

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHRIST'S RESPONSE TO THE LAST, THE LEAST, THE LOST, THE LEFT OUT-
IS THE CHURCH LIVING UP TO CHRIST'S STANDARD?

A Thesis Project Submitted to
Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

By

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LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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ABSTRACT

CHRIST RESPONSE TO THE LAST, THE LEAST, THE LOST AND THE LEFT OUT-
IS THE CHURCH LIVING UP TO CHRIST'S STANDARD?

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There is a plethora of statistics concerning how many un-churched people there are in the United States and the socioeconomic ladder does not discriminate who fits this lost category. Yet, the concern of this project deals with the gang member, drug dealer, drug users, pimps and prostitutes. The intent is to take outreach to the street through cook outs, Holy block parties, street revivals and the like. The rationale of this project is to show how one can reach, teach and keep this group of people, the potential dangers, and positive consequences associated with it. The potential value of this topic is to reach a mass of potential leaders for Christ who will be able to bring others of like class to the Lord and make mature disciples of them. This project will reveal several types of evangelistic efforts such as surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and new member classes.

Abstract length: 148 words.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this Thesis to my mother, Mrs. Virgie A. Staples and my deceased father, Rev. N.B. Staples Jr., who raised me in the fear and admonition of the Lord Jesus Christ. I extend my thanks to them for not giving up on me when I was literally the prodigal son, for assisting me periodically with the financing of my education and most importantly for all of their prayers during my lifetime. I would like to thank my wife for everything that she does, not only for bearing with me during the time that it has taken me to obtain the D. Min., but for being so supportive and loving during our entire marriage. I love you! I would like to thank my church family and all the prayer warriors that labored in prayer for me. Lastly, I would like to thank all of my professors at Liberty University for their input and wisdom.

God Bless!

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Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Today there is a plethora of statistics concerning how many un-churched people there are in the U. S. Of course, the socioeconomic ladder does not discriminate as it pertains to the people who are lost spiritually in this country. Yet, the people who are considered here consist of the gang member, drug dealer, drug user, pimps, and prostitutes. Christ said, “For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). According to the book series *Gangs*, the author states, “The FBI defines a gang as ‘a group of three or more individuals bonded together by race, national origin, culture or territory, which associates on a continual basis for the purpose of committing criminal acts.’ Many gangs are a product of a specific neighborhood or locale, but some gangs have established national franchises far from their home base.”¹ All of the aforementioned people who find themselves involved with these activities, which can be criminal, usually have one common denominator which consist of either using or dealing drugs, thus substance abuse is a huge problem throughout the country whether in rural communities or in metropolitan areas. The substance abuse problem has become so prevalent that people are breaking and entering into private homes, businesses and especially pharmacies. Thus the intent here is to take outreach to the street through cook outs, holy block parties, and street revivals with a rationale of reaching this group for Christ, investigating the potential dangers, and positive consequences associated therewith.

To compound this, the prison system is overloaded due to non-violent crimes associated with substance abuse. Even though this type of activity has become a huge problem, the larger problem lies with the un-willingness of the church to personally approach the aforementioned

¹ Andela Soliz and others, eds. *Gangs: Opposing View Points Series*, (Farmington Hill: Greenhaven Press Inc., 2009), 112.

class of people prior to incarceration as Jesus instructed us to do and compel them to come to Christ. Prior to incarceration is mentioned because approaching someone while incarcerated is not that dangerous if the guards, in fact, allows one to leave once the visitation time has expired. There are a lot of churches which are involved in prison ministry, but if one would listen to the wisdom of Barney Fife of the old Andy Griffith TV program, he would say, "Nip it in the bud," as prevention trumps remediation every time. In other words, one should try to reach the sinner prior to incarceration no matter the danger which may be involved. Is there a distinct possibility that one could lose his or her life in a concentrated effort to reach the last, the least, the lost, and the left out in street ministry, of course there is, but did not Christ say, "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" (Luke 9:24). Therefore, one must be very careful in an effort to go among people who have been known to rob, car jack, and even murder. Yet, to reach this target group, it is necessary at times to go into the enemy's camp and take back what the devil has stolen.

As previously mentioned, the drug dealer, prostitute, gang banger, pimp and the drug user all have a common denominator which happens to be illegal or prescription drugs, both of which are destroying lives daily. These drugs include, but are not limited to, methamphetamine, cocaine, oxycodone, marijuana, and of course, alcohol. Whether they are involved with the sale or use of drugs, a large percentage usually has a drug problem. Therefore, there must be a psychological aspect or root cause of why this class of people are either addicted to drugs, dealing them, or more likely than not, found on a proverbial carousel of hopelessness involving the abuse of the substance, and all the other ramifications which surround these activities. With that said, there is a lack of knowledge as it pertains to how or where one can receive assistance with this problem and assistance comes in various forms such as physical, emotional and

spiritual. This project will attempt to identify some of the psychological issues which surround the abuse in a manner that will give the Christian community some firepower (pun intended) as it pertains to how to confront this problem, and the abusers some knowledge as to why they are primarily involved, and how to break free of the stronghold.

There is also the issue of emotional baggage which comes along with living this type of lifestyle. A lot of this stems from the home environment in which one was raised and the ramifications surrounding what was endured during this time. Although there are many psychological issues surrounding all of this, one cannot ignore the spiritual side which deals with witchcraft and the demonic forces that accompany substance abuse, physical abuse and a traumatic lifestyle. This writer is of the opinion that there must be a balance between the psychological side and the spiritual side of this issue. Yet, biblically speaking, “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers and the rulers of darkness of this age, against spiritual host of wickedness in the heavenly places”(Eph. 6:12). So, in light of the psychological, emotional and spiritual trauma which surrounds the substance abuse lifestyle, the church needs to answer the question of how she can assist in an effort to bring balance to this issue and win souls for Christ simultaneously. Thus, the answer lies with having qualified counselors who are either on the churches staff, on call as needed, or has agreed to donate some of their time and ability to bring these people to discipleship in Christ.

Even though many of the people on the streets of our nation think that there is no other viable option than to resort to gangs and substance abuse in an effort to fit in, obtain family atmosphere, obtain protection, or make a viable living. Wilkes says, “Where do they come from, these hard-nut hoodlums? The hard man can usually be traced back to a deprived environment featuring a dysfunctional, disrupted and insecure family life amid a daily scramble for survival.

As forensic psychiatrist Ray Wyre once observed: “I have yet to meet a psychopath from a happy home.”² In light of this statement, this writer is a living witness, as are many other people throughout this nation, that there is another way which is not only viable, but wonderfully enhancing physically, psychologically, and especially spiritually. Please do not be naïve as it pertains to gang activity, substance abuse and prostitution because they are found everywhere, and could already be creeping into one’s own home, the school of which one’s child or grandchild attends, or even one’s church, believe it or not. Therefore, in order to reach these people with the love of God in a practical manner one should be encouraged to teach them the Word of God, place them in programs throughout the church whereby they can get cleaned up, placed in small groups where they can be supported by others, and teach them to make disciples of others like themselves who resemble the last, the least, the lost and the left out, because one’s class does not necessarily reflect one’s character or one’s ability to serve in the body of Christ.

Statement of Limitations

This author does not proclaim to possess a Ph. D. in psychology or counseling and the findings which are presented here are an overall view and do not pertain to each individual case as individuals may vary as it pertains to how much psychiatric or medical assistance is needed to help overcome a life which constitutes dysfunctional childhoods, substance abuse, and the emotional and physical trauma that comes from the lack of a normative family socialization process. As an example, this dissertation is not an attempt to theorize the condition of schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive personality disorders, or any other disorder that psychologist have deemed pertinent to the addiction problem. Yet, it is the opinion of this writer that doctors and nurses can apply medicine, counseling, and anything else that pertains to

² Roger Wilkes and others, eds. *The Mammoth Book of Gangs and Gangsters*, (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2006), 3.

medical assistance, but only God can actually heal, deliver or set someone free instantaneously or restoratively by His powerful hand for the Scripture says, “But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Is. 53:5).

Theoretical Basis

Historically, God has been known to utilize various types of people and personalities throughout the Holy Writ. One particular case in point which fits this domain includes a woman by the name of Rahab, who the Bible calls a harlot. A harlot is a “prostitute.” Not only was she used to hide the spies sent out by Moses and was instrumental in the ultimate victory of the Israelites, but she is also named in the lineage of the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. This implies that God can and has historically used prostitutes for His ultimate purpose. The Scripture says, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8). Now if God used a prostitute for His ultimate purpose, then can He use pimps, drug dealers, drug users and gang bangers? Of course He can! Yet, is the church of God really reaching out to those who have these types of hang-ups in their lives. Many churches are, but others certainly are not. Hopefully this work will aid both categories of churches to do more through outreach and evangelism toward this lost group of people.

Theologically, it is imperative that the church exercise faith in Jesus in an effort to bring this class of people out of the fire and into the body of Christ. Jude exhorts the Christian when he said, “And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 22-23). In other words, Christians should have compassion on the sinner which is still walking according to the flesh or centered on self, prone to sin, and opposed to everything that is connected to God (Rom. 7:18),

and literally make a conscious and compassionate effort to pull them from the fire of Hell thereby creating an opportunity for them to follow the will and way of Christ. Otherwise, Christians may be held in contempt by the high court of Christ as He says, “For I was an hungred, and ye gave me not meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me not drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not” (Matt. 25:42-43). Many of the aforementioned class of people certainly resembles this description of which Christ portrays in Matthew as being hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and in prison. Jesus instructs us to “Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20). If the church is to respond to this mandate, it must take practical action such as food and clothing banks, prison ministry, and mission. A good way to get started would be to visit the local jail in the area and get the proper forms to begin a prison ministry or just by simply starting a clothing bank right in the local church.

Statement of Methodology

Based upon the history of drug crimes and the prevention thereof, everyone agrees there is a substance abuse problem in the United States and abroad which feeds into the behavior of the groups of people listed within the confines of this thesis. Yet, although everyone agrees there is a problem, some would disagree as to the solution to the problem. Is there a comprehensive strategy or panacea which provides a way out of addiction that provides complete recovery and a resolution to the whole assortment of behaviors such as prostitution, pimping, gang affiliation or other behaviors which are associated with addiction? In the book series *Gangs*, the author writes, “But what happens back in the neighborhood? Who takes the torch? Where do these

teens go to control their addictions, get support and references when applying for their first jobs, learn to read, have hyperactivity or a learning disabilities diagnosed, or find athletic teams to participate in?"³ It is this writer's belief that the local church should be the first place whereby these activities should be introduced and the teenagers would have a chance to grow spiritually, intellectually and socially. This can be accomplished by starting computer classes for them, getting them tutors during the evening, mentors for job placement and church sports leagues to participate in with their peers. In other words, the churches are the ones that should provide its best to assist these young men to do better in life and it has the wisdom, the knowledge, and the help of God to make it happen.

With so many people who are affected by an economic downturn, euphoria seems to be the craving of the day. Therefore, with so many of life's troubles, substance abuse seems to be the only way to get the euphoric high that many so desperately desire. There are many doctors in this country which have been either arrested or even lose their license because of either writing too many prescriptions to known addicts or because the doctors themselves are addicted. Yet, this writer would submit to the psychiatrist, the psychologist, and any other medical professional, that the solution to all of this addiction and criminal lifestyles is to turn to Jesus with the whole heart.

The United States declared war on drugs during the Reagan Administration and this war has succeeded to lock away, for centuries in some cases, what some would believe to be the worst of the criminal element and others believe to be potential leaders in most arenas given the proper opportunity. It is no doubt that many people, but not all people, need to be locked away such as the world's first known Internet serial killer, John Robinson. Speaking of Robinson's

³ Laura K. Egendorf and others, eds. *Gangs: Opposing Viewpoint*, (San Diego: Greenhaven Press Inc., 2001), 125.

evil exploits, Douglas writes, “They also found blood on the baseboard in the bedroom, containing hair and human tissue. Bits of the hair, when examined closely by the forensic team, had forcibly been pulled out. Several small bloodstains were examined and one was found to be an ‘impact stain’ as opposed to a contact stain.”⁴ Now this type of individual needs to be locked away due to such a heinous crime against women, but to lock people away is our governments designed solution to the problem of drug abuse, prostitution and gangs, which in the opinion of this writer, has some flaws which will be pointed out, therefore, there must be a better way. Although this outlook does have its flaws, the positives include the fact that a plethora of people are employed due to the prison systems which include, but are not limited to, guards, clerical workers, chaplains, culinary workers, police task forces, probation, bondsmen, and courtroom personnel, all of which benefit from the demise of other people getting locked up. Yet, the focus of this dissertation is to determine the solution from a Christian perspective and even the Christian perspective can be argued. In other words, should one agree to locking everyone away and throw away the proverbial key, take the position that these type of people are law enforcement’s problem and not the Christian’s problem, or should one implement the love of Jesus and do everything within one’s power to assist these people with their problems and assist in getting them the help they need psychologically, physically and more importantly, converted to Christianity, taught discipleship, and into a community of baptized believes in Christ where they can work out their own salvation in fear and trembling before the Lord.

Does this writer proclaim and promote that just anyone can go into the street among this class of people to proclaim the gospel, although that probably should be the case, realistically, absolutely not. There are some people who have no clue about street culture. It is this writer’s

⁴ John Douglas and Stephen Singular, *Anyone You Want Me to Be: A true Story of Sex and Death on the Internet* (New York: Simon and Schuster Inc., 2003), 201.

belief that the ones who should go out to the street corner are those that have been there before because they have some semblance of how things are in the street. This will accomplish two goals, first it gives those who have been saved from this environment a chance to witness to others in the street and it will give those that are in the street the opportunity to witness how Jesus can change someone's life for the better and give them hope that the same thing can happen to them. Street ministry is what Jesus did and what He instructed disciples to do, but churches should have a special group to attend to this ministry. In other words, street culture will eat some people alive if they do not know how to react while being there. It is the opinion of this writer that the Christian religion should be faith in God through every circumstance, yet one should exercise common sense in action. Thus, it would behoove the church, if it has people who have been saved from the street, to meet with other elders whereby classes can be established on how to win others from the street, what dangers may be lurking, how to react in certain situations and actually set the stage for street ministry.

The main factor to the healing process of any individual is their willingness to admit there is a problem and then to act on that admission. Oftentimes one has to experience an interceding convergence of events which practically kills them prior to anything that even resembles conversion, repentance, positive development, maturity or growth. In other words, the addict, prostitute, the pimp, the gang banger, or dealer has to come to a place in his or her life where they say to themselves, "enough is enough." Enough simply means that the pain is no longer bearable and relief is sought in some other form other than continuing in the sin of which has brought them to this precipice in the first place psychologically, physically, socially, legally, and financially. It is at this point that many find a multitude of irreparable damage to the body, family, and friends. Many recovery therapies utilize the words "higher power" in recovery

efforts, but the word “Jesus” is much more suitable for psychotherapeutic treatment, for dependency on psychoactive substances, and to cease and desist in the activity of sin, completely and absolutely. In other words, it is through and by Jesus that one can fully recover and become free from the chains that bind.

So the real question becomes how does the church go about reaching people with the message of Jesus Christ which has such problems even though there may be danger lurking during the effort. This writer purports that some of the tactics of the past such as expecting that people will show up in church is no longer a viable solution, but the church must take to the streets of America and the world in a concentrated effort to reach the lost. In other words, as an example, the church should try tent revivals or tent church services. This would allow people to attend those services that they otherwise would not for whatever reason. Christians should develop certain times during every week whereby they pray for the street ministry’s safety and success. The church should pray regularly in this regard and then step out on faith in a concentrated effort to reach the lost on the street. It would be helpful to let all the people know that there will be a cookout whereby everyone can eat at no cost and proceed with the cookout somewhere in close proximity to the church such as the parking lot or a vacant lot nearby. This can be accomplished with fliers, social networks and the local newspaper. Everyone enjoys good food and this also aligns with what Jesus said, “For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in” (Matt. 25:35). Thus when the cookout takes place, some of the people contacted during street ministry will show up to eat. It is during this time that evangelistic efforts can take place with the possibility of converts. During this time the church can pass out tracts, fliers, visitor’s packets, and other such paraphernalia which will assist in this evangelistic effort. This whole scenario is also possible

with a back to school bash whereby school supplies are given away in conjunction with the food. The worst case scenario would be that everyone will go away fed and hopefully happy with the idea that maybe they will attend a church service sometime in the future because of the kindness which was extended during the cookout or bash.

One must learn to break the power of past sins, wounds, failures and circumstances in life. God has a tendency to forgive the past, but He does not erase it, thus the sinner is given a new start as a babe drinking milk and is expected to die daily to the parts of life that do not bring honor to God and then follow Jesus. In other words, the Christian must take the man, woman, boy or girl of sin by the hand and be a living example to them as to how to pray and live in a manner that induces an individual inventory trek as it pertains to brokenness, vulnerability, grief, loss, emotional and spiritual maturity, and any other dynamic which will produce a healthier emotionally, physically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually filled life. This type of mentality was exemplified in Columbine martyr Rachel Scott. In describing Scott, the author says, "I think this intimacy with God is the key that unlocks the mystery of who Rachel was and how she could be so loving to everyone she met and knew. It's as if her heart was filled to overflowing with the love of God, and this love flowed out from her and touched others too."⁵ There will be more concerning breaking the power of sin in chapter four.

Review of the Literature

In an effort to unravel all the ramifications surrounding this problem of a sinful lifestyle and the substance abuse which surrounds it, there will be five categories of literature which will be utilized consisting of counseling, psychology, socioeconomics, physical, and of course the spiritual. Each of these categories will assist in the effort of counseling with and understanding

⁵ Beth Nimmo, Darrell Scott and Steve Rabey, *Rachel's Tears: The Spiritual Journey of Columbine Martyr Rachel Scott* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2000), 77.

how to deal with those individuals or couples who are involved in abusive and addictive lifestyle. Thus a portion of the literature for this project will consist of the following:

Gary Collins: *Counseling for Substance Abuse and Addiction: Resources for Christian Counseling*

This book is one of several in the Resource for Christian Counseling series which deal with a certain abuse type and this particular one is on substance abuse and addiction. It deals with the initial stages of the abuse because everyone starts on equal ground, not addicted, but the seven factors which lead to abuse include a disorderly family, lack of self-esteem, peer pressure, experimentation, cultural influence, parental drug abuse, and lack of moral and spiritual values. Not everyone likes a drug once it has been tried, but if the brain likes the drug, this is what leads to dependence or a compulsive desire to continually use the drug. This book groups drugs into the categories of depressants, stimulants, psychedelics or hallucinogens, inhalants and nicotine, none of which discriminate as it pertains to addiction. Therefore, the steps needed to really help the addict consist of open acceptance, assigning responsibility, allowing the consequences, and intervention by confrontation. Finally, this book deals with the family, recovery and treatment aspects of abuse.

Joyce J. Penner and Clifford L. Penner: *Counseling for Sexual Disorders*

Although a large part of this book deals with sexual disorders within the marital context, it is also valuable to the Christian who speaks with anyone, married or not, who is dealing with sexual issues such as the prostitute or pimp. The book teaches one how to understand those issues surrounding sexual addictions, lack of desire and dissatisfaction which may be caused by a variety of past or present circumstances of life. Therefore the book will assist one when

counseling with those that have been abused sexually or just dealing with context of sexual issues.

Orlando A. Battista: *The Power to Influence People*

Oftentimes the target group of this dissertation has been influenced by people who have brought them to a place of discontentment and discouragement. Therefore, this book is a good one to assist with the development of how to positively influence them toward a better lifestyle. It teaches several principles which include, but are not limited to, how to build up self confidence, solve problems, bolster support, control emotions, control attitudes, how to avoid hurting the feelings of others, and how to generally deal with people in a manner that will influence them in a godly direction.

Ronald, L. Koteskey: *Psychology from a Christian Perspective*

This book analyses the aspects of psychosexual development, cognitive development, psychosocial development, moral development, social development, developmental psychology, marriage, parenthood, death, extrasensory perception and behavioral patterns, just to name a few, and how all of this is analogous to the Christian perspective. If one is to counsel with people who have been in a sinful lifestyle and get them back on a trek toward Jesus, this material is tremendously helpful in accomplishing this task because it helps one to understand the possible psychological demons of which others may be encountering.

