the community to share the gospel. Before this time, Jesus had been teaching and modeling before His twelve disciples, as well as the seventy others He appointed, on what to do. Carson, in his commentary on the Luke 10 passage, writes, "While Jesus was on the earth, He took time to teach His disciples and modeling before them skills of kingdom principles."[184] However, Jesus also took time to encourage people to practice what they had heard Jesus teach and had seen Him do.

Practices and approaches for equipping the saints to share their faith or to do community outreach are based on theories and models adapted by scholars and church leaders. Each model has its own strengths and weaknesses. This research examined several studies. Each approach has its own strengths and weaknesses.

Earley, in his book *Pastoral Leadership Is*, examines the role of the pastor in church and ministry.[185] One of the things Earley discusses in the book is the role of the pastor to equip the saints for evangelism. According to Earley, his model is based on the Pauline model.[186] Earley argues that there is no mention of committees, hospital visitations, performing funeral services, etc., as emphasized in the West as the primary role of the pastor.[187]

Earley then discusses the example of Paul in shepherding as it relates to equipping the saints. Earley identifies four principles that Paul uses to equip those who were under his

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[184] Carson, *A Model of Christian Maturity*, 140..

[185] Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is*, 16.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid., 17.

oversight. He outlines these principles as prayer, teaching the Word, intentional training or

leading, and the use of small groups.[193]

Earley is an expert on pastoral leadership and has written extensively on the subject. In

Pastoral Leadership Is, he identifies four tools that are used to equip the saints. He names these

four tools as prayer, the Word of God, intentional training, and connecting with other members

of the body of Christ.[188]

According to Earley, prayer is the first tool available to the pastor to equip the saints.[189]

Using prayer as a tool for equipping the saints, Earley gives a typical example of what that

prayer looks like. He describes prayer as seeking God for guidance every step of the way.[190] By

praying regularly and consistently, the believer will be effective in carrying on his or her work.

Earley notes that prayer saves time. He explains that some try to do the reverse. In other words,

some people attempt to do it in their own strength and when they fail, then they seek God for

help. Earley used the end of the book of Hebrews to highlight a typical prayer for equipping the

saints. The prayer highlights that the Great Shepherd Jesus should equip the saints to do what is

good and pleasing to the Lord.

The second tool Earley discusses for equipping the saints is the Word of God. He uses 2

Timothy 3:16 to make his case. He argues that the aim of 2 Timothy 3:16 is so the saint can be

equipped for every good work.[191] Early discussed how the Word of God is used for instruction,

counsel, rebuke, and to equip the saint for every work of righteousness. The third tool for

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[193] Ibid., 27

[188] Ibid., 26.

[189] Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is*, 26.

[190] Ibid., 33.

[191] Ibid., 50.

equipping the saints according to Earley is intentional training. The student should train in such a way that the student becomes like the trainer or master. Earley uses Jesus' words in Luke 6:40 to support his claim: "but everyone when he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher" (NASB).[192]

The fourth tool Earley recommends for equipping the saints is the tool that connects members.[193] Earley writes that it is difficult for any pastor or church leader to equip the members if there is disunity in the church. To solve the problem of disunity, Earley recommends healthy small groups in the church in which members can get along with each other.[194] The strength of Earley's Pauline model is based on the example of the apostle Paul. The key elements of the model, such as prayer and teaching of the Word, are pillars that a leader can use to develop and equip his congregation. However, the weakness of this model may be rooted perhaps in the unpreparedness and immaturity of the congregation at the time to receive the truth or teaching. For example, the writer of Hebrews argues that "by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again…for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the Word of righteousness, since he is a child" (Heb. 5:12, 13, ESV).

The GWEM project adopted the Earley Model in implementing the teaching intervention. The study used three tools out of the four tools Earley recommended. Prayer, the Word of God, and Training were the three tools used. The emphasis on prayer was taught to demonstrate dependence on God to communicate the gospel. Jesus is the model of a prayer life for the believer. Jesus taught His disciples not only how to pray, but He was a living example of a consistent prayer life (Mark 1:35). The Word of God was the main text used for the teachings.

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[192] Ibid., 60.

[193] Ibid., 62.

[194] Earley, *Pastoral Leadership Is*, 62.

Teachings were taken from the life of Jesus in the Gospels, the lives of Paul, Peter, and the apostles in the book of Acts and the Epistles. Books other than the Bible written by Christian scholars on sharing the Gospel were also referenced for the teaching intervention.

A closer look at the teaching plan itself outlines five fundamental principles that can help to answer the questions that have been raised. The first principle the teaching plan reveals is that Jesus is the one who has commanded believers to share their faith, according to Matthew 28:18-20. The focus of knowing who has given the command to share the gospel is vitally important because it answers the question of to whom the believer owes his obedience.