Schneider Institute for health Policy, Brandeis University: *Substance Abuse*

This book is filled with a comprehensive overview of the abuse phenomenon and certain criteria associated with that which include, but is not limited to the treatments, the historical trends, the cost association, the health risks, the demographic differences, the number of deaths, and how society is affected in the workplace, family, and by crime. This book also provides a

picturesque view of this criterion with charts and graphs which outline all of the aforementioned information.

Richard K. Ries, David A Fiellin, Shannon C. Miller, and Richard Saitz: *Principles of Addiction Medicine*

This book is a very extensive and comprehensive view of scientific principles of clinical addiction medicine which include 106 chapters. Much of what this book covers includes, but is not limited to, a plethora of addiction terminology, ethical issues, legal issues, liability issues, psychological issues, substance induced mental disorders, cardiovascular consequences of drug use, therapies, motivation to change, the pharmacology of various drugs, and the diagnosis, assessment and intervention of each. This book is a literal gold mine concerning an overall view of the addictions, treatments and psychological issues which plague the United States. It is also a treasure as it provides a long list of related references which can be utilized by most professionals and physicians which are interested in this subject, as well as the Christian community in an effort to dissolve the addictions associated with the behaviors which cause sin and ultimately, spiritual death as the Bible says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

Robert W. Kellemen: *Soul Physicians. A Theology of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction*

This book equips those who are laden with the task of pastoral care to infuse biblical counseling with Christian theology thereby changing lives for the better with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some of the many topics which are examined include, but is not limited to knowing the creator of the soul, diagnosing the fallen condition of the soul, prescribing God’s cure for the soul, the final healing of the soul and knowing the creator of the soul. This book is filled with practical stories which spread light into real life situational darkness. It unveils soul care in the

context of spiritual formation and discipline. It can be utilized as a textbook, study guide or a comprehensive and practical work text to reach those who are lost or on the verge of setback.

Gerald G. May: *Addiction and Grace*

This book, written by a Dr. May, is personal in essence as it relates the experiences and theological assumptions which were formed by an infused bondage of addiction, chemically addicted people, the exploration of spirituality and the human brain, and the power of grace to release freedom. It basically looks at the qualities of addiction, the psychological, neurological, and theological natures of addiction and the power of God's grace in overcoming addiction.

David G. Benner: *Psychology and Religion*

This book, which has several contributing authors, pits the tensions and animosities of psychology and Christianity in a way that shows how both can be utilized for the common good. It is a thorough and comprehensive overview of the Psychology of Religion and religious experiences, Psychology from a Christian Perspective and a backdrop of faith, topics of particular interest to Christianity such as demonic influence and psychotherapy, divine guidance and the psychological consequences of sin, just to name a few.

Albert C. Outler: *Psychotherapy and the Christian Message*

This book seeks to find objective ways in which the psychotherapist and Christian can coexist by placing their respective dogmas aside and place them side by side for review. It examines most of the major developments in psychotherapy in light of how they affect the work of the Christian counselor. The author utilizes men such as Freud, Sullivan, Horney and Fromm as a school of cultural analysts in order to uncover various distinctions, put systems in their proper perspective, and define the problems of alliance or conflict between psychotherapeutic thought and the Christian message.

Michelle Alexander: *The New Jim Crow. Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

This book explains, in great detail, the ramifications which surround the United States' War on Drugs and the devastating social consequences which are created therewith. Mrs. Michelle Alexander Esq. compares these consequences to that of the 19th and 20th century Jim Crow south. She concentrates upon the mass incarceration of African American men, but does not limit incarceration to this category alone, but also points out compatibilities of those who are poor and vulnerable of all colors which seem to be of low priority to the socially adept. Her book is filled with vital statistics and historical data which substantiates her claims and provides an insight into a world of evangelism which may have been overlooked by evangelical Christians.

Will McRaney Jr.: *The Art of Personal Evangelism. Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture*

McRaney expresses how to expand the Kingdom of God on the earth in a manner which communicates the gospel in light of culture. This book will be utilized to show how his work is very relevant concerning communicating the gospel in a manner which can be understood by people who are involved with "street culture" and how those who communicate the gospel message should also be ones of which understand this same culture.

Alvin I. Reid: *Radically Un-churched. Who they are & How to Reach Them*

Many of today's society deem the church as irrelevant and outmoded, thus this book will be utilized to share how Christians should communicate the gospel to those outside of the church. This book is a comprehensive analysis of understanding an indifferent culture & how to develop strategies that will assist with the evangelistic efforts of reaching the lost, least and left out.

Eric Metaxas: *Bonhoeffer. Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy.* "A Righteous Gentile VS. The Third Reich

This book epitomizes incredible moral courage in the face of dangers associated with the evangelistic efforts of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's attempts to smuggle Jews from Hitler's Nazism into a neutral Switzerland. This biography gives insight into the dangers and suffering associated with evangelism, the faith it takes to stand up in the face of opposition, the spirit of hatred that still looms toward Christians and taking action because it is the right and godly thing to do.

Jill Murray: *But I Love Him.* "Protecting Your Teen Daughter from Controlling, Abusive Dating Relationship

This book deals directly with the many high school girls which succumb to sexual, verbal and physical abuse by their so-called boyfriends, only to make the statement "but I love him." This book provides great information on the reasoning, contributing factors, detection, and prevention of abuse. Thus, this writer will attempt to show how this type of behavior can lead into even greater problematic lifestyles of prostitution and how this behavior can be prevented permanently.

William J. Bennett: *The Broken Hearth*

This book provides a plethora of evidence that substantiates the deterioration of the traditional American family through divorce, out of wedlock births, and cohabitation which causes children to be exposed to neglect and even abandonment. This work is valuable to show that biblical values concerning marriage have altered for the worse and fuels a fire of generational evil as it pertains to a holy lifestyle.

Lastly, the Scriptures which will be utilized here are divided into four sections. First are those associated with Jesus' instructions to his disciples to go into the world and seek to save the

lost. He is the only one who can wash away sin. Second, are those Scriptures associated with the dangers which may be encountered and how to deal with them. Third, are passages concerning the people who should be invited to the feast or the church will be investigated. Forth and lastly are passages presenting, the consequences associated with either being disobedient or obedient, whichever the case may be, to the commands of Jesus. Many of these Scriptures include, but are not limited to the following:

Section One:

1. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age (Matt. 28:19-20).
2. And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:15-16).
3. Then He said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem (Luke 24:46-47).
4. So Jesus said to them again, Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you (John 20:21).
5. 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).

These first five Scriptures have to do with outreach through what theologians have deemed the Great Commission. This Christian Great Commission is instruction to the disciples of the resurrected Jesus to spread the gospel to all nations of the world emphasizing ministry, missionary work, evangelism and baptism through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is the mature Christian's job as disciples to invite people or to compel them to come to Christ. The word "compel" means that zeal and moral urgency should be utilized to induce sinners to come to Christ as they presently stand. There are so many that are under the impression that they must first clean up their own act prior to coming into the Christian fold, but if one could clean up his own act, there would be no need for God.

Section Two:

6. For whosoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it (Mark 8:35).
7. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5).
8. And He said to them, when I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything? So they said, "Nothing." Then He said to them, but now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. For I say to you that this which is written must still be accomplished in me: And He was numbered with the transgressors. For the things concerning me have an end (Luke 22:35-37).

9. 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).

These next four Scriptures deal with the potential dangers associated with being a disciple of Christ during outreach. Although those who reside within the confines of the United States rarely lose lives trying to promote the gospel, there have been accounts of missionaries in other countries which have been incarcerated and have even lost their lives promoting the gospel of Christ. Thus the Scripture states that the fight is not with humans, but is one of a spiritual nature. Satan acts through people and one must not forget this when dealing with these potential dangers. Some people live in a country setting or what some would deem a rural setting and carrying weaponry is a normal procedure, but normally a sheep or a dove does not carry a weapon for protection. This writer is not promoting that one should not protect oneself and his loved ones, but whether Christians should carry weapons while witnessing for Jesus, as some would argue that number eight above indicates, is a heated debate in this writer’s opinion, but number nine indicates that one should be harmless.

Section Three:

10. So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind (Luke 14:21).
11. When Jesus heard that, He said to them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.
12. Then the master said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled (Luke 14:23).

13. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding. So the servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests (Matt. 22:9-10).

Here Jesus utilizes earthly stories or parables which have heavenly implications concerning the people who refuse to come for a variety of reasons and others who will come in their stead. Jesus makes it abundantly clear that sinners are to be invited to come unto Him, no matter their subsequent social class or orientation. Therefore, the church should not discriminate as it pertains to inviting people to come to Christ.

Section Four

14. I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper (Luke 14:24).

15. Then the king said to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen (Matt. 22:13-14).

16. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25:34).

17. Then He will also say to those on the left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

18. Then He will answer them, saying, Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life (Matt. 25:45-46).

The consequences associated with being disobedient to these commands of Christ are simple, eternal damnation for disobedience and conversely, obedience conveys eternal life.

Therefore it is each individual's choice as to whether to accept Christ and live in accordance with His word and ultimately eternal life.

Chapter One

The Correlation between Drugs and other Criminal Activities

Addiction and Abuse

In order to adequately show the correlation between drugs and other criminal activities, it is imperative to define ‘drugs’ and thus alleviate some preconceived notions about them and show that not all drugs are necessarily bad for an individual. According to Van Cleave, “Drugs are simply chemicals that can change something in the body’s chemistry or internal makeup. We take “drugs” every day and never realize it. Without them we would eventually suffer severe or even fatal diseases. In this case these “drugs” are both necessary and beneficial.”¹ Therefore, although when one normally thinks of drugs it is usually something negative that is linked to the thought, but as Van Cleave points out, negativity is not always the case concerning drugs. It is the abuse of drugs that brings about the negativity.

With that said, in the context of what will be investigated here, it is normally something bad for one’s health and overall prosperity that will be overturned. In this context, when someone is using drugs it is called substance abuse. Substance abuse involves a person using mood-altering drugs to alter the way one feels. The drug may be inhaled and such is the case of crack cocaine. It may be sniffed as many pills are crushed for this type of use. It may be swallowed as many pills are taken this way, and many drugs are injected straight into the bloodstream by syringe. No matter the mode of taking drugs, all of them alter the brain and are mood altering, which is why they are called psycho active drugs by the medical profession. With this in mind, abusers are really not out of their minds altogether, although their mood has been altered in some fashion and sometimes drastically. Thus Walter Byrd states, “Substance abusers

¹ Gary R. Collins and others, eds. *Substance Abuse and Addiction: Resources for Christian Counseling*, (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 36.

know, on a logical, thought level that they are hurting themselves and others, but the euphoria (or drug high) is learned within the feeling center of the brain, not in the logical, thinking center.”²

Thus, there is no control of the abusive situation because of the psychological and physiological craving for the substance of abuse. Therefore, the abuser continues to use drugs in spite of who gets hurt and any other bad circumstance which, under normal circumstances would have been circumvented, yet because of that feeling from the center of the brain, control has been literally deleted.

When a person abuses drugs and it becomes an addiction, there are other dangerous ramifications which surround the person involved. As aforementioned, all drugs are not necessarily bad for an individual because doctors can prescribe medications that can do a body good. What happens is that many prescription medications today are being abused as much as any illegal drug which can be found upon the street. As a matter of fact, many doctors and other such professionals are being arrested because of their involvement in such criminal activities.

One case involved a local doctor in the state of West Virginia:

A federal judge sentenced a Mingo County doctor to six months in prison Tuesday for illegally providing prescription medication to patients she never examined. Diane E. Shafer, 60, also will pay a \$5,000 fine, U.S. District Judge John C. Copenhaver ruled. In May, Shafer pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to conspiracy to misuse her Drug Enforcement Administration registration number. The plea came as a result of a federal probe that examined Shafer's doling out of more than 118,000 prescriptions since 2003.³

According to the Schneider Institute for Health Policy, “High school students who use illicit drugs are more likely to experience difficulties in school, in their personal relationships

² Ibid., 65.

³ Rusty Marks. “Mingo doctor gets 6 months for pill scheme.” The Charleston Gazette, September 18, 2012, New Section, !A edition.

and in their mental and physical health.”⁴ With this in mind, the church is the place where Christians should begin to teach these youth about the ramifications which surround substance abuse, and pray with them in a concentrated effort to deter at least a portion of them from making this mistake. Otherwise, things can get even more serious if youth participate in using drugs in combination with alcohol. The Schneider Institute for Health Policy also states,

Heroin or cocaine is involved in 70 percent of drug deaths. Reported deaths directly related to drugs grossly underestimate the mortality toll from illicit drugs. This is because they exclude deaths from associated diseases, such as AIDS among injecting drug users, hepatitis and tuberculosis, and from other indirect causes of death, such as homicides, falls and motor vehicle crashes.⁵

Therefore, it becomes easy to conclude that many youth, or anyone for that matter, can fall victim to relationship problems, physical problems, wanton endangerment or possibly homicide, due to the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Richard Ries states,

Drugs, both legal (e.g. alcohol, nicotine) and illegal (i.e., cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin, marijuana) are misused for various reasons, including for pleasurable effects, altering mental state, improving performance and, in certain instances, self-medicating a mental disorder. Repeated drug use can result in addiction, which is manifested in an intense desire for the drug with an impaired ability to control the urges to take that drug, even at the expense of serious adverse consequences.⁶

From a spiritual perspective, it can be deduced that most people are really looking for something in drugs and alcohol of which only God has the cure. In other words, the real truth is the old adage that states, “Nobody can do me like Jesus.” Dr. Gerald May puts it like this, “It is addiction that keeps our love for God and neighbor incomplete. It is addiction that creates other gods for us. Because of our addictions, we will always be storing up treasures somewhere other

⁴ Schneider Institute for Health Policy, Brandeis University, *Substance Abuse* (Princeton: The Stein Group, 2001), 30.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁶ Richard K. Ries and others, eds. *Principles of Addiction Medicine: American Society of Addiction Medicine* (Baltimore: Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, 2009), 3.

than heaven, and these treasures will kidnap our hearts and souls and strength.”⁷ In other words, the grace of God knows no boundaries as it pertains to His greatest creation, man. God is a jealous God, but He also desires that all men come to Him in need of deliverance and transformation. Anyone can find equanimity in God “if” they place their trust in Him. This writer has personally witnessed it in so many people down through the years: a person is one minute an alcoholic and the next sober as a judge, one minute a drug addict and the next minute a Christian, and one minute walking with Satan, but the next, devoted to Jesus. Yet, oftentimes one does not find God because of wanting to keep a certain semblance of personal authority without having to surrender to God’s will and God’s way. Dr. May states,

Even when we know that our hunger is for God alone, we will still be looking for loopholes—ways of having our cake and eating it too, way of maintaining our attachments to things and people while simultaneously trying to deepen our intimacy with God. We seek compromise not because we are evil or conniving, but because of the way we are made; we naturally look for the least painful ways of living.⁸

Thus, it would be beneficial to the church to take these facts and statistics and teach them during predetermined classes and timeframes. After teaching them to those who will attend, they should pray that these situations would be turned around by God Himself and that God will use the church to be a conduit of His love toward those who may be struggling with these issues. The church can utilize plays and scripts that would bring to fruition more vividly the negative ramifications that surround these issues and how God can get the glory from them. It has been this writer’s experience that youth really enjoy this type of interaction and teaching.

Contributing Factors

The criminal activities which are stated here, such as gang affiliation, pimping and prostitution, have much to do with societal upbringing and choices. Oftentimes young men and

⁷ Gerald G. May, *Addiction and Grace* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers Inc. 1988), 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

women are lured by acquaintances who are already involved in these activities, but normally there is a tendency to try drugs which will cause one to “graduate”, into other forms of criminal activity, such as sexual or physical abuse, violence, the abuse of alcohol and robbery. Many who are involved with the sale and transfer of drugs never touch the stuff themselves, but either has a need to support the family by doing so, has the need to appear wealthy to their peers, or are coerced by gang affiliates or peer pressure. According to Ries, “Environmental factors that have been consistently associated with the propensity to self administer drugs include low socioeconomic class, poor parental support, and drug availability. Stress might be a common feature in a wide variety of environmental factors that increase the risk for drug abuse.”⁹ In other words, children who are raised in neighborhoods which are poor and are already infested with drug activity are more likely to partake of this evil due to peer pressure and availability. Once a person is linked into this seemingly unending caldron of deceit and destitution, it is very difficult to become freed from these chains that bind. Even the medical community turns its back on those with no insurance, and there are many instances when insurance will not assist with the treatment of addictions. Ries states, “The participation of the medical community in many countries, including the United States, is further curtailed by the lack of reimbursement by most private medical insurance policies for the evaluation or treatment of drug abuse and addiction. This lack of reimbursement limits the treatment infrastructure and the choices that the addicted person has with respect to their treatment.”¹⁰ Therefore, the obstacles for this societal group seem extremely difficult to overcome once they are caught in this proverbial trap, but the actual testimony of someone who once resembled all of this could be heard to say, “But God.” If

⁹ Richard K. Ries and others, eds. *Principles of Addiction Medicine: American Society of Addiction Medicine*, (Baltimore: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2009), 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

perhaps one has never heard this testimony it goes something like this: “There was a time in life that the Devil had me chained and bound, ‘but God’ came to my rescue, loosed my shackles and set me free.” If perhaps one is dealing with some of the issues which have been described, he should remember that, this testimony that millions of people share is possible for anyone.

With this information in hand, it would behoove the Church to investigate their local communities to find professional counselors which would possibly be willing to donate some of their time to the church in an effort to get professional assistance in this area. Also, those who already have graduate education in the church may be able to further their education in Christian Counseling, which would certainly be an asset in this area.

Prostitution

Prostitution has been around for a long time. Teela Sanders says, “In 350 AD, Christians succeeded in prohibiting temple prostitution in Rome and, as time went on, the systematic denigration of sexuality, particularly female sexuality, engendered increasingly intolerant attitudes towards prostitutes.”¹¹ In fact, as aforementioned, the biblical character Rahab is noted as a harlot, but because of a conscious decision to hide the spies of Moses and follow the way of the Israelite’s God, she is listed in the historical lineage of Jesus Christ. It is this writer’s contention that the Lord is no respecter of person and can also utilize others who come from a similar background.

Many young ladies have become prostitutes because they have run away from home for a variety of reasons which include, but are not limited to, physical abuse, parental marital problems, rebellion, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse. Bill Murray states, “In America today, every nine seconds a teenage girl is battered by someone with whom she is in a

¹¹ Teela Sanders, Maggie O’Neill, and Jane Pitcher. *Prostitution: Sex Work, Policy and Politics* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc., 2009), 2.

relationship. What is most alarming is that the signs of potential abuse are also behaviors that young women find most flattering.”¹² This writer is of the opinion that once a young lady has left home, she begins to search for the love which was not available in her previous relationships and begins to build a family on the street, only to find the same type of abuse to which she was accustomed. Thus, psychologically she begins to think that this lifestyle is inevitable and unavoidable which causes her to endure this type of suffering due to a feeling of helplessness. Dr. Martin says, “The term learned helplessness has been used to explain why women find it difficult to escape a battering relationship. Early studies with laboratory animals demonstrated that if they were repeatedly and randomly shocked, they became unable to escape even when a method of escape was available and easily understood.”¹³

If these women never report their injuries or have anyone to help them with their pain, the probability that there have been serious injuries and even deaths which have gone unreported is very high. As a matter of fact Dr. Martin continues,

Hospital emergency room personnel report that abused individuals only show up for treatment when there is blood. The sight of blood seems to trigger a realization there is personal danger involved. Even if there are internal injuries or broken bones, many abused wives will not go to the hospital. They have lost touch with their physical boundaries, including the awareness of pain. For most victims abuse has become familiar and common.¹⁴

Therefore, if women, whether married or not, are in such a predicament, Christians should be an avenue whereby not only fasting and praying is done for the prostitute, but also providing a way of escape for them. The Bible says, “Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that

¹² Jill Murray, *But I Love Him: Protecting Your Teen Daughter from Controlling, Abusive Dating Relationships* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 2000), 7.

¹³ Grant L. Martin, *Counseling for Family Violence and Abuse* (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1987), 85.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

you break every yoke.” (Is. 58:6). In other words Christians have a moral and spiritual responsibility to assist others who find themselves in oppressive situations. Michelle Alexander states,

Moreover, we all have duties and responsibilities to each other, not the least of which is to do no harm. We ought never excuse violence or tolerate behavior that jeopardizes the safety and security of others. Just as all people—no matter who they are or what they have done—ought to be regarded as having basic human rights to work, housing, education, and food, residents of all communities have a basic human right to safety and security.¹⁵

There are different types of sexual services which do not always include sexual intercourse. Sanders states, “Sex services that are exchanged for money, gifts or other remuneration are divided in the literature between ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ sex work. Direct sexual services refer to more specifically to types of commercial sex where physical contact of a sexual nature is exchanged for money.”¹⁶ There are men who do not desire a woman for the actual sexual intercourse (and vice versa because men can be prostitutes as well), but engage purely for the excitement of having a nude person in front of them. Therefore, there are people who supply this need for a fee which is a sexual service. Sanders continues, “The industry of erotic dancing, also known as lap dancing and stripping, is one part of the indirect sexual services industry. This form of indirect sex work involves a personalized striptease dance where the dancer moves erotically, semi-naked or nude, to music for a fee.”¹⁷ Yet, no matter the mode of sexual favors, all of the women and men are subject to some type of violence, verbal and physical abuse. Many of these women, as this is the main focus for abuse and violence, watch out for one another and are a means of safety and solitude, that is as much as is humanly possible due to the

¹⁵ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 216.

¹⁶ Teela Sanders, Maggie O’Neill, and Jane Pitcher, *Prostitution: Sex Work, Policy and Politics* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc., 2009), 18.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

environmental circumstances of street life. As an example, Sanders states, “These include soliciting near to other sex workers, keeping an eye out for one another, for example, taking down registration numbers of cars used, watching from the end of an alley, working with partners nearby or, in some cases, carrying a weapon”¹⁸ But really, is this enough to deter or alleviate the circumstances of which many of these women find themselves? Probably not!

Is there a possible way that once a person has been involved in this cesspool of activity for any tenure to be exonerated from such a lifestyle of abuse and violence? Oftentimes many of them look to drugs and alcohol to at least ease the pain and suffering associated with this lifestyle. Kellemen says, “The problem is, God made us longing, thirsting, hungering, and desiring beings. So we follow a trillion different strategies for deadening our desires and shutting out the wail of our soul. We live as if this world is all there is. We refuse to hope for something more. We make it our goal to satisfy the flesh in order to quench the ache in our soul.”¹⁹ Thus, the Christian and the church should make themselves available to anyone who thinks that they have no other way out of a verbal and physically abusive situation in their lives. Thus, available means that the church could possibly purchase a building strictly for the purpose of being a shelter for battered women which is a part of servitude. If not, let them know that someone is available for them to speak with in an effort to steer them in the direction of refuge. In other words, have information such as fliers of battered women shelters available to them as readily as possible and work with them in an effort to get them placement. Time may be of the essence and could mean life or death in many situations. Reid states,

¹⁸ Ibid., 44.

¹⁹ Robert W. Kellemen, *Soul Physicians: A Theology of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction* (Taneytown: RPM Books, 2005), 297.

Servant evangelism gives the believer an opportunity to demonstrate compassion for others. Too, simply being involved in servant evangelism gets believers out of the church building and into the real world, which alone can breed compassion for people who do not know Jesus. I used the old saying before, and it's still true: People don't care what you know until they know how much you care about them.²⁰

In other words, the Christian should be involved in a concentrated effort to induce an inner transformation beyond guilt that leads to faith in Jesus Christ and high caliber living.

The Christian's ultimate example is Jesus Christ, and Scripture teaches that He was so compassionate in providing people with the spiritual, emotional, social and physical healing which was needed, that He was able to accumulate an extensive following. Maybe one of the reasons that so many churches are experiencing plateau or decline is that they are not reaching out to the lost, the least, the last and the left out. Jesus dealt with the sin that afflicted the souls of men, women, boys and girls in a manner which gave Him credibility with the people, no matter their social status. Thus, if Christians are to win others to Christ, they should show the genuine concern which Jesus had for His disciples. Battista says, "Appeal to the loftier sentiments of others. Put consideration of others above consideration of yourself, especially when you do not have to. Develop the habit of forbearance; it is far more persuasive than any form of direct logic. Make it easy for the other person to say "yes" rather than "no" when he must make the decision for or against you."²¹ Therefore, if the Church and Christians show the love of Christ to others, there is the possibility that a drastic dent for Christ can be placed in the profession of prostitution. Lastly, the pimp would be out of business if there were no prostitutes, thus if the church captures all prostitutes for Christ, the pimp would surely follow.

²⁰ Alvin K Reid, *Radically Unchurched: Who They are & How to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishers, 2002), 160.

²¹ Orlando A. Battista, *The Power to Influence People* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Incorporated, 1959), 8.

Lastly, there is a great market which has been developed for prostitution because of the men which crave this activity, a lot of which is due to the pornographic websites which men visit on a daily basis. This type of activity only fuels the fire of prostitution whereby these men can carry out the fantasies created by the websites of which they visit. In the *Opposing Viewpoint Series*, Mark Laaser states, “In a 2000 issue of the journal *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity* several authors contend that accessing sexually oriented web sites is not confined to the home but is a primary problem at work. One study by a leading Fortune 500 company found that 62% of male computer time was spent in cyber-sex sites.”²² With that in mind, perhaps the Church can fight fire with fire. In other words, the church can give these men an alternative on the Internet and become involved with evangelism through the Internet. Many churches do not have an Internet website, but now is the opportunity to become involved in the fight against Internet evil and produce other local information for the church such as various events, online giving, ministries, history and the list is endless. There are a number of online resources with which one can start a website for free or practically free. These ways include, but are not limited to godaddy.com, wordpress.com and Vista Print.

Gangs

Gangs are prevalent throughout the United States, but especially in metropolitan areas. Again, many youth get involved in gang activity because of socioeconomic background. Because many parents are abusing drugs themselves, the young male has a need for belonging to a family, other than their own biological family, that seemingly cares for their wellbeing. As Lloyd so adequately points out,

Actually, for many years research has pointed out that the gang merely speaks to most adolescent needs; that is, the need for affiliation, belonging, and for status or at least

²² Helen Cothran, *Prostitution: Opposing Viewpoints Series* (San Diego: Greenhaven Press Inc., 2002), 33.

estimation. Gangs provide the necessary audience for deed of bravado and for positioning and strutting. The gang fulfills a number of not-so bizarre needs after all; it provides a sense of family and of group membership by furnishing friends and camaraderie to unloved and often unwanted youngsters.²³

Testosterone plays a major role in the decision making process of a young male and oftentimes that process is defective if young men are left to their own devices. This is why so many are caught up in gang activity and the violence and drugs which ensue.

Another major factor in the young men's decision making process is defined by the music to which they listen, most of which is Hip Hop. Although this writer is not a big proponent of the Hip Hop industry or rap music, which is a subgenre of Hip Hop, not all of it carries a negative message in the lyrics. Yet, a percentage of this music, such as "gangsta rap" as the young people call it, carries with it a very negative connotation of urban crime and an extremely violent lifestyle. The Gangs series makes a very enlightening point,

Gangster rap often glamorizes the gang lifestyle, Rick Landre, Mike Miller, and Dee Porter claim in the following viewpoint. They cite the experiences of famous rappers whose brief lives and popular careers were marked by arrests and controversy as proof that the gangster image can influence gang violence. However, the authors note, this influence is not limited to gangster rap; white racist bands can have a similar impact.²⁴

From this it can be ascertained that the music industry can have a major impact upon the decision making process of any cultural group as it pertains to gang related activity. This music, no matter the lyrics, reaches not only the inner city, but is purchased in the smallest rural neighborhood and downloaded to iPods and other electronic devices. Thus, the message of gang related activity could possibly be brewing right in one's own peaceful neighborhood without any hint of warning until it is too late.

²³ J.D. Lloyd and others, eds. *Gangs: Opposing Viewpoints Series*, (San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2002), 97.

²⁴ Laura K.Egendorf and others, eds. *Gangs: Opposing Viewpoints Series*, (San Diego: Greenhaven Press Inc., 2001), 36.

This is why the Christian should become proactive rather than reactive pertaining to this activity as youth are being victimized right before society's eyes. The lyrics of some rap music has been known to bolster violence, racism, promiscuity, rape, shootings, vandalism, drug dealing, materialism and substance abuse, just to name a few. Soliz reports, "For example, 70% of gang youths reported being the victim of general violence (assault, aggravated assault, and/or robbery), compared to 46% of non-gang youths. Although most of the general violent victimization, (i.e., aggravated assault and/or robbery) were even more pronounced."²⁵ Therefore, gang activity can get even more pronounced with different types of criminal activity or in other words, diversified. Soliz continues, "Public Enemy is now involved in identity theft. Booth said the gang has gone from swiping personal information from mailboxes and trash to stealing entire credit profiles with the help of girlfriends and wives who take jobs at banks, mortgage companies and even state motor vehicle departments"²⁶

The more pronounced and organized gang activity becomes, the more corrupt the whole scenario can become. In other words, oftentimes there are prosecutors, police officers, judges and a whole array of public officials which corrupt themselves by the money which gangsters can offer for various input. The gang series continues,

In an October 22, 2008 report, Robert Leventhal, the director of anti-corruption programs at the State department's bureau of International and Law Enforcement Affairs, explained, "The huge amount of money generated by the global drug trade allows drug lords to corrupt police, customs and other public officials and establish structures and networks that can be used to facilitate other criminal or terrorist activities."²⁷

²⁵ Adela Soliz and others, eds. *Gangs: Opposing Viewpoints Series*, (Farmington Hills: Greenhaven Press Inc., 2009), 69.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 161.

The contention here is that the Christian and church must get involved in the lives of young people before they are hardened to the point of practically no return. Why 'practically'? Because there is nothing too hard for God, but this writer is convinced that it would not be as painstaking if the intervention was sooner rather than later. Soliz observes,

After a period of participating in a variety of dehumanized acts to achieve and solidify their rep in the gang, they tend to become unfeeling. They become insensitive to the pain of the violence they inflict on their victim. They develop a limited ability to identify or empathize with their victim or have any sense of remorse. Through this gang process of desensitizing their behavior, they become capable of committing spontaneous acts of senseless violence without feeling concern or guilt.²⁸

This type of hardening of the heart concerning violence and even murder is such that someone needs to step up to the proverbial plate and introduce these youth to Christ before it is too late because many of them are dying every day throughout this country. If each church could reach one, Jesus says, "Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10).

²⁸ Ibid., 115.

Chapter Two

Street Culture

Street culture has to do with the various aspects of street life such as the conditions, happenings, and involvement of those who participate in street life. Therefore, street culture can involve various categories which include, but are certainly not limited to language, gangs, graffiti, prostitution, homelessness, fashion, dance, food, drugs, money, cars, games, and the competition which ensues therewith. Webster's definition of culture is, "The customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group."¹ With that definition in mind in conjunction with this writer's explanation of the various aspects of street culture, the goal here will be to define the limitations, dangers and benefits of ministering on the street to a people of a particular background, such as the last, least, lost and left out, in light of this cultural backdrop.

Also there are other people who involve themselves in street culture because of difficult life scenarios such as divorce, suicide, and abortion. Thus the challenge of the church is seeking a way to assist these people of various temperaments, traditions, and backgrounds in a method of Christian living in a contemporary world. The church must make a conscious decision as to how it will stand in the effort to contribute cohesively to the overall discussion on morality and whether to hold to tradition, or to revive its doctrines and practices, thereby allowing it to remain relevant to the surrounding culture to which it will ultimately witness. In order for the church to embark upon such a challenge, instead of pacifying the issues that have caused factions and polarization within its confines, it should reintroduce the terms of special insights and the desirable qualities that will produce general happiness as it applies to the community, with

¹ Merriam-Webster, *Webster's New Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Popular Publishing Company, LLC. 2001), 127.

practical love toward the sinner. The seriousness of life's issues which the sinners and even Christians alike are facing in today's society calls for a no-nonsense way of reclaiming the Bible as a coherent and challenging source of help to resolve some of the often hostile divisions within the world, as well as in the church. In other words, Christians must seek the answers necessary for solution from God's word in a more profound manner and act accordingly.

The Limitations

Concerning culture McRaney said,

Credibility is a major factor in developing receptivity to the gospel. How we interact in various settings either aids or detracts from our credibility. When operating in cross-cultural settings, developing an understanding of and sensitivity to the significant cultural differences is a key to establishing credibility for the message. It is difficult if not impossible for the lost person to separate the message from the messenger and the message of evangelism.²

With that in mind, the way one presents himself to anyone involved in street culture should not present a facade because most people who are sinners can discern the authenticity of a Christian. In other words, most that are on the street can tell if one knows anything about the street and if God has really changed a person, or if such person is just trying to present himself as someone who fits that bill. This is important because most of the people to whom this writer has witnessed in the street seem to listen more intently to someone who can identify with their particular environment. Therefore, those who are familiar with the street and who come from the street have more respect for others who have come from a similar background and carry with them a powerful testimony of how they have been changed by the power of God, rather than someone who is just trying to win souls. Therefore, those who attempt to do street ministry must help sinners find the means that would guide them toward the right behavior, in terms of general

² Will McRaney Jr., *The Art of Personal Evangelism: Sharing Jesus in a Changing Culture* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2003), 160.

happiness and calculate the consequences of one's actions whereby they can embark upon a way to incorporate the love of God into a more helpful way of life which reflects the nature of God in their lives and decision making. In other words, witnesses must search for ways that those who are found partaking with street life can achieve a more flourishing life with virtues such as integrity, gratitude, generosity, honesty, faithfulness, and patience as prescribed by the Pauline letters. This, in the opinion of this writer, will provide a better perspective of how the sinner can develop a holistic and vertical relationship with God, as well as an honorable and horizontal relationship with other people, and with the Bible as the guiding principle of love, freedom, and justice of a worldwide community of people living in a faith-based relationship with God.

Although this suggestion pertains to who should do street ministry, it is not a directive by any means because if one has the power of prayer and the presence of God with him, souls can be won even if the witness has no idea about street life. God is sovereign and certainly has the last word in everything. Therefore, if one feels led of God to do street ministry, he should by all means do it, and be sure by faith that the results will be dynamic.

The Dangers

Oftentimes, many who are on the street are taking part with something which is illegal, yet some are not. This means that one should be well aware that an outsider is sometimes recognized as a threat. If those on the street do not recognize a person, it is often thought that the person could possibly be "the man," "5-0," the "Po-Po," all of which are street linguistics for what is more commonly known as a police officer. Yet, not all police officers are completely legal as it pertains to drugs and money. In today's society, the drug problem has become so prevalent that unfortunately, even employees are stealing from evidence lockers. Such is the case in Beckley, West Virginia as the local newspaper explains: "Raleigh County Prosecuting

Attorney Kristen Keller has confirmed that any drug-related cases involving evidence housed in the property room at the Beckley Police Department in the past 15 months will be dismissed. Keller said police notified her that in some drug cases, there are narcotics missing from evidence.”³ Also, even though one may be identified as a Christian trying to win others to Christ, there will be opposition to this as well, because it is well noted that the enemy, Satan, does not want anyone to be won to Christ. Reid says, “True Christianity runs counter to the culture. The gospel will always be scandalous; it will always be offensive to any person who rejects the call to repent. But making the gospel plain to our culture does not include compromising the gospel to it. As in the first century, one can easily recognize a dedicated Christian.”⁴ Thus it behooves the Christian to be real with those on the street and present the gospel in an authentic way.

Another reason to be well aware of one’s surroundings and with those with whom one is speaking deals with their demeanor. One does not know what someone else is going through in his private life, and the wrong words could possibly set off a negative reaction to something completely unrelated to the gospel message. In other words, when dealing with people who may be trying to cope with various addictions, it cannot be taken for granted that their state of mind will be pleasant or even bearable.

Penner states,

The circumstances that become fertile ground out of which an addiction can grow include any type of emotional stress where there is a strong need for nurture, affirmation, comfort, or control. In adulthood, the addiction may be set off after a death, a divorce, a separation, birth of a child, and loss of a child, loss of a job, or added pressure at home or

³ Wendy Holdren, “DEA to take over evidence probe.” *The Register-Herald*, August 24, 2012, Front Page section, 1A edition.

⁴ Alvin K Reid, *Radically Unchurched: Who They are & How to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishers, 2002), 117.

on the job. All of these life circumstances which provide extra stress may serve as the spark or initial nudge for acting out.⁵

Even with this in mind, the Christian must not be fearful of what may happen because of that faith factor which assures that Jesus is with each individual. Jesus said, “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves” (Mat. 10:16).

It is always best to make oneself known in many different ways and to a lot of different people on the street or block so that one may be able to witness without retaliation on the part of those who may perceive the minister as a threat. In other words, one should be as cordial and friendly as humanly possible. Battista says, “The warmth and friendliness with which you project attitudes of calmness and genuine interest toward others are sometimes the barometers of your success in human relations: the extent of that warmth and friendliness determines the strength of people’s similar response to you.”⁶ Even if this is accomplished, there will be some that just do not accept outsiders into their circle, regardless of intentions. Thus it behooves the minister to take every precaution when dealing with some of the world’s worst as it pertains to possible violence and conversely, the world’s best as it pertains to the potential for winning others of like mindset to Christ. In other words, one should keep a good keen sense of what to do or not do and what to say or not say which should keep the tension at a minimum. Battista continues, “It assists in obtaining and maintaining friendly and influential relationships. It prompts you to act with courtesy, diplomacy, genuine appreciation and conscientiousness at all times. Its secret ingredient is the consideration of others. That is why it can disarm opponents,

⁵ Joyce J. Penner and Clifford L. Penner. *Counseling for Sexual Disorders* (Dallas: Word Incorporated, 1990), 281.

⁶ Orlando Battista, *The Power to Influence People* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall Incorporated, 1959), 53.

liquidate enemies, quiet tempers, calm nerves, and show you the easy way out of difficult and trying situations.”⁷ Thus, a keen sense of tact is a major player in the role of trying to reach the last, the least, the lost, and the left out.

Even when the best of tact is utilized, it also behooves one to be aware of his surroundings at all times when trying to reach the lost on the street. Most of the people described here are usually not even on the street during daylight hours. In other words, many of these people do not even come out until late at night, although some are out for various reasons during the day. So, if a Christian is to win them to Christ, they must be located and witnessed to in “enemy territory.” Therefore, when on enemy territory, one must be well aware of the potential dangers involved. There have been many people who have lost their lives because of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Street culture involves knowing when to duck, move or break camp, thus staying in one piece for further ministry. Thus, if one perceives that arguments are taking place or possible transactions which may induce fatalities, this may not be an appropriate time or place to be involved with the ministry.

In the postmodern culture in which one lives today, one cannot expect to automatically see people who have been described here to come through the church door and fall down at the altar, but Christians must assist with their decision making process, because coming to Christ involves a conscious and conclusive decision.

Walters says,

Growth is a choice. Those who escape self-control disorders do so because they choose to. They decide to begin living differently. If we are to act differently, we must decide to. Christianity makes it inescapably clear that the direction we turn is within our control. The word turn is used hundreds of times between Genesis and Revelation. Some people

⁷ Ibid., 140.

turned away from Jesus in his presence (Luke 4:28-30) and others turned toward him (Luke 6:17-19).⁸

The Christians should make it an imperative to assist others with this decision making process and make it as easy as possible for them to turn to Jesus rather than away from Him. Conversely, there may be times which may not be conducive to witnessing because of the dangers involved and the Christian must be able to discern those times through an honest assessment of the situations that may be encountered on a daily basis.

The Benefits

Jesus, who is the Christian's Master Teacher, spoke about being hungry and not being fed, being thirsty and not given water, being a stranger and not taken in, being naked and not being clothed, being sick and in prison and not being visited (Matt. 25:42-43), all metaphors for anyone being in this condition and not being ministered to by those He deems as goats and not His sheep. Therefore the benefits of what can really be accomplished by reaching out to the lost are really immeasurable. Who best describes this neglected group of people that Jesus is talking about than the group of people of which has been described throughout this thesis? Most of them are trying to fill a void in their lives with money, drugs, alcohol, sex, sin and violence that only Jesus can fill. Even Christians can feel bereft at times during their Christian walk with God. Even Jesus was not exempt from this feeling as Patty Kirk so adequately points out.