The second principle of the teaching outline is that Jesus' Word to the Christian is a command and not a suggestion. Also, Jesus' Word is not optional or discretional but imperative. This second principle is emphasized in the teaching because some tend to think that believers are not under any obligation to share the gospel. Some even argue that they do not have the gift to evangelize; therefore, it is not binding on them to share the gospel. However, the Bible says quite the opposite.

The third principle of the teaching plan is that Jesus commands Matthew 28:18-20 for every Christian without any exceptions. Until now, the command of Matthew 28:18-20 was debatable. Some believed that the command was only for the apostles. One of the people who refuted the claim that the GC was only meant for the apostles was Carey.[195] Carey was a Baptist minister who fought hard to convince his Baptist superiors that the GC was meant for ministers today.

The fourth principle of the teaching plan is that Christ has equipped the church leaders to prepare other Christians for the work of ministry, including sharing the gospel, as explained in

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[195] McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 179-187.

Ephesians 4:11-13. The fifth principle of the teaching plan is the subject of giving rewards for sharing the gospel. The teaching plan considered that rewards can motivate one to carry out the Lord's command besides being motivated by love, which Scripture also teaches (2 Cor 5:14-15).

According to Daniel 12:3, "Those who turn many to righteousness shall shine like the stars in the firmament," (translation). Besides the reward of shining like stars in the firmament, Jesus also is coming with His reward to give every person according to what each has done (Rev 22:12-14). Concerning rewards for Christian service, Powell writes that with regards to those who give their service for the kingdom. Although the context of Jesus' teaching is against the background of the Beatitudes, according to Matthew, Powell argues that no service is done unto the Lord that goes unrewarded.[196]

The problem the research investigated was that the members of God of the Whole Earth Ministries did not know how to share their faith with others. Almost all the participants at the beginning of the study said that they were not comfortable sharing their faith with others.[197] Among the reasons given for not being comfortable sharing their faith was that participants did not know how to start or begin a conversation that would lead to a productive discussion in sharing the gospel with others.

To address the problem of participants not knowing how to share the gospel with others, an intervention was designed and introduced. After the intervention was introduced, this researcher measured and analyzed the results.[198] Interestingly, those participants who had a high level of not being comfortable sharing their faith later discovered that their level of not being comfortable sharing their faith was reduced or absent. This meant that their level of comfort

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[196] Paul W. Powell, Sermons Ideas: Rewards, 28.

[197] See Table 4.4 for the comfort levels before research was completed.

[198] See Table 4.5 for the comfort levels after the research was completed.

shifted from not being comfortable at the beginning to having some degree of comfort or confidence to share their faith after the intervention. Besides using the index of levels of comfort in sharing the gospel to evaluate any measurable change in the understanding and attitude of participants, the research asked participants whether the research was helpful in any way in changing their minds about sharing their faith. Eighty percent reported it was very helpful, 15% reported it was helpful to some degree, and 5% reported that they were not sure it was helpful or not.[199]

The results of this research, compared to other research from the literature review, support the concept that there can be a measurable shift from not knowing how to share the gospel to knowing how to share the gospel if Christians are properly equipped. There were different approaches reviewed as to how to equip Christians to share their faith. Each approach varies depending on the leadership style of the equipper, trainer, or church leadership and those that are to be equipped. In as much as leadership styles differ from person to person, Jesus Christ remains the perfect model that all church leadership can learn from.

Other studies focused on the content of the message to be used to share the gospel. Further expanding on content, those studies made a sharp contrast between the times of the first century in which the gospel was proclaimed and that of modern times. Their conclusion is that in modern times, the church should proclaim the message with the same power of the Holy Spirit that had people convicted of their sins in the first century.

The problem with this process of equipping is that it does not take into consideration sharing the gospel with an individual but only with a large group. In contrast, the GWEM study targeted both individuals and large groups. The GWEM study has seven simple steps that most

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[199] Please refer to table.

people can easily learn to improve their confidence to share the gospel. This is not the case with most of the other studies. Unlike the GWEM study, most of the other studies require some depth of knowledge of Scripture and a longer more rigorous training process. Other studies focused on creating missional awareness[200] among church members, which plays a great role in motivating church members to get involved in sharing the gospel. The tool of creating missional awareness was utilized and was found to be helpful in motivating GWEM's members to share their faith. In fact, this researcher learned from the beginning of the study that almost all the participants were never motivated to share their faith because they were not exposed to a culture or environment that talked about sharing the gospel. The responses of the participants were overwhelming, as far as being motivated is concerned, perhaps because a culture or environment was created by GWEM for its members.