She says,

However, Jesus himself, though sinless, clearly experienced some degree of the same forsakenness that people from biblical times to today experience most or even all of the time. Mocked and suffering on the cross, he cried out, in Aramaic, the opening lines of David's agonized psalm: "*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*"—that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).⁹

⁸ Richard P. Walters, *Counseling for Problems of Self Control* (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1987), 86.

⁹ Patty Kirk. *A Field Guide to God: A Seeker's Manual* (New York: Guidepost, 2010), 33.

The point is this: if Jesus felt forsaken, how much more so would people that has no idea about the power of God and what He can do about the abandonment and emptiness which they feel. Yet, once they are reached through the Word of God, their importance to the church could be phenomenal. In other words, once the Christian has reached many of them, taught them the ways of Christ, after which making disciples of them and placing them in ministry, how great and important would their testimony and witness be to those which they have just shortly departed. Although they may not have the type of credentials that the church seems to crave in today's society, their credentials are much like those of the Apostles Peter and John in that they were perceived as uneducated and unlearned men, but it was evident that they had been with Christ (Acts 4:13). Koteskey states,

Credentials are often the primary basis for judgment in our society and are becoming increasingly important in the church. Individuals must have a seminary degree from the "right" seminary. Thus our church leaders are now chosen by a series of gatekeepers on admission committees based on their credentials, which often include scores on personality tests which may be largely invalid¹⁰

Now it is not the intention here to downplay education, but the power of God is no respecter of persons, educated or not. Yet, one is certainly better off when studious, especially concerning the Word of God as everyone should do everything within his power to obtain a Christian education, but one also needs the power of the Holy Spirit. In other words, Satan knows the word of God, but the problem with him lies within the ability to live according to God's word. The Bible teaches, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Thus teaching is a vital strategy for reaching the last, the least, the lost and the left out as street culture is a very important aspect, but it does not "require" a seminary degree to reach the lost, and to be on fire for the Lord with much vitality for the work of God. Therefore, the church should go out and

¹⁰ Ronald L. Koteskey, *Psychology from a Christian Perspective* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1980), 129.

rescue people from the evil one. The concern should be to win souls through the local church and be attentive to not be diverted in any way.

Briefly, a better understanding of what an education involves will be helpful. Education has to do with teaching and learning; it is a development of one's mental and moral potential. It increases one's ability to grow in measure, capacity, maturity and ability, which should lead to an individual's ability to fulfill his or her personal destiny and to live in and contribute to his or her culture. Thus an education is a process whereby certain criteria and components must be met. In other words, a pupil must have a certain foundation upon which certain new learning may be built. Conversely, a teacher must have a certain foundation upon which new instruction may be built. Therefore, all learning revolves around an exchange of information whereby communication is pertinent. This process of learning has both physical and psychological elements such as physical development, cognitive development, moral development, faith development, decision making, new information, new skills, new behaviors, readjusted attitudes and values, and different emotional responses, all of which cause positive change in the individual. Lastly, the educational process would be severely hindered without the cognitive mental maturation process which is a large part of learning. Once Jesus Christ becomes the focal point of learning, then mere education becomes Christian education. It is through Christian Education that an individual should grow in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man, which will lead one into the discipline of Spiritual Formation.

Likewise, Spiritual Formation has to do with the growth and development of a Christian through the disciplines of prayer, the study of Scripture, fasting, simplicity, solitude, confession and worship. In Christian Spiritual Formation as opposed to normal education, the central focus is upon faith in Jesus Christ. Christian spiritual formation is comprised of a lifelong commitment

to become a follower of the teaching of Jesus Christ. In order for this process to be accomplished one must adhere to the aforementioned disciplines, submit one's own will to the will of God, and serve as one is led by the Holy Spirit of God. This kind of discipline allows God to change one into the noble person that will reflect an unshakable confidence in the one who equips one to face life's trials and tribulations and remain faithful to Him. It is a maturing process that includes a growth in character, a healthy concept of God as opposed to self, a respect of other theological perspectives, an appropriate application of biblical principles to one's daily living, and a healthy, realistic concept of self and how that relates to others in Christian love. Yet, Christianity and spiritual formation are moot if one does not have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A lot of what was mentioned above has to do with works such as interacting with others and spiritual practices, but James said, "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (Ja.2:17). Therefore faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus is an integral part of spiritual formation.

So what are some of the ways which one can incorporate Christian education into the scenario after reaching some of the lost and bringing them into the house of prayer? First, the church can implement Sunday school and Bible study if they have not already been executed. The word disciple means that one is a student, a learner and a pupil. Most people only attend regular worship service, but most growing churches attempt to involve everyone in Sunday school and Bible study. This is where one can receive a complete coverage of the word of God no matter the age group; the Bible is studied from Genesis to Revelation. Sunday school and Bible study gives a person a comprehensive study of God's word in several forms such as doctrinal, biographical, devotional and topical. Sunday school and Bible study are vitally

important to every member of the body of Christ and to every sinner who has been recently brought into the body of Christ.

The next way to incorporate Christian education into the scenario is by incorporating new member classes. This is one way to follow-up with the new convert in a manner that will teach them obedience to the words of Christ. It is in new members classes that a variety of topics or subjects can be covered which include, but certainly not limited to, the doctrine of the church, new members expectations, tithing, polity, plan of salvation, history of the church, opportunities for service within the church, church covenant, spiritual disciplines, spiritual gifts and of course, evangelism. The membership class is the perfect place to move new converts from membership to ministry. Lawless explains,

In the churches we surveyed, over 70 percent of the members who joined in the last two years remained involved in the church. Our research did not ask specific details about the “type of activity or ministry”; nor can we show that the 70 percent who remained involved were only those who attended membership classes. Nevertheless, we are confident these churches point to some important principles for moving members into ministry¹¹

Therefore, in this age of low dedication and distrust of religious institutions, membership classes will make a very large impact upon the leadership qualities of a church organization because of the mentoring process which encourages and teaches growth and a changed lifestyle for the believer. It produces Christian character and Bible knowledge which are internal growth, and will then produce the type of person who can bring others under the care and watch of a local church. The late Rev. Dr. Jerry Falwell had a saying which fits very well here: “Use them or lose them.”

¹¹ Chuck, E. Lawless, *Membership Matters: Insights from Effective Churches on New Member Classes and Assimilation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 100.

In the world today, pastors should be the model of a Christian lifestyle, and this should be reflected through the ultimate conclusion of their families. It is a sad thing in today's society to have broken homes even in the pulpit. There are husbands and wives who represent the pastorate in the church who are not getting along together, yet presenting a façade in the church. This world is filled with children who have been neglected and failed, only to have become rebels against any type of authority, especially God's authority. So what is the answer to all of this type of chaos which plagues churches throughout this country? The answer is one of simplicity: earnest pursuit of the family until all are brought to relationship with Jesus Christ. Yet who is one's family, but those that do the will of the Father? This is what this writer adores about the principle of adoption. God has adopted every Christian into the family of God, and He is seeking others who are now lost. Thus it is the job of every Christian to bring every breathing soul into the family of God as an adopted member with all the rights and privileges of pure blood as one has received a blood transfusion from the Lord.

Man, by his very nature, is someone that is inquisitive to the point of wanting to know about everything, especially God. In turn, God by his very nature desires man to know of him by his command, "Be still, and know that I am God..." (Ps. 46:10). There are many and various ways that God reveals himself to man such as nature and science, but God also reveals himself through his Word. God is self-existent in that the Bible states, "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1:2-3). Jesus told the Samaritan woman, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). Therefore if God, by His own Word is Spirit, this means that He is an incorporeal being which does not encompass a physical body although the scripture says He has hands (Is. 65:2), fingers (Ex. 8:19), feet (Is.66:1) and eyes (1 Ki. 8:29).

With this in mind, God made man in His own image and after His own likeness that He might have dominion over the rest of his creation. Man failed God with making the wrong choice of eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, which was forbidden on instruction from God. This is the reason that God had to devise a plan to bring man back into fellowship with himself. God's plan in relation to this could arguably be summed up with one verse of scripture which states, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). This is the very reason that an animal was slain to cover the sin and nakedness of Adam and Eve in the garden, but "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). Of course, this verse speaks of the obedience of Jesus Christ to God for the remission of sin in that He shed innocent blood that man would be able to become reconciled to his God which is the very best benefit of someone who has been involved with street life and the best benefit of the entire world regardless of their background.

All of this has much to do with making disciples of those which have been won to Christ. A disciple is a learner, a pupil, a student of a master teacher and in this case that master teacher is Jesus Christ. The Bible describes a disciple as one who follows Jesus. A disciple is also one who, not only follows Jesus, but obeys His teaching. Discipleship in the New Testament is espousing a lifestyle patterned after the teaching and life of Jesus. In other words, discipleship is a transformation process whereby the student becomes like the teacher in every respect. Disciples are consistently learning new principles which they are to apply to their daily lives. Disciples are followers of Jesus Christ, especially the commissioned twelve that followed Jesus during His earthly ministry. Therefore, discipleship entails emerging as a lifetime witness to the saving acts of God, specifically the death and resurrection of Jesus without which witnessing is

void. The goal is to enable believers to a lifestyle patterned after Jesus and characterized by learning, obeying, serving, sacrificing and loyalty.

It is not only the task of the disciple to learn and implement the teaching of the Master, but to also pass along the sayings and teachings of the Master. This is a part of the Great Commission which is to make disciples (Matt. 28:18-20). It was during the time of Jesus' walk on earth that disciples came from all walks of life. He had tax collectors, lawyers, doctors, thieves, fishermen and a plethora of others that were converted and labeled His disciples. Therefore, a disciple of Jesus is not to target a specific group of people for discipleship, but people of all nationalities and cultures. Jesus called his disciples to "follow me" (Lk. 5:27). He asked for lifelong allegiance (Lk. 9:57-62) as the essential means of doing the will of God (Matt. 12:49-50; Jn. 7:16-18). The will of God for a disciple is to come to Jesus in faith, hear and believe the gospel and carry out the mission of Jesus' teaching. Jesus taught that the disciple only becomes a master after learning how to serve others.

Therefore, the disciple is one that accepts Jesus Christ as savior and Lord of his life and applies His teaching to his daily lifestyle. In other words, one must undergo a changed life or a metamorphosis in values, goals, perspectives, activities and relationships which accentuates knowing, loving and serving God. This certainly is a must if one is to become a true disciple or follower of Jesus. After this has been accomplished, the real disciple shares this commitment which has been learned with others as a witness to the entire world concerning the victory and joy in serving Jesus. Also, once the disciple has developed the discipline to serve Jesus, as well as his fellow man, he or she would then begin to mentor others concerning this way of life, consistently seeking guidance from God. Therefore, the disciple is a constant learner, a pupil, and a student of the master teacher because the Bible states that, "All scripture is given by

inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Thus, a tool which may be helpful in this process may be to allow each individual the opportunity through small groups to practice how to become true disciples and bring other sinners to Christ.

This is just some of what can be accomplished when one reaches out to the lost of this world. In other words, when one reaches out to the lost and make disciples of them there will be a multiplication effect, whereby each person that the church wins to Christ makes disciples of others, once he has learned how to do so. God is certainly pleased with this type of effort and will add a blessing to each individual and church for following this procedure.

Chapter Three

How Does the Church Fit In?

The Body

The Bible teaches that the church is a body that includes many members which are not independent of one another (Rom. 12:5). Therefore, this writer is certainly not purporting that every church is a great prospect for street ministry realistically, but definitely purporting that as a whole, the church can accomplish great feats in street ministry. The Bible says, “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world” (1 John 2:2). In an effort to explain the difference between reading meaning from the text (“exegesis”) and reading an “Extreme Sovereignty” (ES) meaning into the text (“eisegesis”) Geisler explains the above text,

The plain meaning is that Christ did not pay the price for the sins of a limited group of believers, but for those of all humankind. Still, ES proponents contend that world means “Christian world” of Christians scattered around the world.” This is not only contrary to the plain meaning of whole world in context, it also is opposed to the definition John gives of the term world in this very chapter.¹

This was brought out to bring a clearer meaning to what Jesus said. He said that if one were to believe on Him that greater works than even He did could be accomplished (John 14:12), and as a young Christian, although that was a long time ago, it was quite puzzling to this writer how Christians today could possibly even come close to the tremendous feats of our Savior such as feeding 5000 men with two fish and five barley loaves, open the eyes of the blind, raising Lazarus from the dead, and healing so many sick people, just to name a few. To understand this passage one must understand the concept of the body of Christ. The body of Christ has not only the capability to do more, but also the availability to do so much more

¹ Norman L. Geisler, *Chosen But Free. A Balanced View of God’s Sovereignty and Free Will*. 3rd Edition (Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers, 2010), 178.

throughout, not only the United States, but throughout the world. The church has people who can evangelize every culture and nationality that exists with success, which has already been proven for many years considering the missionaries all over the world, which by the way, should be prayed for, and supported financially. Thus the objective here is to teach on how the church body can make a difference with the prescribed group of people which will allow every individual church the opportunity to ascertain if they would include this ministry into their evangelistic efforts. In describing this Harney says,

The best place for those whose hearts are still far from God is among the people who have drunk deeply of grace and are ready to share it with others. That is what the church is all about. Of course, there are some unhealthy congregations that struggle to embrace new people and reach out. But there are countless wonderful bodies of believers who can't wait to welcome those who visit their fellowship.²

Either way, to embrace new people and to reach out just seems more like what Jesus would do, even in today's society and are Christians, not trying to mimic Jesus? That should be the objective!

Furthermore, it can be found that oftentimes individuals as well as church groups criticize the churches that have reached out to street people. They criticize the efforts to try to keep them in the church. In other words, if the church invites a comedian, author of a well known novel, a controversial band or anything else that is not necessarily evil, but simply put, controversial, it is now open season for the so called "Christian critics." Well, this writer is of the opinion, if a person or corporate entity such as a church is not engaging the described type of people, they probably have no idea as to what is being dealt with on a daily basis and should allow others to evangelize with the help of God and not be so quick to criticize, judge or belittle others in their

²Kevin G. Harney, *Organic Outreach: Infusing Evangelistic Passion into Your Congregation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011), 50.

efforts. When a prostitute, pimp, drug dealer or abuser comes into the body of Christ, their behaviors and dress are not automatically deleted, but they must grow in Christianity while being mentored by others. Thus, patience is the best policy here.

The Challenge

Once the components and possibilities of the body are understood by the Christian, then the challenge can be undertaken. The challenge consists of getting the non-believer or that person who may be a believer, but unchurched, to recognize friendship, their own identification, and how to embrace a new mindset. Oftentimes, those who are struggling with addictions and street life have been hurt, experienced loss in various ways, abused in distinct ways, and are very distrustful of others. Most are looking for friendship in all the wrong places, but a keen testimony from someone who has been where they are could possibly turn a proverbial light on in the mind. Just as an example, these types of people are dealing with divorce, out of wedlock births, cohabitation, incarceration, probation, and homelessness, just to name a few. Many of the children which are taken into church today are dealing with parents who are either breaking up or have already been divorced. This is an emotional shock for the child and the parents, many of whom are youngsters and only thinking of themselves, and have no idea of the trauma which a child experiences when the parents break up. Bennett says, "Divorce: A generation ago, the odds were one in four that a child would witness his parents' breakup; today, they are one in two. Since 1960, a forty-year period in which the marriage rate has declined by a third, the divorce rate (despite small recent improvements) has more than doubled."³ Thus, from these numbers alone, it can be ascertained that when a child is taken into the body of Christ, there is a fifty-fifty

³ William J. Bennett, *The Broken Hearth: Reversing the Moral Collapse of the American Family* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 12.

chance that he is experiencing a family breakup in some way and the Church and Christian should be compassionate to this fact.

Many young parents are not aware of the Scripture that says, “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). Even if they are aware of this Scripture, a large majority of them choose to cohabit rather than be married. One of the major reasons of which they choose to cohabit rather than marry is because of failure to see any benefit to marriage because of those marriages that continuously fail. It would truly be a shame if Jesus would come back and judge many of these young people, many of whom have tremendous character otherwise, in this cohabitating state without the opportunity to repent. As an example of the magnitude of this problem, Bennett says,

Cohabitation: Between 1960 and 2000, the number of couples cohabiting increased more than eleven fold, from under five hundred thousand to five and a half million, with the biggest spike occurring in the 1990’s. Today, more than half of all marriages are preceded by a period of cohabitation, and the number is even higher among men and women in the twenties and thirties, for whom cohabitation is replacing marriage.⁴

This is a dangerous position into which youth have placed themselves, considering the consequences involved. Yet, this is the challenge which the church faces in today’s society. Thus, it would behoove the church to teach about the negative consequences associated with this posture and the positives associated with a couple which has positioned themselves as husband and wife in the body of Christ.

To compound the situation, where there is cohabitation, there will be out-of wed-lock births as well. The aforementioned five and a half million people, and that number has increased since Bennett wrote his book, are having children which will be brought up in a home where marriage is non-existent. This gives the children fuel for more of the same if the church does not intervene and teach them a more excellent way. Concerning out-of-wedlock births, Bennett says,

⁴ Ibid., 13.

In 1994, for the first time in American history, more than half of all first born children were conceived or born out of wedlock—the culmination of a long-term trend. Among teenagers, that trend is even more alarming; today over three-quarters of all births to teenagers occur outside of marriage, while in fifteen of our nation's largest cities, the teenage out-of-wedlock birth ratio exceeds ninety percent.⁵

This reflects a lot of out-of-wedlock births and unfortunately, they continue to climb.

Every church and Christian should be convinced and convicted by these outrageous statistics and pull these people into the body of Christ; otherwise there will be a snowball effect of tremendous proportions. Bennett puts it this way,

My concern is that we are now embarked upon an experiment that violates a universal social law: In attempting to raise children without two parents, we are seeing, on a massive scale, that voluntary breakup of the minimal family unit. This is historically unprecedented, an authentic cultural revolution—and, I believe, socially calamitous. We may be under the illusion that we can cheerfully deconstruct marriage and then one day, decide to pull back from the brink.⁶

This is tremendous evidence that the church is seriously derelict in its duties and needs to take back the sanctity of marriage, retrieve the family unit, counsel with couples and teach families to pray through their problems which causes divorce in the first place.

Jesus emphatically states Christians should have a sincere concern toward those which are in prison (Matt. 25:36). Yet, if taken a step farther in that the prison industrial complex is another major challenge and issue facing the church, how is this overcome? The prison industrial complex involves people who are incarcerated, on probation, or possibly living a lifestyle that will eventually place them in the previous two categories. This means that the church and Christian should not be judgmental as it pertains to the crime, but be compassionate toward the soul of the sinner. In other words, there are Christians who will emphatically pronounce the death sentence for those who commit various crimes, but will have an emotional

⁵ Ibid., 13.

⁶ Ibid., 70.

fit as it pertains to the death of a fetus or abortion. This writer is of the humble opinion that both are murder no matter how this pie is sliced. It is not one's place to condemn the world of their sin, but to show the world the love of Jesus in a manner that they also would want to become Christians. Michelle Alexander suggests, "A criminal record today authorizes precisely the forms of discrimination we supposedly left behind—discrimination in employment, housing, education, public benefits, and jury service. Those labeled criminals can even be denied the right to vote. Criminals, it turns out are the one social group in America we have permission to hate."⁷ Although Mrs. Alexander makes a great point here, Christians do not have permission to hate any person, as Jesus has instructed one to love, even the enemy, yet one does have permission to hate sin, but not the sinner. The real Christian is to assist people in an effort to make disciples of them. This certainly does not involve hate, but a lot of love, patience and work trying to get them to put on the mind of Christ. If Christians neglect this, who will take on this responsibility, the political system? Certainly not! Concerning the amount of drug arrest which occurs, Mrs. Alexander continues,

And so long as the number of drug arrests increases or at least remains high, federal dollars continue to flow in and fill the department's coffers. As one former prosecutor put it, "It's a lot easier to go out to the 'hood,' so to speak, and pick somebody than to put your resources in an undercover [operation in a] community where there are potentially politically powerful people."⁸

Thus it can be ascertained that the ones which are even targeted by law enforcement are those who deem to be impoverished, destined for police activity, ultimately the prison system and probation cycle that for some never ends unless someone reaches out to them in an effort to stop the bleeding: the church!

⁷ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: The New Press, 2010), 141.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 124.

It is so easy for youth to get involved with illegal activity just by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. For informational purposes, anyone can become subject to the search of their vehicle for illegal drugs, although the procedure is often relegated to suspicious persons which is left to the discretion of the officer. Therefore, it can easily be understood how many officers are accused of various types of profiling, whether that is actually the case or not. In response to the Ohio Supreme Court decision to allow motorists the right to leave the scene of a potential search for drugs at their own consent, Alexander writes,

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down this basic requirement as “unrealistic.” In so doing, the Court made clear to all lower courts that, from now on, the Fourth Amendment should place no meaningful constraints on the police in the War on Drugs. No one needs to be informed of their rights during a stop or search, and police may use minor traffic stops as well as the myth of “consent” to stop and search anyone they choose for imaginary drug crimes, whether or not an evidence of illegal drug activity actually exists.⁹

Everything presented here is to help one understand how easily some youth find themselves caught up in the prison industrial complex possibly by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is also presented to assist the church in understanding some of the ramifications surrounding how so many youth end up in the prison system. Regardless of the situation, the answer still remains that the Christian is to intercede with the love of Jesus in practical ways such as the mentor/mentee programs, big brother programs, and accountability partners, all to assist them from getting into this mess in the first place.

When youth end up in prison or some type of correctional center they are now subjected to other inmates who could potentially physically or emotionally abuse them. Now the problem is only compounded. In other words, what has been created here is not only a youth who has been caught up in the system, but abused and potentially ready to strike back in some fashion due

⁹ Ibid., 68.

to the anger and resentment of authority figures. The numbers of youth who fit this description is phenomenal. Bennett says,

The United States already has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with more than two million persons in federal and state prisons and local jails (in 1980, the figure was just over 500,000). Today, we deploy almost three-quarters of a million full-time, sworn law enforcement officers, and Americans spend more than \$15 billion annually on personal security systems.¹⁰

Certainly this is really quite a dilemma and should be addressed by the church and the Christian. This thing is so serious that one author from the Gangs series contends,

In this country, government responses aimed at urban teenagers who are criminally connected tend to be more concerned with the crime rate than with the kid; more concerned, that is, with making society safer than with nurturing the young man or woman. I honestly believe that there are people in high places—certainly in low places—who would rather lock up young black men or even let them kill each other, than put forth the effort to save them.¹¹

Whether one agrees with this assessment of the situation or not, it does not obliterate the dire numbers of inmates, potential inmates and those who are connected with the system via probation.

So what can the church do when facing such dire circumstances and situations? The task which is before the church is certainly not something that can be broken or fixed in a matter of moments. This is something that will take a lot of prayer and seeking the hand of God to secure a place in the hearts of these sinners. These are a people who have been brought up in homes with no father because of divorce or being born out of wedlock, who have parents that are cohabitating, or are dealing with the carousel of the prison industrial complex. Bennett says,

¹⁰ William J. Bennett, *The Broken Hearth: Reversing the Moral Collapse of the American Family* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 93.

¹¹ Laura K. Egendorf and others, eds. *Gangs: Opposing Viewpoints Series*, (San Diego: Greenhaven Press Inc., 2001), 93.

I am under no illusions. Breaking the cycle of illegitimacy ultimately depends on stopping widespread, deeply entrenched, highly destructive behavior. In inner cities all across America, the vast majority of children are born without fathers in their lives; to restore the two-parent norm in these communities—to say nothing of the rest of the nation—is a monumental undertaking.¹²

Who better to take on this task than the Christian who is enabled by the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish all things through Christ who strengthens (Phil. 4:13)?

Since most people who find themselves in these types of predicaments have been looking for friendship and relationship in all the wrong places, it is now time to at least present the possibility of friendship and relationship from the Christian and Christ, respectively. The Christian can provide a type of friendship that requires nothing in return, which will help others see the love of Christ or spiritual friendship. The only type of friendship most of them have shared previously has been predicated upon mutual and reciprocal exchanges. Kellemen says, “When we understand the God-given capacities of personhood, we can identify the purpose and focus of spiritual friendship. Spiritual friendship enables people to live/relate/communicate as romancers who love with passion, as dreamers who think with wisdom, as creators who choose with courage and as singers who feel/experience with fullness.”¹³ Once a person has developed a spiritual friendship with a Christian, it can enhance his capacity for knowing and loving God. This is the type of friendship which sheds light upon the type of person who lies deep within and can thus be changed into someone that Christ can use in His Kingdom on the earth. In other words, if Christians can show the love of Jesus to them, they can in turn understand that Jesus is the light of the world and loves them in spite of their previous activities.

¹² William J. Bennett, *The Broken Hearth: Reversing the Moral Collapse of the American Family* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 99.

¹³ Robert W. Kellemen, *Soul Physicians: A Theology of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction* (Taneytown: RPM Books, 2005), 149.

Once this light has been lit and developed, a person can then begin to ascertain between what they are now and conversely, who they can become with the help of a friend or Christian, yet the ultimate friend is Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends. You are my friends if you do whatever I command you” (John 15:13-14). This friendship applies to the Christian, as well as the sinner, in that all the sinner needs to do is repent of his or her sin and Jesus is faithful and just to forgive his sin. This is how a sinner can develop a new identity in Christ Jesus. Kellemen says,

In sanctification, you yield to the Holy Spirit who uncovers the Christ who dwells within. To grow in Christ, you need to know who you are in Christ. Once you are clear on your identity, deep in your being, then you can begin to cooperate with the Divine Architect who daily transforms you more and more into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18, 4:16-18). You may not always feel it, you may not regularly experience it, but truth is truth. You are healthy, whole, and holy.¹⁴

Praise God! The Apostle Paul put it this way, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Once a person has come to the realization of his own identity, then it is possible to identify with the Master Teacher. With whom one identifies has everything to do with where one will spend eternity. The Divine or Master Architect will mold and shape an individual into what He wants him to become for the individual is the clay and He is the potter. In other words, one must submit his own will to the will of God which will require a new mindset and biblically speaking, to allow one’s mind to become as the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). This new mindset must come to fruition by faith in the Lord Jesus because He can and will change a person’s life for the better. The Bible says, “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 12:6). Faith is a key to any individual’s success as it pertains to this Christian

¹⁴ Ibid., 383.

journey, but oftentimes many of the sinners which have been taught about Jesus will have apprehension initially, so the mature Christian needs to know how to verbally deal with this. John Ortberg, in his book, *Faith and Doubt*, implies that faith requires the presence of uncertainty, which bodes well for the person who is trying to avert the apprehension. Ortberg states, “Your wager began the moment you were born. You were ‘launched.’ You will bet your life one way or the other. God either exists or he does not. Heads or tails—no third option! If God does not exist, we lose a life devoted to seeking to love to live generously, to speak truth, and to do justice. But if God does exist, and we choose not to follow him, we lose everything.”¹⁵ Ortberg uses a worldly analogy of gambling here to explain the consequences concerning eternal death or eternal life as it pertains to following Jesus in faith. Therefore, establishing one’s identification deals with one’s position in Christ now and where an individual expects to spend eternity and it is simply a choice which will be made, one way or the other. In other words, one can do nothing and the decision will be involuntarily made not to follow Jesus, or one can make a conscious decision to follow the Lord with the whole heart, mind and spirit, which will produce a great return and reward.

Once an individual has recognized friendship and established his identity, now he is ready to embrace a new mindset. What is a new mindset? Kellemen says, “It’s the larger story, the eternal, heavenly perspective on life that says, ‘Trust God and live!’ Our new mindsets come complete with new vision. Our divine Physician performed totally successful laser surgery on our eyes so that we no longer look at life with eyeballs only, but with faith eyes. Our perspective is captivated by Worthy Groom's worth.”¹⁶ The new mindset involves leaving the ways of sin

¹⁵ John Ortberg, *Faith & Doubt* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 34.

¹⁶ Robert W. Kellemen, *Soul Physicians: A Theology of Soul Care and Spiritual Direction* (Taneytown: RPM Books, 2005), 458.

and immaturity behind and consciously replacing that animal-like nature with the Word of God, prayer and other spiritual disciplines. The life of sin is one which Satan has power over one's thoughts and actions because God has no place in the non-believer's life. Walters says,

The fundamental problem is sin, of course. Sin is rejection of God and is our natural condition because of the fall. The person who has not accepted God's offer of salvation, relationship with him, will have one or both of the reactions. The first is pride. The urge rises within us, as it did in Lucifer, Adam, and Eve, to put ourselves above God. This leads to self-control disorders of gratification. The second response is fear. Fear leads to self-control issues of escape.¹⁷

Thus, the problem lies within the individual despite the effort to place blame on circumstances, the trials of life or even others, such as family members. Yet, one must realize the new mindset involves leaving the world of sin behind and pressing forward toward the prize of Christ Jesus. The Bible says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). The prize is eternal life with Jesus. Therefore, the old mindset should be killed every day and the new mindset nurtured and developed every day. Koteskey says, "From a Christian perspective, development is leaving the animal-like and becoming more like God. Humans are like animals in their immature stages, with the potential to become like God at maturity. The emphasis in a Christian developmental psychology would be on maturity rather than immaturity, on the God-like rather than the animal-like."¹⁸

The new mindset involves, not just membership in a church, but a relationship with the Lord. It involves moving from the baptistery into a ministry. Accomplishing this feat requires spiritual disciplines which lead to maturity. Spiritual maturity should be the desired destination for every Christian. Walters says,

¹⁷ Richard P. Walters, *Counseling for Problems of Self Control* (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1987), 33.

¹⁸ Ronald L. Koteskey, *Psychology from a Christian Perspective* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1980), 60.

Spiritual maturity is the practice of using our powers of perception to distinguish between good and evil (Heb. 5:14). We need maturity to have the proper discernment toward evil-inspired falsehoods (Eph. 4:14) and to have the knowledge of God's will (Col. 1:9). Maturity involves giving up the old ways of thinking and developing the ways of behaving that are appropriate for a Christian.¹⁹

Maturity requires a development of spiritual disciplines which will take one to a new level in Christ. One of the major spiritual disciplines is prayer, because without a close relationship with Jesus, all other spiritual disciplines become moot. Jesus taught by example that everyone should take time to pray. Prayer is a major way to develop a relationship with God and get to know Him. Reid says, "The goal of prayer is not merely to talk to God, or even to get answers. The goal of prayer is to know Him. I define prayer as intimacy with God that leads to the fulfillment of His purposes. Our desire in evangelism should be to bring more people into the kingdom to worship and know God. The issue is not whether we can reach an un-churched culture."²⁰ It is through prayer that God can ease heavy burdens, loose demonic strongholds, and impact the life of a leader, the church and the world in such a way as to produce positive emotional health in all involved. Prayer is the one thing that should be emphasized most because with that close relationship with God, any other endeavors could possibly be rendered impotent because with God all things are possible, but without Him, we can do nothing (Mk. 10:27). It is prayer that can help define the ethical choices of an individual in conjunction with the word of God. Walters says,

However, the recognition that there is an ethical component of maturity makes it necessary for psychology to acknowledge its incompetence and drop out. Since ethics asserts that one kind of conduct is better than another, an ultimate basis for comparison is

¹⁹ Richard P. Walters, *Counseling for Problems of Self Control* (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1987), 235.

²⁰ Alvin K Reid, *Radically Unchurched: Who They are & How to Reach Them* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishers, 2002), 51.

implied. Ethical choices are basically theological since they imply loyalty to God or to some principle that stands in the place of God.²¹

The Response

The response of the church deals with how the body of Christ should respond to the evil that is preventing the youth and others the opportunity to learn about Jesus and develop a right relationship with Him. This writer will attempt to divulge and assess many avenues which the church can take, but one should not limit what God can do otherwise through revelation that could possibly be different than what is being divulged here. Initially, church health is imperative because during the transition of bringing people from the world into the church, there should be a healthy environment to bring them into, otherwise there will be travesty. According to Macchia, “Our goal as church leaders is to instill health into families and friendships so that the extended family of God can become a healthier, more vibrant example of Christ like love and unity...and they’ll know we are Christians by our love.”²² Church health has much to do with the presence of God which exudes through the people in the form of the fruit of the Spirit, various spiritual gifts and the building of God’s kingdom here on the earth. This process also includes the worship of God by the people; and although there are various styles of worship, the key is to effectively engage the heart, mind, soul and strength of one’s being through worship. Although worship is a large part of church health, it does not stop there, but involves a style of living which includes communication with God, educating oneself against the tactics of the evil one, memorization of Scripture, missionary actions, participatory attendance of various meetings, spiritual disciplines, mentoring, and growing in body, mind, spirit and community. Martoria

²¹ Richard P. Walters, *Counseling for Problems of Self Control* (Waco: Word Incorporated, 1987), 183.

²² Stephen A. Macchia, *Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Traits of a Vital Ministry* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 102.

says, “Part of what we are trying to do in these conversations is draw out a person’s journey—his or her spiritual path to date, the mile markers along the way. But when we invite people to be disciples of Jesus, we’re ultimately encouraging them to let their personal story be reshaped by God’s story.”²³

The wicked one is always attempting to stop and block the progress of the aforementioned lifestyle, but a healthy Christian and church will be able to recognize and overcome such obstacles as Internet addiction, overload, the multiplicity of needs of various groups, a lack of transparency in relationships, and many other hindrances. Not only does the sinner deal with these hindrances, but Christians do as well, as indicated by the Apostle Paul himself (Rom. 7:25). This is what leads to a lot of unanswered questions in a lot of people’s minds. Wilkerson says,

Victory over all our enemies is through Jesus Christ the Lord. But how do we get the power out of His vine into our puny little branches? How does this thing work? I love Jesus—always have. I know He has all power. I know He promises me victory, but just what does it mean? How does the victory come? It’s not enough to be forgiven; I must be free from going back to my sin.²⁴

Also the church and Christian should recognize the narcissistic age of self-centeredness and relational challenges of this present age and combat these with authentic encouragement of one another, transparency, honesty, integrity, grace, mercy, forgiveness, burden bearing, diversity, avid positive communication with one another, and service. Jesus Christ is the overall example for all of these, but especially servitude because of his leadership style. The focus of his leadership was on the one being served and not on himself. The leadership of the church

²³ Ron Martoia, *Transformational Architecture: Reshaping Our Lives as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 158.

²⁴ David Wilkerson, *Have You Felt Like Giving Up Lately: Finding Hope and Healing When You Feel Discouraged* (Grand Rapids: Grand Valley Publishers, 1980), 66.

should follow closely the needs, hurts, joys and desires of the followers. Therefore, biblically speaking, in order to bring a vision to reality, there has always been a team of people involved, with such examples as Moses, Paul, and Jesus, just to name a few.

Therefore, there must be a plan, because to fail to plan is to plan to fail. Thus, the first step is to assess the health of the existing body through various surveys and questionnaires, such as those found at <http://www.churchcentral.com> and <http://www.ncdinternational.org>. These will provide a good start on getting the existing body headed into the right direction as it pertains to church health. One should also assess celebration attendance, offerings, per capita giving, annual growth rates, first time visiting units per week, and conversions which would help gauge the progression of church health and growth in these areas. All of this is helping to produce church health that will cause a positive atmosphere which is conducive to bringing in the sinner from the street. The mention of church health is consistent because it is vital for a church to be healthy from the pulpit to the door, otherwise, the sinner will be brought into a cancerous situation which is not good. In other words, the church must have hospital sense. Hospital sense means that those that work in the nursery usually do not work on any other floor or ward because they do not want to bring the germs from other wards into the nursery where there are newborn babies. This is the same logic that should be used with newborn Christians. Dr. Wanda Davis Turner says, “The enemy may have people out with orders to seduce and destroy you because of the ministry that God has placed in your life. My warning to you is that you had better walk the straight and narrow! Flee from those harlots; steer clear of every evil thing. When Jesus prepared disciples for ministry, he sent them out ‘by two and two’ for their own protection.”²⁵

²⁵ Wanda Davis-Turner, *Sex Traps* (Shippensburg: Treasure House, 1997), 39.

The response or tactics recommended here for reaching the lost include, but are not limited to, having cook outs at various times inviting those off the street to attend at no cost, several types of social functions, Holy block parties, street revivals, questionnaires, surveys, interviews and the like, in a concentrated effort to get people off the street, converted to Christianity, into new member classes, and taught how to get others of like lifestyles to come to Christ. The church could also implement shelters of various kinds, children's homes, tutoring programs, reading programs, mentor and mentee programs, various feeding programs, drug rehabilitation, literacy projects, prison reform, and medical care facilities, all of which would service the needs of the community.

It is also recommended that each church body restructure the programming of doing "church" whereby it is more strategic and sequential. In other words, the church should concentrate upon an intentional movement of new members from their current position in maturity to another level of maturity through new member classes, short term steps, positive relationships, connecting through groups, and ultimately, encouraging and sending them to make more disciples. Also, one should try to get everyone involved in a concerted effort to reach the lost for Christ through the love of open arms, training, prayer, and a philosophy of spontaneous and planned evangelism. Stetzer says, "Peter was not a failure because he looked down and began to sink. If anyone failed, it was the eleven who stayed in the boat, waiting to see if it could be done. Too many churches are afraid to take risks to reach their community....until it is too late. Instead, they need to become intentionally indigenous."²⁶

²⁶ Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 91.

The church should make every effort to reach great numbers through conversion growth and not through transfer growth and move out of its comfort zone which consists of a place where the leadership is in place, there is no mortgage, the people have grown to love one another for the most part, and they have slipped into a mode of maintenance. This is one of the very reasons that the church for the most part has succumbed to plateau and ultimately decline. The church can reinvent itself to reach lost people and seek to provide love, service and commitment to a community of lost people. Not only that, but so many churches' focus has been totally inward instead of outward, but it should learn from the Great Commission in a concentrated effort to switch their focus to one which is more evangelistic. Therefore, this writer submits that the church's response should be one of which is warm, full of love, teaching about the commands of Jesus and other biblical doctrine, missional, and full of service.

Other tools which can be utilized by the church consist of websites such as <http://www.zipmap.net/> , <http://www.therda.com/> and www.NorthAmericanMissions.org which will assist with understanding such things as population, ethnicity, incomes, housing occupancies, number of evangelicals in the area, type of evangelicals such as blacks or mainline, how many orthodox or Catholics in a community, and lastly, how many people have no affiliation or are unclaimed. These websites can help churches ascertain the types of communities of which they are domiciled thereby getting a better understanding of how to evangelize said community. Thus, this is a good starting point which can assist churches to grow into a more mature Christian community and get involved with the Great Commission. Evangelism begins with a leader's vision for outreach, then bleeds throughout the rest of the leadership of the congregation whereby everyone can be involved in a concerted effort to reach

last, the least, the lost and the left out for Christ through the love of open arms, training, prayer, and a philosophy of spontaneous and planned evangelism.

Chapter Four

Breaking the Power of Sin

The Process

Much of what has been discussed thus far and many of the references have been from a viewpoint that contrasts science or philosophy and Christianity. Before delving completely into how to break the power of sin, one must first distinguish between these two forces. Science is an instrument in examination which involves what is actually discernible, irrefutable, and repeatable in discovering the facts. Science does not completely meet the criteria that man comes from a Deity, but from a natural process. It assumes objective values and ascertains that the human mind and sensory faculties are reliable which are philosophical suppositions and self-refuting. Conversely, Christians believe the biblical account of what is deemed authoritative, inspired, infallible and inerrant in discovering the facts. Authority describes the absolute power and freedom of God. Inspiration declares the actions of God leading to the writing of His words to His people into the Bible. Infallibility describes the Bible as being a reliable guide in matters of faith and practice, whereas inerrancy describes the Bible as being wholly without error in all that it affirms in the original manuscripts.