Another comparison of this study to other studies that is worth noting is that each study is unique in the sense of the prevailing circumstances of a group of people and the specific needs or problems that exist. In the case of the GWEM study, participants did not know how to start or begin a conversation to share their faith. Although some of the participants reported that they would have loved to share their faith, they admitted they did not have the skills to do so. Examining the literature review, the GWEM study did not find any study whose fundamental problem was a lack of skill to start or begin a conversation to share the gospel. Of course, there were a few studies that mentioned briefly communicating the gospel clearly through conversation. Notwithstanding, the emphasis of those studies was on how to communicate the gospel, which has to do with the process or mode of communication. In contrast to the GWEM study, the process is on how to start or begin a conversation to share the gospel. The GWEM

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[200] Woodward, *Creating a Missional Culture*, 211..

study's emphasis is on the initiation of communication or building bridges before the actual movement on the bridge.

A good example of this distinction between initiating a communication and actual communication process is the example of Jesus at the well with the Samaritan woman found in John 4. In building a bridge to communicate the gospel, Jesus initiated the conversation by first asking for a drink in John 4:7. Jesus's approach to the Samaritan woman is the idea this researcher has in mind when pointing out that the emphasis of the GWEM study is unique from other studies reviewed. For example, one study presented the argument of sharing the gospel conversationally but omitted the emphasis on how to initiate that conversation. His emphasis is on the process rather than the initiation or building bridges to communicate the gospel.[201]

While implementing this project, the researcher learned several things. First, the researcher learned that people can be motivated based on their connection with the researcher without been offered compensation. It is said that money or financial benefit is motivation, but this researcher studied that participants can be motivated based first because of their desire to share Christ and secondly because of their level of trust in the researcher based on the church-member relationship. The research was carried out during very trying times i.e., during the COVID-19 pandemic. This researcher thought the pandemic was going to be a disruption to the study. On the contrary, participants were more motivated.

Expectations for participation in the study were exceeded. First, the researcher thought that because of COVID-19 concerns, many people would not participate. However, more than fifty percent of the participants attended the teaching sections each week. The lesson the

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[201] Tim Chester and Steve Timmis, *Everyday Church: Gospel Communications on Mission*, North American ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 76.

researcher learned from the participants' overwhelming participation is that when people are interested in something, no matter what the barriers are, they will do everything to overcome those barriers.

The researcher also learned while implementing the study that it is important to have as many workers as possible and backups just in case something goes wrong, especially when a worker to perform a certain task is not available. During the implementation of the study, the researcher underestimated the number of helpers that were needed to help with the implementation. For example, the study needed a timekeeper for each teaching section and another person to observe participation and responses during the teaching sessions.

To manage the unforeseen obstacle problems, the researcher had to ask for volunteers during each meeting to perform the task of timekeeper, the observer of participants' reactions and responses, and other important tasks such as greeter, preparers of lunch, etc. The researcher took people's willingness to volunteer for granted since he would be conducting the study with his own church members, but he did not put thorough planning in those areas of importance.

Finally, one lesson that can be learned from this study is that others are encouraged when they realize they are not alone in their problem. It was interesting to know that those who thought they were alone and lacked the confidence to share the gospel, had others just like them facing the same problem. Therefore, each participant was supportive of others throughout the study. They all went through the study as one family having the same challenge.

Some churches complain about the challenge of church growth. To solve this problem, they resort to providing social services such as food pantries and giving away clothes and household items. As important as social services are, they may not attract people to become part of the local church. People may only come for the social services the church provides. However,

when people truly give their lives to Christ through the sharing of the gospel, they may become a member of the local assembly. It is in this light that this researcher is of the view that GWEM can help churches to increase their church membership.

The GWEM study may be used as a model for communities and nonprofit organizations to design programs for their respective entities with long-lasting benefits. For example, the GWEM model has the blueprint of how minds can be changed to motivate people to work together for the common good of all.

The GWEM study can also be used in educational settings. People normally function with the light or knowledge they have. Without the appropriate light or knowledge, people tend to be afraid, and as a result they may feel incapable. However, with the right amount of light the fear disappears, and they become bold. GWEM's study teaches that people who lack confidence can overcome their fear when they are properly trained or educated and take the necessary steps to face that fear. Therefore, educational settings can benefit from the GWEM study.

This research will go a long way to help and strengthen GWEM's focus to equip members to share their faith. The research can also be used as a resource to help other churches address a similar problem. The problem was that GWEM members were not equipped to share the gospel with others. Each of the participants expressed a lack of confidence to share the gospel. Investigation for the reasons behind the lack of confidence revealed that all participants did not know how to start a conversation when they wanted to share the gospel.

Therefore, the research is significant in that it provides knowledge and skills that people can use as tools to help them tackle the problem of lack of confidence to share the gospel. In the case of GWEM, the participants, after they were equipped to share the gospel, experienced a decrease in their levels of discomfort, and their confidence increased.

First, what the results show is that although people may have the mindset that they are unable to share the gospel, that mindset can be changed to embrace a concept that can help them improve their confidence in sharing the gospel. Second, the research is significant because it fills in the gap from the analysis of the literature review that there is an immense need to know how to start a conversation, which can help improve the confidence of people to share the gospel.

Third, the research is significant in that other churches, ministries, and other small groups may be able to study the research findings as a resource to help them address their own challenges of sharing the gospel. Although there are different approaches available that can be used to share the gospel, the GWEM study approach is one that is participant friendly. Participants may also be able to find the study fascinating. In the case of the GWEM study, the participants were far more enthusiastic about the study than the researcher predicted.

During this research, it was discovered that those who consider themselves extroverted still had the problem of reaching out to others with the gospel, when compared to those who consider themselves introverted. Perhaps future research might explore why there is no difference between an extrovert and an introvert's fear of sharing the gospel. It seems apparent that those who consider themselves extroverts may easily be able to share the gospel more than those who are introverted. Future research on the reason for this irony is worth exploring.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: GWEM Church Project

Principal Investigator: Christopher Stevens, Liberty University, DMIN Candidate

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be 12 years or above. You must be a member of GWEM Church or a friend or family member of any GWEM Church member. 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 this **DMin**. action research project is to teach and develop skills to lead church members into outreach conversations.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

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

• Attend the teaching and Training Sessions.

• Model what is taught.

• Ask you to follow a group into the community to apply what you have been taught.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

• As the result of your participation in this study, you will overcome your fear of community outreach and be confident.

• You will be equipped to share your faith with anyone with confidence. You will know how to start and maintain conversations that will lead to the knowledge of Christ.

• Society will have people in the community whose lives have been transformed by the knowledge gained for the good of everyone.

How will personal information be protected?

•   Participant responses will be anonymous. Participant responses will be kept confidential using codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.

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

•   Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

•   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.

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

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

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 University or GWEM Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time prior to submitting the survey, without affecting those relationships.

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

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

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number 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[s] conducting this study, Christopher Stevens. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact Christopher Stevens at ██████████████████████████████████. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Robert Dixon, at ██████████████████.

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

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

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

<div align="center">

Your Consent

</div>

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

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

<div align="center">

Legally Authorized Representative Permission

</div>

By signing this document, you are agreeing to the person named below participating 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 agree for the person named below to take part in this study

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Printed LAR Name and Relationship to Subject

_____

LAR Signature   Date

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form for Underage Participants

Title of the Project: GWEM Church Project

Principal Investigator: Christopher Stevens, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your child_____ is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be 12 Years or older.]. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is: The purpose of this DMin. action research project is to teach and develop skills to lead church members into outreach conversations.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your child_____ to be in this study, I will ask [him/her/him or her] to do the following things:
1. Ask to attend Teaching Sessions.

2. Ask to Demonstrate or model Lessons Learned.

3. Ask to do a Community Outreach for Practical

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants should expect to receive from taking part in this study are Participants will overcome fear to do community outreach and be confident. Benefits to society include morally inclined environment that know and reverent God and a peaceful community.

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. Data collected as part of this study may be shared for use in future research studies or with other researchers. If data collected from the participants is shared, any information that could identify them, if applicable, will be removed before the data is shared.

Participant responses will be anonymous. Participant responses will be kept confidential by codes. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.

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.

How will participants be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

What are the costs to be a part of the study?

There is no cost to be part of this project

What conflicts of interest exist in this study?

There are no conflicts of interest that exist in the study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to allow your child to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to allow your child to participate, she or he is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time: the survey]. without affecting those relationships.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your child from the study or your child chooses to withdraw, please have him or her exit the study and close his or her internet browser or inform the researcher that your child wishes to discontinue his or her participation, and your child should not submit the study materials. Your child's responses will not be recorded or included in the study.

If you choose to withdraw your child from the study or your child chooses to withdraw, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw his or her child or should your child choose to withdraw, data collected from your child apart from focus group data, it will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your child's/ contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw your child from the study.

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

The researcher conducting this study is Christopher Stevens. You are encouraged to contact him at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor and email.

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

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

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your [child/student] 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 allow my child to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record my child as part of his/her participation in this study.