The Christian believes in the first four words of Scripture which state, "In the beginning God," thus God is the creator of everything which exists. God created the angel Lucifer and the man Adam who both sinned and became separated from God. It was because of the fall of Lucifer and the fall of man that God had to develop a way for man to become reconciled with the Creator. Thus, the Christian must have a sound development of biblical Christology with a strong scriptural base that accepts unequivocally the deity, virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death and bodily resurrection of the Lord and savior Jesus Christ, if the street

sinner is to be taught sound doctrine. Christianity is fundamentally about a person—the person of Jesus. When Jesus was resurrected from the dead, He allowed the disciples to handle and feel his body. The Lord’s appearance was evidenced by the fact that He had scars on His hands and feet. He also had the ability to eat the fish and honey afforded to him by the disciples. The Spirit of God has no material body or form, but Jesus had a tangible body which could be touched by man. Now Jesus has gone back to be with the Father in heaven and is very much alive.

If one is to bring others to Christ, then the Christian also should have a strong hermeneutical core whereby the interpretation of Scripture is competent enough to apologetically defer any heretical views when evangelizing. Oftentimes when a person has been incarcerated for whatever reason, there is a tendency to become an expert on religion, as well as other topics, and the Christian should be ready to defend the gospel of Jesus Christ, as well as the existence of God. This is all a part of breaking the power of sin and the chains that bind many people to heretical belief systems. Therefore, the new convert, as well as more mature Christians, will need some ammunition in this regard. If the sinner wants to become confrontational, so should the Christian. Malphurs says, “Another form of evangelism is confrontational, which involves going door to door or confronting people in public places with the gospel. Friendship evangelism is a form that emphasizes the importance of building relationships with people while sharing the gospel with them.”¹ Thus, if one is going door to door, one should not be surprised or discouraged by anything which may occur, and should be ready for confrontation.

Jesus said, “God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Therefore, God is not limited to a human or physical body. There was no meeting

¹ Aubrey Malphurs, *A New Kind of Church: Understanding Models of Ministry for the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2007), 89.

held to vote God into the position which He now and always will hold. He does not depend on anyone else for His existence. Dr. Towns says, "Perfect existence cannot be added to or subtracted from, nor can it change because that which is perfect must by its very nature be eternal."² Thus it is the opinion of this writer that God has revealed himself through many venues such as historical circumstances, natural phenomena and human religious experiences. The grocery list of these events is extensive, but for brevity and ammunition this can possibly assist one with the aforementioned hermeneutical core. The most significant and powerful display of God's power historically came when he delivered the Israelites from bondage out of the land of Egypt as he divided the Red Sea, enabling the children of Israel to pass through on dry ground, and then drowning Pharaoh's capable army just afterwards. God also displays His power through natural phenomena and extraordinary events which include, but are not limited to earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and snow storms. It is amazing how every small stream, every creek and river flows continuously into the sea, yet the sea never overflows its bounds. This is just another example of the awesomeness of God. Finally, one can also utilize religious experience as ammunition. For example, there was a young man about the age of 14 which had been medically diagnosed with bone spurs. This young man was experiencing excruciating pain. Physicians had explained to him that he must undergo surgery and post-operative physical therapy. In spite of all the medical advice, the young man believed in his heart that God would heal him and deliver him from any type of medical procedures and indeed, one Monday night at the Mission meeting at his church, he was in fact healed by God. He then returned to his doctor and told the doctor what happened and a second x-ray was taken in the place where the bone spurs were previously. Much to the doctor's surprise, the bone spurs were gone. This young man is now 54 at the time of this writing and the bone spurs have never

² Elmer Towns, *Theology for Today* (Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1989), 101.

returned. That young man was indeed the author of this Thesis. When presenting an experience with God such as this to doubters, it may well be the type of evidence that can make the difference of winning a soul to Christ.

In order to break the power of sin, the sinner or new convert needs to be taught about the provision of salvation, permission of sin, providences, creation and the power of Christ to save, deliver and set free. Anderson states, “Every Christian is faced with the choice of walking by the Spirit or by the flesh on a daily basis. The moment you choose to walk according to the flesh, the Holy Spirit brings conviction because what you have just chosen to do is not compatible with who you really are. If you continue in the flesh you will feel the sorrow of conviction.”³ A great part of this decision making process for the Christians is to understand the Trinity which has to do with one God in three distinct persons, each being God. Each person of the Trinity is equal in power and has a specific ministry to fulfill. God the Father is the author of all and God the Son reveals the Father and in Him is the perfect image of God revealed. God the Holy Spirit is the indwelling God which inhabits the bodily temple when one believes in the Father through Jesus Christ. Thus, it is the Holy Spirit that one must embrace when temptation comes in order to fight off satanic attacks. To back this triune God biblically, the Bible says, “For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one” (John 5:7).

The new convert or sinner also needs to be taught that it is a scriptural fact that through the Fall of Man it was by sin that he came into condemnation. There are two contradictory systems that began in the Garden of Eden—the serpent’s suggestion that man’s anthropological status was insufficient and the hopelessness of man’s estate apart from God’s salvation. The

³ Neil T. Anderson, *The Bondage Breaker: Overcoming Negative Thoughts—Irrational Feelings—Habitual Sin* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 2000), 156.

penalty of sin is still death and Adam and Eve eventually came to this realization, but people today should come to this realization as well. After the Fall of Man, God by His love and mercy revealed that the seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). This was the plan of salvation for man. The seed of the woman is a prophecy of the Son of God whereby the only hope for man was this future child Jesus Christ, the savior of the world. This has to do with the incarnation of Jesus, which is the central fact of Christianity. The whole super structure of Christian Theology depends upon the incarnation. The facts surrounding the virgin birth of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith have no legs on which to stand without the incarnation. Thus there are no two ways of salvation because all salvation of God comes through and by the Savior, the Son of God, and His work on the cross. Faith is the key component to salvation because without faith it is impossible to please God. Through the fall, man fell out of communion with God, yet it is through the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that man can once again commune with God and become reconciled with Him. It is by the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the believer is united to the body of Christ and comes into his new position in Christ. The believer becomes a new creation, having received the very eternal life of God. It is by justification that the believer is declared righteous before God because he is now in Christ. This new position in Christ assures the believer's positional sanctification in which he is set apart as holy to God. The believer has the possibility of infinite fellowship with God assisted by the indwelling presence of the triune God and the transformation of His character through the new birth. Ultimate sanctification is also assured the one who is thus reconciled to God, in which the believer's spiritual state is elevated to a higher position. Finally, the final state is when the believer stands perfect and complete, sharing the very glory of Christ in heaven.

The Plan

The plan of the Christian and the local church in breaking the power of sin should begin at home. Oftentimes, vices or habits need to be broken in one's life, but the sinner finds himself waiting on God to do something miraculous, while all the time God is waiting on the sinner to do what is necessary to break the vice. Dr. Towns says, "People want to put the ball in God's court, when all along God wants to give them the ball to empower them to be more responsible. Habits are broken not by external forces, but from within. They must be broken the way they are formed, one act at a time—by submitting to the discipline—by repeatedly choosing not to behave according to habit."⁴ In other words, there are many problems facing local churches in today's culture, and these problems need to be addressed in a manner that will assist the sinner in breaking habitual sin. There are three things which are imperative for the local church to be effective in reaching the lost thereby breaking the power of sin. The church must be holy, color blind, and receptive to positive change. As far as this writer is concerned, this goes straight to the heart of the leadership problems facing the local church. Therefore, it would be safe to say that the Lord requires His bride and individual Christians to be holy. The Lord instructs Moses, "Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be ye holy, for I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 20:7). In today's culture and in memories past, there seems to be an influx of people in leadership positions which are not living a holy life. As an example, Gross states,

Shortly after the first millennium ended, in AD 1095, Godefroy de Bouillon, a French Knight, led the First Crusade and founded the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Religion was leveraged and legislated. Essentially, if a person didn't believe in the established order, they were ostracized, isolated from the mainstream—sometimes even killed. Earlier, the infamous Constantine used the name of Jesus to manipulate, murder, and monopolize.⁵

⁴ Elmer L. Towns, *Fasting for Spiritual Breakthrough: A Guide to Nine Biblical Fasts* (Ventura: Regal Books, 1996), 90.

⁵ Craig Gross and Jason Harper, *No Matter Who You Are or What You've Done: Jesus Loves You This I Know* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 17.

The Bible teaches, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). This teaches that when the Lord Jesus comes again to receive the church, He is not coming back for buildings made with natural hands, but He is coming back for a group of people without spot or wrinkle. If a person is in a leadership position in the church, every possible effort should be made to live a holy life. Every Christian is just a sinner saved by the grace of God, but it is now the responsibility of every Christian to live according to the word of God. When a person proclaims to be Christian, yet continues in sin, he brings the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to an open shame. Some Christians may say that their sins are hidden and are hurting no one but them. Yet, every sin will eventually be found out and it is at this time that the sinner, which the sinning Christian is trying to reach, will be hurt or set back because of what it presents in the way of moral behavior and Christ-likeness. The Bible states, "For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops" (Luke 12:2-3). Therefore, the Christian must live a holy life in every way in order to be the leaders that God intended and especially in the effort to evangelize others to Christ.

With that said, if the church is to be effective in breaking the power of sin, it must also be colorblind. This is a major problem facing local churches, in the opinion of this writer. There are so many people that will probably miss the mark of paradise due to their own prejudices. One must go after everyone who is breathing to bring them to Christ. Any and every prospect must be sought for the Lord. The Christian and the church must be totally colorblind and totally empty of prejudice to seek the lost for Christ. Jesus once said, "And I also say to you that you

are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). Now, for one to fully understand what the Scripture does say, one must sometimes delineate what it does not say. In the pericope of this text, Jesus does not say to Peter “I will build my Jewish church, my black church, my white church, or my Latino church,” but he says emphatically “my church,” which is all inclusive. The church must come to the full understanding that God is no respecter of person, race, or denomination as it pertains to who can accept his Son, Jesus Christ. Hull states, “For most Christians, the racial barrier is not an intellectual one. The average white evangelical says, ‘I would accept a black or other minority who attended my church.’ I believe he means that, but to what degree would he be willing to live in community with minority members?”⁶ In other words, the church must be willing to reach out and embrace all of God’s people regardless of race or cultural background. When the church can come to the full understanding of this fact, it will have alleviated the prejudice that leads to division in the house of God.

God is the epitome of love, for the Bible states, “He who does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 John 4:8). The Church and Christian, to be successful in reaching the lost, must realize that God has a positive and unique plan for everyone’s happiness, prosperity and growth. If the church does not reach people for Christ, their ultimate end is destruction. It should be the goal of every Christian to reach lost souls for Christ. Everyone was just one step away from being lost as Paul declares, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Thus Christians should have broken hearts for their particular city and be committed to bring the lost to Christ. The Great Commission is a command from Jesus to go and

⁶Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Church* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1990), 99.

evangelize the world, and the world starts with one's family, extends to the community and then to the rest of the world. The command is to teach them or make disciples of them and get them to follow the doctrines of Jesus Christ. When disciples are baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost as prescribed by Jesus, they are identified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection and are followers of Christ. It is the job of the Christian to find sinners and get them into a local church and make disciples of them as expeditiously as possible. Yet, with most churches, the problem lies with not getting the newly converted disciple taught in this manner.

Barna states, "Few churches have a life-changing mentoring or coaching program because such a process demands extensive knowledge of the qualities and capacities of the coach and the student as well as the ability to wisely par mentors with appropriate protégés. These are people-intensive processes. Most churches are not structured or emotionally geared to master such processes."⁷

What Christians must realize is that delay is not an option because yesterday is history, and tomorrow is a mystery, so one must accomplish this feat today. In other words, the church and Christian should communicate the gospel in an understandable manner and motivate people to respond to Jesus Christ and encourage them to become responsible members of His church.

Finally, the last problem mentioned here facing the church is the inability to accept positive change and innovative ideas within the organization. The church really needs to come to the realization that the only constant in this life is that everything must change, and the church is no exception. The church needs to understand that there is a paradigm shift in America and the question is not whether change will occur, but what will be the reaction to the inevitable change. It has occurred to this writer by experience that the older one becomes, the more

⁷ George Barna, *Growing True Disciples: New Strategies for Producing Genuine Followers of Christ* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2001), 93.

exaggerated the resistance to change becomes. Of course, this does not apply to everyone because there are always exceptions to the rule. Yet, there are so many people in churches that are relegated to relaxing in their recliners of status quo because the programs that once were very productive have now become outdated or dead and need to be changed. Some people have held a leadership position in church forever and a couple more days, but should rather be a mentor to someone who can keep the church moving in a progressive mode. It is sad but true that some churches are experiencing plateau or decline because of the inability to recognize and institute positive change through innovative ideas. One such innovative idea which could be helpful is to get people involved into smaller groups whereby they can stay connected in community. Rainer states,

Breakout churches understand that church members must get connected with a small group for them to grow in spiritual health and to remain connected with the church. Members who are involved in worship services alone tend to drift toward inactivity. The breakout churches placed great emphasis on small groups, whether in a Sunday school model or a more nontraditional model.⁸

The last thing is that the body of Christ would be a better place for evangelistic efforts if the love of Christ would abide within the confines of the church. The church must learn to love one another despite any differences that may manifest, whether those differences are cultural, linguistic or gender. When this life is over on earth, where one will spend eternity is all that will matter anyway. God's paradise will be tremendously diverse because the Bible says, "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb'" (Rev. 7:9-10).

⁸ Thom S Rainer, *Breakout Churches: Discover How to Make the Leap* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 106.

The Prize

When reaching people for Christ, they should be taught to be encouraged about the things to come. This is something that can be taught during new member classes, Sunday school, Bible study, men's or women's groups or any other type class which the local church deems appropriate. When the power of sin has been adequately broken, there is a prize which every Christian has to look forward to at the Second Advent of Christ. The Second Advent of Christ will not be a secret event. It has been described as lightning spreading across the heavens from the east to the west. All the earth will see this event and Christ will then come back accompanied by clouds and with great power and glory. Christ will establish His throne and judge the nations, separating the sheep from the goats—the saved of God from the unsaved. One day every born again Christian will have the opportunity to stand before the throne of Christ saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb” (Rev. 7:10). Conversely, Christ will then take vengeance upon unbelievers and the heavens and the earth will be destroyed. Christ is also revealed as coming from heaven on a white horse accompanied by the armies of heaven to claim his right as King of Kings and Lord of Lords and to judge the wicked (Rev. 19). Revelation 20 indicates that Satan will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit to remain inactive the entire 1000 years of Christ's reign on the earth. Satan is bound so that he will not deceive the nations, but will be loosed after the 1000 years have passed. It is so sad to think about the many people who had the opportunity to choose life, but instead will have to spend an eternity in eternal damnation. Not so with the believer! As Billy Graham says, “The Christian knows he has eternal life, ‘And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and

this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life”⁹ (1 John 5:11-12).

Although the Christian has a wonderful opportunity to look forward to in the life to come whereby every day can be spent with Jesus, there is really a great opportunity on this side of glory which should be taught as well. John said, “Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers” (3 John 2). In conjunction with that Jesus said, “If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7). Thus, this writer is of the opinion that God does not desire that one should be without physically, spiritually or financially. In other words there is a prerequisite to God’s promise; “if” we abide in Him then God will act on His promise. Yet, someone has to teach those who are just coming into the body of Christ that there are many benefits and promises that God has made unto them “if” they live by the word of God. The book of Malachi records, “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and try me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such a blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it” (Mal. 3:10). Notice, there is the little big word again, “if,” which means that one must follow the game plan of God. God will follow His plan for man explicitly, but man must follow God’s plan as well. In other words, men and women must live according to the word of God and treat one another with the love of Jesus, and God will do just what He said.

If Christians are to change the world with the teachings of Christ, the prerequisite is to change the way one lives and acts. In other words, one must act in a manner as to please Jesus through one’s lifestyles and treat one another with love and respect. No one can change a live

⁹ Billy Graham, *Hope for a Troubled Heart: Finding God in the Midst of Pain* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1991), 177.

streaming world with an eight-track mentality. The Church and Christian must come out of the dark ages of bigotry and hatred and understand that God made everyone in His likeness and image. This can be accomplished, but oftentimes, when people are evangelized from the street, many will look at them with indignation because of their appearance such as tattoos, dress, piercings or hairstyles. Dr. Earley states, “A good football coach coaches players, not just football. A successful math teacher teaches students, not just math. An effective multiplier mentors leaders, and doesn’t merely communicate skills. There’s no discipleship without relationship.”¹⁰ Thus, if one will make disciples for Christ, he must not make the mistake of disqualifying people before they even get started.

The Christian can utilize his testimony, worship, and communication in a decisive and culture transcending way. The proper way to do this is to make sure that one’s testimony accentuates God and not oneself. One must be sure that one’s worship reflects the greatness and transcendence of God that will bring about change to one’s lifestyle and love to one’s hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. When this is accomplished the believer will experience a bona fide relationship with God that is full of nearness, interaction, and knowledge. All these things will assist the believer in his attempts to communicate the gospel to the lost. It is very possible to reach people through the process of servant evangelism or intentional acts of kindness as practical and effective ways of showing the love of Jesus to others that may just prompt them to come to Christ. The church must adopt innovative ways of communicating the gospel to others such as the Internet. Internet evangelism can be a powerful way of communicating the gospel through social networks, email, chat rooms, and blogs that could be more thought provoking and extensive than just traditional evangelism. Christians can utilize the computer to create a

¹⁰ Dave Earley, *Turning Members into Leaders: How to Raise up Your Group Members to Lead New Groups* (Houston: Cell Group Resources, 2003), 46.

database of friends, relatives, church members, and evangelistic prospects that could have a powerful effect if utilized. Also there are other innovative ways of reaching the lost such as events, competition centered sports, and school evangelism, which if utilized, would be great ways of reaching out to the lost of this world. All of these things are very gratifying to the soul and are at the heart of the prize or reward. The Bible says, “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works” (Matt. 16:27).

Another portion of the prize, which should be taught to every new convert, is that the Holy Spirit lives within each believer. What an awesome blessing it is to have God residing within each believer and all sinners saved by grace. To qualify these statements with the word of God, the person and work of the Holy Spirit as portrayed in the Gospel of John is seen pre-eminently as to reveal Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also necessary to delve into the life and testimony of Jesus in conjunction with the person and work of the Holy Spirit in John’s Gospel. John’s Gospel is an uncompromising argument for the deity of Jesus Christ. Thus John records the miracles and statements that could only be ascribed to God himself. When God revealed His name to Moses (Ex. 3:14), He utilized the “I AM.” Jesus also used this same “I AM” statement concerning himself throughout the book of John which indicates His claim to deity. By the same token, Paul, by using the word “temple” in terms of the Spirit indwelling the believer, is making the claim of deity to the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Godhead; He has personality. A personality implies the existence of certain attributes and as Jesus is the truth in John’s Gospel, so then the Spirit of truth leads disciples to the full appreciation of His life and teaching which guides into truth, glorifies Christ, brings to

remembrance, bears witness, declares things to come, and brings to meaning the unanswered teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Spirit is the new dispensational character of the Trinity which will guide the Disciples of Christ into all things pertaining to righteousness. Although the word Trinity is not found in the New Testament, it is certainly implied by Jesus in His teachings concerning God in three distinct persons, therefore implying the Godhead. Jesus gave equal credence to each member of the Trinity by including the Holy Spirit in the baptismal formula (Matt. 28:19). This close association with other members of the Trinity indicates that the Holy Spirit is a person. Also the Bible recognizes the three persons of the Godhead as equal in nature, separate in person and subservient in duties.

Therefore the person and work of the Holy Spirit is such that He is God upon the earth “in” every believer. Peter, in his conversation with Ananias, says “Why hath Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not our own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:3-4). While the incarnate Christ was still upon the earth, the Spirit could not fulfill His office as true revealer of Christ because the atoning work of Christ was not yet completed. Once this work had been accomplished, the Holy Spirit would replace Jesus upon the earth and be “in” every believer and guide into all truth. As Christ was on earth, He prayed for the believer, so in the same manner, the Bible states, “Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weakness. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered” (Rom. 8:26).

Although John the Baptist could not recognize Jesus initially, this work of the Holy Spirit identified Jesus as the true Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world, which established the witness of John the Baptist concerning Jesus. This is one of the witnesses utilized by Jesus against the accusations of the Pharisees. Thus the Holy Spirit can be recognized here as having the ability to perform the specific task of witnessing to the personage of Jesus Christ.