_____

Printed Child's/Student's Name

_____

Parent's Signature   Date

_____

Minor's Signature   Date

If you would prefer that your child NOT PARTICIPATE in this study, please sign this document, and return it to GWEM Church offices by September 31, 2021.

_____

Printed Child's/Student's Name

_____

Parent's Signature   Date

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Email, Letter, or Verbal Script

Dear Recipient:

As a graduate student in the School of Divinity at Liberty University. I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a DMIN degree. The purpose of my research is to is to teach and

develop skills to lead church members into outreach conversations, and I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be 12 years of age or older and member of GWEM Church or friend or family member of GWEM Church. Participants, if willing, will be asked to attend teaching sessions, model the lessons that have been learned, and go into the community to demonstrate what has been learned. It should take approximately 8 weeks to complete the activities listed.

Participation will be completely anonymous, and no personal, identifying information will be collected. A consent document is provided along with this letter. The consent document contains additional information about my research. Participation is anonymous. However, if you choose to participate, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to Christopher Stevens at the offices of the church or during one of the Sunday worship services.
.

Sincerely,

Christopher Stevens
Graduate Student

APPENDIX D

8-WEEK LESSON PLAN

Objectives of the Lesson:

Jesus commanded believers to go out and share their faith (Matt. 28:18-20).

Therefore, the objective of the lesson is to empower believers and give them tools to share their faith.

WEEKS	TOPICS	SCRIPTURES	ACTIVITIES
WK 1	• Orientation & Introduction • Discussion of Objectives	• John 6:38-46 • John 20:2 3 Acts 1:8	• Questions & Answer • Sharing Personal Impressions of Outreach
WK 2	• Jesus Mandate to the Church • Believers' Responsibility to Reach Out	• Matthew 28:18-20. • Acts 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:2	Question & Answer
WK 3	How to Start an Outreach Conversation Pt. 1	• How to Start Conversation by Jonathan Fox • Colossians 4:6; Proverbs 16:24	1. Questions & Answer 2. Modeling of the Lesson by participants
WK 4	How to Start an Outreach Conversation Pt. 2	1. How to start conversation by J. Fox 2. Col. 4:6 Proverbs 15:1-2	1. Questions & Answer 2. Modeling of Lesson by Participants
WK 5	1. Following Jesus' Example 2. Examples of Apostles	1. John 4:1-26. 2. Acts 17:22-31	1. Questions & Answer 2. Modeling of Lesson by Participants
WK 6	1.The Content of the Message 2. How to be Saved	1. 1 Corinthians15:1-4 2. Romans 10:9-10	Questions & Answer
WK 7	1. The Place of Prayer in Outreach 2. Following the Guidance of the Holy Spirit	1. Hebrews 13:20-21 2. Acts 8: 26-40. 3. Acts 10:1-11	Questions & Answer
WK 8	General Review	All the Lessons (Lesson 1-7)	Participants go into the Community

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRES

• Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

Yes, or No?

• What do you think about sharing your faith with the community?

Response

• Do you think it is only the duty of the pastor to tell others about Christ in the community?

Response

• Do you think church members should tell others about Christ in the community?

Response

• Are you confident or intimidated about sharing your faith?

Response

• Why are you confident or intimidated in sharing your faith?

Response

• What do you think about acquiring skills and gaining new knowledge to share your faith or to make improvements in sharing your faith?

Response

• Have you ever shared your faith? If yes, why did you share your faith? If not, why have you never shared your faith?

Response

• Are you comfortable sharing your faith with someone whom you do not know? Why or why not?

Response

• Do you think it is important to learn skills to know how to start conversation to share your faith? If yes, why? If not, why not?

Response

• On the scale of 1 to 10 how comfortable are you in sharing your faith with someone? Score of 10 means very comfortable and score of 1 means not very comfortable.

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IRB APPROVAL LETTER

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 29, 2021

Christopher Stevens

IRB Approval 120Y.11Z611:

IRB-FY21-22-272

September 29, 2021

Christopher Stevens
Robert Dixon
Re: IRB Application - IRB-FY21-22-272 God Whole Earth Ministry Church Project

Dear Christopher Stevens and Robert Dixon,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office
for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your project with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your IRB application.
Decision: No Human Subjects Research
Explanation: Your study is not considered human subjects research for the following reason:
(2) Your project will consist of quality improvement activities, which are not "designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge" according to 45 CFR 46. 102(l).

Please note that this decision only applies to your current application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.
Also, although you are welcome to use our recruitment and consent templates, you are not required to do so. If you choose to use our documents, please replace the word research with the word project throughout both documents.

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

 Sincerely,

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