The new convert should also be taught about worship, for to worship carries the idea of God's worth to an individual and how that worth is expressed unto God. Jesus says, "The true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 5:23). In the Bible, people went to the temple to worship, but Jesus unveils the fact that one does not have to be in a specific place to worship God. God is not limited by time and space. Worship should come from the heart or spirit of man, and therefore one can worship God at any time. When sinners are brought to Christ, they should be taught how the Holy Spirit can break strongholds in their lives and assist them with the ability to no longer participate in actions that are conducive to strongholds. In their book *Breaking the Missional Code*, Stetzer and Putman state, "To break the code, we need to recognize and pray against the cultural and spiritual strongholds of our communities. How? Well, when we pray for people, we pray that God will do his work in their hearts and break the strongholds of disobedience, and we pray for the Holy Spirit to do his work."¹¹ Due to the fact that God is Spirit, His desire is that man would worship Him by the realm of which He is analogous, which is spirit. The other aspect of this worship is truth. This would involve man's worship being genuine. There is so much false worship in the world today, as there was in the day of Jesus, whether that be the worship of false gods or the hypocritical worship of God which

¹¹ Ed Stetzer and David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 88.

involves playacting on Sunday and living unholy on every other day of the week. Thus the person of the Holy Spirit is “in” the believer in such a fashion that will cause God to be pleased with the believer’s actions, not just on Sunday, but every day of the week. Therefore the Holy Spirit has an interest in the new convert’s life as He leads into all things pertaining to righteousness.

The new convert should also be taught about the sacrament of communion. Jesus had just been teaching His disciples about eating His flesh and drinking His blood, at which time many of the disciples proclaimed that this was a “hard saying” and deserted Him because of it. Jesus was trying to explain to all who would hear His Word that His teaching had much to do with having everlasting life and if one could just see past the physical realm and believe on Him, that this life would be his for the taking. In spite of all the miraculous things that Jesus had performed in the disciples’ presence, yet the majority would still not believe on Him as the Son of God. Jesus gives a contrast between Spirit and flesh. He explains that the real meanings of His message was Spirit and not flesh because the flesh is profitable for nothing and the Spirit in contrast is profitable for eternal life. The word quicken carries the denotation of being made alive or to revive which is a work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, everyone who comes into the body of Christ has this wonderful prize of walking with the Lord in the Holy Spirit and not according to the flesh. Thus, as the new convert continues in this walk, he or she can partake of Jesus’ body and blood in communion as prescribed by the Lord (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

Chapter Five

From Destitute to Disciple

The Commitment

To be destitute indicates that one is lacking something of which is needed. Thus, the people which are the focal point here are defined as needing Jesus due to the precarious predicament in which they find their souls. They are trying to fill a void in their souls with drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, money, and any other vice that pleases the flesh. Oftentimes, people do not know they are in need of Jesus until they have exhausted every other option and by then they perceive their options as being “too late.” Yet, there is help for every individual and it is the Christian and church’s responsibility to get these people connected with the Lord by any means necessary and to make disciples of them. Benner says,

Another consideration is that Christians, in their relationship to the Lord, have resources available to facilitate their growth in the direction of a more intrinsic religious orientation. This increases the possibility that their religion will enable them to overcome the less healthy effects of their background and thereby develop in more positive directions. Involved in their growth is the gradual awareness of the wholeness they actually possess through their commitment to Jesus Christ.¹

It is this commitment that gives the sinner who has come to Christ a new sense of hope on which to cling. This hope is found, but still fragile and needs to be nourished by those mentors who are to follow up with the new born Christian and seek to take that hope to another level. Benner continues, “Theologically hope serves the function of linking the believer to the future promised by Christ. As the follower of Christ experiences a new spiritual life, there is a keen awareness that the earthly enjoyments of faith in Christ are incomplete. What has begun on earth will continue into eternity. Hope links the believer’s present with a glorious future.”² Yet,

¹ David G. Benner, *Psychology and Religion* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), 109.

² *Ibid.*, 304

all too often, churches are so focused upon getting people to come to “their” church, that the real matter of getting them to come to Christ is overlooked. What should be done is to get them to come to Christ at all costs and then get them to a Bible believing and teaching church where they can be taught how to become disciples and eventually win others to Christ.

The ultimate intent for every believer is to become spiritually mature, which is measured not only by one’s learning, but by one’s lifestyle; thus the commitment to Jesus and winning souls for Christ is for the believer, as well as the body of Christ, which is the church. This commitment has much to do with recognizing the sinners and all the ramifications which surround trying to get them to come to Christ, but also recognizing those people who are already in the church, those who possibly have bad intentions concerning the welfare of the church in general and who oppose evangelistic outreach. Jesus started with people at their level of commitment, but He never left them there. He taught them how to grow in commitment and loyalty to Him. The church and Christian also must mimic this process of Jesus and veer away from the non-biblical traditions of men. Disciples should never be afraid of interacting with the un-churched and proceed to grow the church from the outside in, rather than from the inside out. One should be reminded that Jesus stated, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Luke 5:32). Thus, the church should have a target group in mind when committing to outreach. It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people. It is vital that the local church focuses its resources on reaching the people with whom it best communicates. As indicated by this writer in previous chapters, not every church is well suited for the type of street ministry mentioned in this dissertation, but every church does have the capability as all things are possible with Christ. With that said, one must ascertain the type of leaders in a church, the type of people who already attend, and then delineate the focus of outreach. In other words, dynamic

growth occurs when the type of people in the community will match the type of people that are already in the church, and they both match the personality type of the pastor and the leadership. Thus, growing churches focus on reaching receptive people, whereas non-growing churches focus on re-enlisting inactive people, and maintaining the status quo.

In the previous chapters, the mindset of various unbelievers and sinners labeled the last, the least, the lost and the left out has been studied. Thus, in order for the new converts to become as fishermen, they must be taught to be serious in every effort to catch the unbeliever. This is not always an easy task because there are times when the road gets rough because God never promised that this assignment would be a flowery bed of rose petals. Dr. Manuel Scott, Sr. says, “Well, for one thing, the road gets rough because we Christians share sympathetically and empathetically in the general misery of the world—its diseases, injustices, inequalities and mysteries. The mature saint cannot afford the luxury of being parochial, provincial and particularistic as it relates to people.”³ In other words, the mature saint must be innovative in thinking and action as it pertains to the people of God.

Dr. Scott continues, “We are planetary in our affection and in our awareness. The Great Commission with its ‘teach all nations’ and ‘go into all the world’ issues an ethical as well as an evangelistic imperative. The Commission commands us to be cosmopolitan in our concern and consciousness.”⁴ This is not a suggestion, but a command, yet once the sinners are caught, the church must keep them interested in worship. This writer has attended a plethora of church services and one pet peeve is dead time between various activities during the church service. It is at this time that people become bored and sometimes even fall asleep. Therefore, the church

³ Manuel Scott, Jr. *The Quotable Manuel Scott, Sr.: Words from a Gospel Genius* (Los Angeles: Manuel Scott Jr. Ministries, Inc. 2010), 171.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

should try to create the most attractive atmosphere as possible for the people whether they are saints or sinners after which the church can work on the spiritual maturity of the people which is demonstrated more by behavior than by beliefs.

Another very important factor in attracting and retaining the lost is the ministry of music. People listen to music practically everywhere they go especially the younger generation who continuously walk around with electronic devices such as the iPod, iPhone, various types of tablets, and e-readers. It is this writer's opinion that the music at the church should be attractive because it sets the mood of the service and worship. The church should realize that if people are going to become involved in the music department of the church, they must have the type of music that will not have them bored to tears, but moved to tears by the penetrating power of the Holy Spirit through the music and songs with which they can identify. This pertains to giving God one's all and not a halfhearted commitment to service and worship. Therefore, when people are brought to Christ and into the church, they must feel comfortable to participate in a manner that is pleasing to God and to the individual. Dr. Rick Warren says, "God is pleased when our worship is authentic. When Jesus said you must 'worship in spirit,' he wasn't referring to the Holy Spirit, but to your spirit. Made in God's image, you are a spirit that resides in a body, and God designed your spirit to communicate with him. Worship is your spirit responding to God's Spirit."⁵

Every Christian and church should keep in mind that the task here is made tough by certain people already established within the church.

⁵ Richard Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth am I here For* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 101.

Dr. Scott says,

These are self-appointed historical societies who see themselves as guardians of the status quo and keepers of the past. This militant company makes sure that many of our churches look like antique shops and conservatories. They reject the idea that novelty is the spice of life and that change is the condition for betterment. Jesus had this group in mind when He said, “Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition” (Matt. 15:6).⁶

Thus, the Christian must be aware of these types which position themselves with others of like mindedness in an attempt to thwart the plan of God for his people. For example, in the movie “Shawshank Redemption,” a character named Brooks, who had been institutionalized so long, that when he was given the opportunity to go free did something very outlandish in an effort to stay in prison. Much like this man, many church leaders position themselves in church so as to look and feel important to others within the church, but unknowingly their position is to maintain the status quo and undermine any type of innovation. According to Cole,

The organized church has become an institution and its leaders are much like Brooks. Inside the institution they are important people, educated people. Outside they are nothing, with no clout, no power, nothing impressive. It is dangerous when the institution becomes the leader’s source of identity and purpose. Soon the leader feels compelled to give his or her life to maintaining the institution. In essence the leader is a prisoner and cannot imagine life on the outside.⁷

In a society where it seems that anything goes, people do not have a fearful respect toward the officials of the church. People of today’s society will not hesitate to take the officials of the church to court in an effort to expose church affairs to an appreciative and amused media which has proven in the past to participate in efforts to make a mockery of God’s bride. Oftentimes, there are people who strive to form various groups which are bent on behaving in a

⁶ Manuel Scott, Jr. *The Quotable Manuel Scott, Sr.: Words from a Gospel Genius* (Los Angeles: Manuel Scott Jr. Ministries, Inc. 2010), 175.

⁷ Neil Cole, *Organic Leadership: Leading Naturally Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009), 34.

fashion which produces an offensive stench before the God of heaven full of hurricanes of hate and hailstorms of hell. Thus, for the church to thwart this activity, a Bible-based system of church discipline must be practiced on a consistent basis. The type of biblical discipline can be found in Matt. 18:15-17.

There has been much ado made throughout chapter one about gangs in the street and how to interact with them in an effort to mobilize them toward Christ. Yet, the church and Christians should be aware of the more understated and ominous gangs or divisions which form in the church through the aforementioned types of people within the church. Many of these people have no love for the leader as they have a vendetta from past administrations which have absolutely nothing to do with the present administration which is trying to carry on the missional vision of which God has given them to carry out. In other words, if the church is successful in efforts to reach the lost, the church must not be unaware of the opposition from within the church, as well as the aforementioned obstacles outside of the church. No one ever said that this road would be easy, but if one would hold on to God's unchanging hand, He will inevitably take the new convert from one good degree of grace to another. It is not that these people are altogether bad, because they, too, belong to God, but the mature Christian must not be naive as it pertains to their agendas. Outler says, "God's demand for righteousness, faith and love stands beyond man's power to obey forthwith—and yet the demand remains as the norm and measure of the relative approximations of it that men achieve. Because of this radical demand, all human achievements must be judged in the eschatological light of God's kingdom and final purposes."⁸ Thus, the church must recognize this activity in an effort to protect the unity of the church, without which harmony within the body becomes non-existent. Dr. Warren continues,

⁸ Albert C. Outler, *Psychotherapy and the Christian Message* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1954), 238.

It is our job to protect the unity of the church. Unity in the church is so important that the New Testament gives more attention to it than to either heaven or hell. God deeply desires that we experience oneness and harmony with each other. Unity is the soul of fellowship. Destroy it, and you rip the heart out of Christ's Body. It is the essence, the core, of how God intends for us to experience life together in his Church"⁹

If the church is to move persons who are fresh off the street, some of which are participating in every type of illicit activity imaginable, and move them into the body of Christ as disciples, every effort must be taken to preach the unadulterated gospel in a fashion which does not sugarcoat sin. The preacher is under orders from God to delve into issues of immorality, institutional iniquities, governmental greed, personal perversion and societal sins. Thus, if the preacher is to win souls and keep the new converts from returning to their wicked ways, these issues and enigmas must be dealt with in an indisputable and irrefutable manner. This will leave no room for doubt as it pertains to indiscretions on the part of the person who is on the milk of the word of God as Satan will seek to creep back into the house which has been cleaned and swept by the Holy Spirit (Matt. 12:43-45). In other words, the church cannot be naïve concerning the fact that many of the people in the church, not to mention those whom the church is seeking to pull from the fire, must deal with consistent satanic attacks. Cole adds, "Satan is a deceptive and sinister enemy who hijacks God's creation any way he can. He always lies to us. He tempts us to think that God cannot or will not meet our needs, which he gave us in the first place. Then we think we have to take matters into our own hands. This is when we take the first step toward bondage to an evil and maniacal master."¹⁰ Therefore, it is the duty of each Christian to be aware of this and provide a comprehensive and practical plan of defense against these attacks. Yet, one should not be deceived into thinking that the church must come up with

⁹ Ibid., 161

¹⁰ Ibid., 50.

something new concerning this as God has already provided what we need biblically. Metaxas says, “A major theme for Bonhoeffer was that every Christian must be ‘fully human’ by bringing God into his whole life, not merely into some ‘spiritual’ realm. To be an ethereal figure who merely talked about God, but somehow refused to get his hands dirty in the real world in which God had placed him was bad theology.”¹¹

The Change

Much like the challenge, the change must take place within the church as well as within the sinner. Therefore, the church must start to think as a missionary due to the command of the Lord, namely the Great Commission. Missionaries go from house to house, walk through dangerous territories, pass out literature and are trained physically, intellectually and spiritually for the task at hand. Thus, the church should be no different as it pertains to reaching out into their section, region and global boundaries. At the very least a church should reach out with literature which may have an impact upon someone. Eastman writes,

I believe that there is no difference, if those who respond to literature are truly searching to know Jesus. Paul made it clear in his letter to the Christians at Rome that he was “not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). The Good News, even when printed very simply in a booklet, can change a life when it is empowered by God’s Spirit.¹²

Also the sinners, once they have come to the realization that a change is needed in their lives, must repent, turn from their wicked ways and accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. Although this may sound very simple, one should always be aware of the strongholds of Satan

¹¹ Eric Metaxas, *Bonhoeffer Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy: A Righteous Gentile VS. The Third Reich* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 2010), 361.

¹² Dick Eastman, *Look What God is Doing: True stories of People Around the World Changed by the Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2009), 89.

even after one has made up his mind to follow Christ. It is that one particular problem that seems to be a leech and so hard to shake from one's life. Lucado says,

What is that one weakness, bad habit, rotten attitude? Where does Satan have a stronghold within you? Ahh, there is the fitting word—stronghold: a fortress, citadel, thick walls, and tall gates. It's as if the devil staked a claim on one weakness and constructed a rampart around it. "You ain't touching this flaw," he defies heaven, placing himself squarely between God's help and your explosive temper, fragile self-image, freezer-size appetite, and distrust for authority.¹³

This is where the mature Christian should teach and follow up with the new convert on the ways in which to fight against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:11).

Just as a teaching scenario, if someone would show up at church reeking of alcohol or is perhaps dressed as what some would deem "inappropriately," some people who consider themselves saved and sanctified could look at that person as if he had come to the wrong place. Yet, this is not the case, he has come to the absolute right place, unless the church is much like the one of which Mr. Oliver tried to join. The story of Mr. Oliver's encounter, who is this writer's uncle, is as such. He went to a revival meeting at a particular church in his neighborhood and was so convicted by the word of God coming from the preacher that he extended his heart in an attempt to accept Jesus and join that church, only to find opposition from the deacons of the church. The next night he went back to the church and was so convicted the second time by the preached word of God that he went down the church aisle in an attempt to join the church again only to find opposition from what he deemed as a very unlikely source, the pastor of the church. Upon asking, he found out that their criterion for Mr. Oliver not joining their church was because he did not fit the preconceived notion of what a person should look like in their church. So, dejected and discontented, Mr. Oliver went home, fell upon his knees and

¹³ Max Lucado, *Facing Your Giants: A David and Goliath Story for Everyday People* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 102.

began to ask Jesus why he could not come to Him and join that church. After praying he lay down upon his bed and went to sleep. Sometime during the night, Mr. Oliver had a dream and in his dream he heard the voice of Jesus saying to him, “Don’t worry about not getting into that church, because I too, have been trying to get into that church for a long time, to no avail, but I accept you as my own.” The moral of this story is to never allow one’s church to become like the one in this story which had preconceived notions as to what people should look like when they come to accept Jesus and join the body of Christ.

The Charge

Whenever anyone comes into the family of Jesus Christ, he or she is charged by God to walk according to the Spirit of God and not according to the flesh. The Bible states, “If you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Rom. 8:13). Thus, the ultimate goal is to live in eternity with the Lord. In conjunction with this Jesus taught His disciples to “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The Spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matt. 26: 41). St. Teresa says, “If then temptation comes from our natural temperament, there are few who can consider themselves so strong as to be negligent about this danger. As long as we live, even for the sake of humility, it is good to be realistic about our own miserable nature.”¹⁴ An acronym for the word “watch” can be utilized as a teaching tool to emphasize what Jesus exhorts in the previous verse of Scripture.

W: disciples should watch their “ways!” One’s ways should reflect a Christ-like character. The conversation should become the gospel of Jesus Christ (Php. 1:27). Oftentimes Christians will allow themselves to get caught up into talking about people in a manner which is

¹⁴ James M. Houston, *St. Teresa of Avila: A Life of Prayer* (Colorado Springs: Cook Communications Ministries, 2006), 79.

not pleasing unto God. When one allows this to happen in a judgmental type fashion, it is possible one is trying to usurp the authority and judgeship of Jesus the Christ. Also, one's ways are inclusive of the places where one goes. If one goes to where sinners "hang out," it should be for the purpose of getting them to come to Christ and it should be in the fashion that Jesus sent out disciples, two by two. In other words, when going into the enemy's camp, Christians should not allow the enemy's devices to bleed upon them, but should change the sinners' minds apologetically, and allow the blood of Jesus to bleed upon them. As an example, whenever Jesus decided to heal a leper, he touched the leper. Everyone knew that lepers should not be touched because they were tremendously contagious. Jesus did not need to touch someone in order to heal them; such is the case of the Roman Centurion's servant as Jesus did not come to the Centurion's house, but spoke the word as requested by the Roman Centurion and his servant was healed the same hour that Jesus spoke the word (Matt. 8:8). The point is this, when Jesus healed a leper, He was making a point to every disciple: Jesus touched the leper and the leper became whole. Likewise when the Christian comes into contact with the world on their turf, the Christian should change them and not the other way around.

A: disciples should watch their "actions!" As the old adage says, "actions speak louder than words." There was never a truer saying than this one. Again, a Christian's actions should reflect a Christ-like character and he should be a mentor or coach to those who are brought to Christ. Johnson says, "The concept of mentoring seems a bit intimidating to most men or seems focused on achieving career success. Mentoring also conjures up the responsibility to be some great, wise teacher who never fails and never makes mistakes. No man can live up to that expectation. And yet God has given us gifts and the power to influence lives beyond

comprehension.”¹⁵ Oftentimes people will say that an individual must practice what is preached, but I heard a professor at Liberty University say that one should “preach what is practiced.” In other words, the disciple should have a practice or steady diet of prayer, Bible study, and solitude with God, all of which include spiritual formation. Yet, Dr. Falwell taught that every Christian should give to the Lord, namely, through time, talent, temple, testimony and treasure. The giving of one’s time involves solitude in prayer, intensive Bible study, heartfelt worship, Christian service to one’s fellowman, all of which will bring glory to the Lord. The giving of talent has to do with gifts and abilities which can be exercised in ministries such as soul winning, singing, ushering, dancing, busing, visiting, just to name a few. The physical bodies are the temple of God (1 Cor.6:19-20). In other words, the disciple should bring glory to God with the body which involves being sanctified or set apart to God. Testimonies are a lifestyle evangelism which has the ability to influence others by the seed of the gospel to come on the Lord’s side and should be lived, as well as told. Lastly, Christians should glorify God with the treasure, which involves the giving of tithes and offerings (Gen.14:20; Mal. 3: 8-10; Matt. 23: 23). These are just some of the ways in which Christians should watch their actions.

T: disciples should watch their “thoughts!” As stated previously, a disciple of Christ is by definition three things—a student, a learner and a pupil. Thus, when someone becomes a disciple of Jesus, his thoughts should bend toward a more educational type venue. Education has to do with teaching and learning; it is a development of one’s mental and moral potential. Cognitive development deals with the mental maturation process that allows one to handle more abstract thinking, ideas, and concepts. It is mental maturation. The educational process would be severely hindered without the cognitive mental maturation process which is a large part of

¹⁵ Rick Johnson, *The Power of a Man: Using Your Influence as a Man of Character* (Grand Rapid: Revell, 2009), 84.

learning. It increases one's ability to grow in measure, capacity, maturity and ability which should lead to an individual's ability to fulfill his or her personal destiny and to live in and contribute to his or her culture.

Once Jesus Christ becomes the focal point of learning, then mere education becomes Christian education. Christian education is a process wherein certain criteria and components must be met such as disciplines of Bible study, prayer, fasting, simplicity, solitude, confession, and worship. Yet all of this is a moot point without the direction of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Price says, "Without that spiritual life, you cannot understand the Bible. You might read it in your native language, but you will not understand its message. Therefore, the new birth is the rebirth of the human spirit and does not affect your physical body. Why? Because all flesh can do is reproduce more flesh; that's why Jesus said you have to be born from above."¹⁶ Therefore, all learning revolves around an exchange of information whereby communication is pertinent. This process of learning has both physical and psychological elements such as physical development, cognitive development, moral development, faith development, decision making, new information, new skills, new behaviors, readjusted attitudes and values, and different emotional responses, all of which causes positive change in the individual. This change will be noticeable to others through the love that is shown by the disciple of Jesus. It is through Christian education that an individual should grow in wisdom, stature, favor with God and man, always being led of the Holy Spirit.

Lastly, communication is a huge part of the thought process and making disciples, for without communication the message is lost.

Peterson explains,

¹⁶ Frederic K. C. Price, *Race Religion & Racism: Jesus, Christianity & Islam* (Los Angeles: Faith One Publishing, 2002), 213.

Story is the primary verbal means of bringing God's word to us. For that we can be most grateful, for story is our most accessible form of speech. Young and old love stories! Literate and illiterate alike tell and listen to stories. Neither stupidity nor sophistication puts us outside the magnetic field of story. The only serious rival to story in terms of accessibility and attraction is song, and there are plenty of those in the Bible too.¹⁷

If a disciple of Christ is to grow in maturity, the message of Christ should be conveyed in a clear and concise way, or in other words, he should be told the story. Also, the mature Christian should communicate with God in prayer on behalf of the new convert. The Christian should always have a relationship with Jesus and should also be able to communicate to the new convert how this relationship is to be cultivated. The Christian should also communicate to new converts a process that will assist them with perseverance. New converts must have someone who follows up with him during times of weakness for the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matt. 26:41). Thus, if time is spent in prayer for others, there will be a return on the investment. Dr. Towns says, "One way that we can prevail for others is by committing to spend our time and energy in prayer for them until they experience salvation in Christ."¹⁸

The importance of learning and understanding Christianity is embedded in the communication process, communication with others, but more importantly communication with God. The disciple must understand that there are costs associated with full commitment to Christ in a life of service. This often means that people that have been accustomed to a life that is filled with luxury and the pleasures associated with that may not be as wealthy as they once were after coming to Jesus. In other words, people who are associated with selling drugs and dealing in prostitution are oftentimes draped in the lap of luxury, but this lifestyle may come to an end when they come to Christ and give up those practices. Once they have given up those practices,

¹⁷ Eugene H. Peterson, *Eat This Book: A Conversation in the Art of Spiritual Reading* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2006), 40.

¹⁸ Elmer L. Towns, *How To Pray: When You Don't Know What to Say* (Ventura: Regal Books, 2006), 117.

new converts should learn to become productive citizens by getting a job, budgeting and staying out of debt. It is possible that they may not know exactly how to stay out of debt because of previous practices, but certain changes must take place.

Klontz and Kahler says,

Gaining control of your finances, overcoming debt, and becoming able to provide for your future financial security might well require you to learn to drive cheaper cars, live in a smaller house, and wear less expensive clothing than you have been accustomed to doing. The willingness to accept a less affluent financial comfort zone, at least for a while, could be the wisest long-term investment in yourself that you could ever make.¹⁹

Without this understanding, the disciple may grow weary along the way and become as the sower's seed which was eventually devoured by the wicked one in some form (Matt. 13:3-7). But if the communication process is comprehensible, then the possibility of the teacher conveying the message of Christ is drastically improved. It is through the communication process of all aspects mentioned above that the teacher enables the student to become a true disciple for Christ. The result of which is someone that produces holistic personal transformation, is determined to become a blessing to others, is aggressively pursuing spiritual growth, develops renewed lifestyles, is concerned about the quality of his character rather than the extent of his knowledge, builds churches known for their culture of love, is committed to service and facilitates people devoted to a lifelong journey to imitate Jesus Christ.

C: disciples should watch the “company” they keep! In an effort to be a disciple of Christ after one has been changed by the power of God and come out of darkness into the marvelous light, one must go into the midst of all kinds of people because the Great Commission commands the church to evangelize the world. The world starts with one's own family, extends to the community, and then to the rest of the world. The life that God intends involves making

¹⁹ Brad Klontz, Ted Klontz and Rick Kahler, *Wired For Wealth: Change the Money Mindsets That Keep You Trapped and Unleash Your Wealth Potential* (Deerfield Beach: Health Communications Inc., 2008), 56.

disciples, teaching people the gospel, and nurturing them to a point whereby the process repeats itself, whereby the goal is to evangelize others to come to Christ. Therefore, a person will come in contact with all kinds of people in an attempt to communicate the gospel in an understandable manner and motivating people to respond to the gospel message of Jesus Christ, thereby becoming responsible members in relationship with Christ and the church.

There is a historical or traditional perspective that should be brought to the table in making disciples for Christ. This aspect would deal with the societal and cultural socialization of the potential disciple. God is the creator of culture and by creating people, families, and communities of families, He created culture. By itself culture is neither positive nor negative. However, cultures are made up of sinful people who do act sinfully and who are in constant need of alignment to the will of God in how they relate to one another and to Him. Christians cannot choose the context in which to carry out the Great Commission in an effort make disciples of all nations. The Christian cannot choose the worldviews of the people they seek to reach; however, Christians can choose how to respond to the various contexts in which God's message is communicated.

H: disciples should watch their "heart!" As the central organ of the body, the heart has come to stand for the center of moral, intellectual and spiritual life. Even eating and drinking are spoken of as strengthening the heart as Luke says, "nevertheless he did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts 14:17). Also, the heart and intellect are closely related to one another (Matt. 13:15; Prov. 23:7), the heart is related to acts of will (2 Cor. 9:7), and the heart is connected to the emotions (James 3:14). Dr. Davis says,

There is a myriad of words we use to describe the special part of us that governs how we live a meaningful life: the psyche, the soul, the self, the heart. No matter which term we

use, this entity is our gyroscope, that uniquely human trait that centers us. Here reside our core beliefs about who we are, what gives meaning to our lives, and how we fit into the world. Our hearts, minds and souls show us how to lead what has been called an “authentic” life.²⁰

Thus if the Christian is to watch his heart, the proper way to do this is to beware of certain types of sin which can penetrate the heart and produce an ill effect such as temptation. Temptation comes in various forms such as lying, stealing, various kinds of abuse, gossip, gluttony, possessions, power, and sexual immorality. The initial stages of these sins begin with a certain thought pattern that begins in the heart and mind. These thoughts need to be brought under God’s control so that the Christian’s journey with Christ is not distracted by the world and the flesh. The sins of speech which originate within the heart are produced by the most unruly member of the body, the tongue, and should be kept in check by asking God for discernment as one prayerfully examines his words. One should also guard against the sins of attitude as the Christian’s attitude is a direct reflection upon the person he represents, Jesus Christ. In an effort to watch the heart, new converts should be aware that bitterness, grudges, improper relationships, neglecting regular fellowship with the local church and inconsistency in reading God’s word can be extremely harmful. The sin of commission, which consists of any type of transgression against the Word of God, should be guarded against. One should be reminded that the old nature of man that remains undetected and very much alive in various areas of one’s heart, and should be mortified on a daily basis. One should also not to allow the sin of ingratitude to creep into the heart. Therefore one should be careful to always acknowledge God in thanksgiving. The Bible says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, which whom there is no variation or shadow of turning (James 1:17).

²⁰ Scott M. Davis, *Living Jonathan’s Life: A Doctor’s Descent into Darkness and Addiction* (Deerfield Beach: Health Communications Inc., 2007), 129.

Lastly, as indicated throughout this thesis, many people are trying to fill a void in their souls with drugs, alcohol, sex, violence, money, and any other vice that pleases the flesh. When seeking to win these people to Christ, the following is a list of questions that may be utilized on questionnaires or during interviews which may be helpful in winning them and keeping them on track:

1. Have you trusted Jesus as complete payment for your sin and as the sole provider of power in your life to be born again?
2. Are you willing to complete a new member class?
3. Will you do your part in trying to fight against and destroy the works of the flesh?
4. Will you do your part in trying to cultivate the works of the Spirit of God in your life?
5. Are you willing to be involved in ministry in a small group?
6. Are you willing to make (church name) your weekly place of worship and celebration of the Lord Jesus Christ?
7. Will you become actively involved in daily prayer, Bible study, Sunday school attendance, and financial support of the ministry?
8. Will you place yourself under the mentorship and leadership of this church whereby you can grow in spiritual maturity?
9. Have you ever been baptized by immersion as prescribed by Jesus in Matthew 28: 19-20?

Conclusion

In conclusion, is there a comprehensive strategy or panacea which provides a way out of addiction that provides complete recovery and a resolution to the whole assortment of behaviors such as prostitution, pimping, gang affiliation or other behaviors which are associated with the lost, the least, the last and the left out? Where do teenagers go to control their addictions, to get support and references when applying for their first jobs, to learn how to read, to deal with hyperactivity, to have learning disabilities diagnosed, or to find athletic teams to participate in? It is this writer's belief that the local church should be the first place where these activities should be introduced and the youth of society would have a chance to grow spiritually, intellectually and socially. The model which this writer would like to introduce here utilizes the acronym "PREACH." This acronym stands for prepare, reach-out, equip, appoint, Christ, and harvest.

Prepare

First, believers should "prepare" by consulting God through prayer and fasting concerning outreach in their individual churches. If the church is to reach the last, the lost, the least and the left out of society, this writer is a firm believer that prayer must be first and foremost in this entire process. The leader of the church should pray alone as well as with the church leadership prior to starting the outreach, because this effort rises and falls upon leadership. The Bible states, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Prov. 3:5-6).

After a thorough regiment of fasting and prayer, one should "prepare" for the cook-outs, block parties, back to school bashes, and street revivals. One should prepare financially for each of these as there will be some cost associated with them in the way of the food, various games,

fliers, school supplies, tents, and other supplies. If the church does not have adequate space on owned property, they should speak with city officials which may have property that can be utilized for free. Also the city could possibly allow the block party to take place on the same street as the church if the church secures permission to block off the street for a day.

Also during the preparation period, one should train the congregation concerning the new people who will be converted and added to the congregation. One should teach the congregation not to be judgmental toward the new converts and to make them feel as comfortable as possible in their new community of baptized believers. One should prepare new member class materials and predetermine who will be assigned to teach the class prior to the outreach; thus when the new members come into the fold, they can automatically be placed into the new member classes. The classes should be incremental as there will be various levels concerning student placement that could possibly range from just learning to read to someone who has a previous foundation in Scripture and Christianity.

Reach-out

Secondly, street ministry is what Jesus did and what He instructed the church to do, but churches should have a special group to attend to this ministry. This writer does not proclaim and promote that just anyone can go into the street among this class of people to proclaim the gospel, as some people have no clue about street culture. Thus, it is this writer's belief that the ones who should "reach-out" to the street corner are those that have been there before because they have some understanding of how things are in the street. This will accomplish two goals: first it gives those who have been saved from this environment a chance to witness to others in the street; and second, it will give those that are in the street the opportunity to witness how Jesus can change someone's life for the better and give them hope that the same thing can happen to

them. In other words, street culture will eat some people alive if they do not know how to react while being there. It is the opinion of this writer that the Christian religion should be faith in God through every circumstance, yet one should exercise common sense in action. Thus, it would behoove the church, if it has people who have been saved from the street, to meet with other elders whereby classes can be established on how to win others from the street, what dangers may be lurking, how to react in certain situations and actually set the stage for street ministry.

It would be helpful to let all the people on the street in the neighborhood know that there will be a cookout whereby everyone can eat at no cost and proceed with the cookout somewhere in close proximity to the church, such as the parking lot or a vacant lot nearby. This can be accomplished with fliers, social networks and the local newspaper. Thus when the cookout takes place, some of the people contacted during street ministry will show up to eat. It is during this time that evangelistic efforts can take place with the possibility of converts. During this time the church can pass out tracts, fliers, visitor's packets, and other such paraphernalia which will assist in this evangelistic effort. This whole scenario is also possible with a back to school bash whereby school supplies are given away in conjunction with the food. The worst case scenario would be that everyone will go away fed and happy with the idea that maybe they will attend a church service sometime in the future because of the kindness which was extended during the cookout or bash.

Equip

Thirdly, one must "equip" the new converts for their new journey with the Lord. Thus, one of the ways which one can incorporate Christian education into the scenario after reaching some of the lost and bringing them into the house of prayer is to implement Sunday school and

Bible study if it has not already been implemented. The word disciple means a student, a learner and a pupil. Most people only attend regular worship service, but most growing churches attempt to involve everyone in Sunday school and Bible study. This is where one can receive a complete coverage of the word of God no matter the age group; the Bible is studied from Genesis to Revelation. Sunday school and Bible study gives a person a comprehensive study of God's word in several forms such as doctrinal, biographical, devotional and topical. Sunday school and Bible study are vitally important to every member of the body of Christ and to every sinner who has been recently brought into the body of Christ.

The next way to "equip" the new convert through Christian education is by incorporating new member classes. This is one way to follow-up with the new converts in a manner that will teach them obedience to the words of Christ. It is in new members classes that a variety of topics or subjects can be covered which include, but are certainly not limited to, the doctrine of the church, new members expectations, tithing, polity, plan of salvation, history of the church, opportunities for service within the church, church covenant, spiritual disciplines, spiritual gifts and of course, evangelism. The new member class is the perfect place to move new converts from membership to ministry.

Appoint

The next step would be to "appoint" mature Christians to various new members where they can mentor the new converts in Christianity. This can be accomplished by starting computer classes for them, providing tutors during the evening, providing mentors for job placement and supplying church sports leagues to participate in with their peers. In other words, the churches are the ones that should assist these new converts to do better in life and the church has the wisdom, the knowledge, and the help of God to make it happen.

The pastor and mentor can assess the gifts and abilities of each new member for the purpose of getting them to either volunteer or be placed by the pastor or mentor in a particular small group or ministry that best fits their particular gift or ability. Once they are placed into a small group or ministry, they can be taught how to utilize their gifts or abilities to the glory of God. They can also be taught in the small group or ministry how to reach out to others in an effort to bring them to Christ.

Christ

Fifthly, the church needs to show the new convert the love and compassion of “Christ.” During the evangelistic effort, it is the mature Christian’s position to compel the potential convert to come to Christ, not just to “their church.” The word “compel” means that zeal and moral urgency should be utilized to induce sinners to come to Christ in their present condition. So many are under the impression that they must first clean up their own act prior to coming to Christ, but if one could clean up his own act, there would be no need for God. The Christian’s ultimate example is Jesus Christ. Scripture teaches that He was so compassionate in providing people with the spiritual, emotional, social and physical healing which was needed, that He was able to accumulate an extensive following. Maybe one of the reasons that so many churches are experiencing plateau or decline is that they are not reaching out to the lost, the least, the last and the left out. Jesus dealt with the sin that afflicted the souls of men, women, boys and girls in a manner which gave Him credibility with the people, no matter their social status. Thus, if Christians are to win others to Christ, they should be shown the genuine concern and compassion for which Jesus Christ had for His disciples.

Harvest

Lastly, one must expect an affirmative answer to the fasting and prayer which was initiated in the first step. In other words, the leaders of the church, after proceeding through each step, should expect a “harvest” from what has been sown. The Bible states, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Thus, if this model is followed thoroughly, one should expect that God will give the increase. The Lord has a history of adding to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47), but the idea here is not just to add to the church, but to multiply the church through evangelistic efforts. Thus, church leaders should teach the new converts and the entire congregation how to invite others to Jesus within their circle of influence. Therefore, if two people get two others to come and likewise the four people get four others to come and likewise the eight compels eight others to come, there will be a multiplication effect which takes place and before one knows it, the church will explode with new membership. There may be instances when an individual or perhaps the church will encounter someone who has become downtrodden because of life’s trials, tribulations and trouble—someone who has been involved with street life and it has eaten them up and all but spit them out. Perhaps the person encountered will have tried everything known such as rehabilitation, and counseling, and perhaps spent time incarcerated, all to no avail as he continuously falls into the same old trap. It is probable that this person may think that every possible venue has already been exhausted in an effort to free him from this grip of sin. Perhaps the mindset of the individual may be that there is no forgiveness for the sins of which have been committed and may be on the brink of saying, “Oh, what’s the use?” Perhaps this thesis will assist one in an effort to teach these types of individuals not to give in, give up or give out, because there is an answer. Minirth says, “First, realize you are a sinner and you have done

wrong (see Romans 3:23). Second, realize that Jesus Christ, God's perfect Son, died on the cross in payment for your sins (see Romans 6:23). Finally, trust Jesus Christ as your Savior (see John 1:12).¹

Jesus expects His church to carry out the Great Commission as prescribed in the Gospels and the book of Acts. For the Great Commission to be found in each of these books of the Bible, it must be pretty important. To fully complete this assignment, someone has to be willing to trust God in order to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries in various nations to win souls for Christ; yet becoming a missionary is only one aspect of the theology of missions. In order for this task of mission to be carried out on the street, one must be a disciple of Christ. A disciple is one who not only follows Jesus, but obeys and espouses a lifestyle patterned after the teaching and life of Jesus. This, of course, does not happen overnight, but consists of a spiritual formation which is a lifelong commitment to become a follower of Jesus. In order for this process to be accomplished, one must adhere to such disciplines as prayer, scripture study, fasting, solitude, confession, worship, submission of one's own will to the will of God, and service as one is led by the Holy Spirit of God. This kind of discipline allows God to change one into the noble person that will reflect an unshakeable confidence in the one who equips individuals to face life's trials and tribulations. It is a maturing process that includes a growth in character, a healthy concept of God as opposed to self, a respect of other theological perspectives, an appropriate application of biblical principles to one's daily living, and a healthy realistic concept of self and how that relates to others in Christian love. Therefore, if the church is to live up to Christ's standard for reaching the last, the least, the lost and the left out, it is going to take some

¹ Frank Minirth, Paul Meier and Don Hawkins, *Worry Free Living* (Carmel: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989), 34.

self-examination and a practiced discipline of discipleship and spiritual formation that brings positive change to a dying world, otherwise judgment lies at the door. David Jeremiah says,

Like Jonathan Edwards's classic sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," these verses refuse to candy-coat the truth. They present the idea that your vision may be clouded, but rest assured that God's eyesight is twenty-twenty. "And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13).²

² David Jeremiah, *Captured by Grace: No One is Beyond the Reach of a Loving God* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 70.

Appendix

Power Point Presentation

[Staples Thesis-1 Power Point Presentation.pptx](#)

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IRB Notification

From: IRB, IRB [IRB@liberty.edu]
Sent: Monday, January 21, 2013 7:40 PM
To: Staples, Jerry R
Cc: IRB, IRB; Rasberry, Rick Lane; Garzon, Fernando
Subject: IRB Application 1519: Christ's Response to the Last, the Least, the Lost and the Left Out

Dear Jerry,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board 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 research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application.

Your study does not classify as human subjects research because your study does not involve human subjects.

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Application number.

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

Sincerely,

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