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In This Issue

Evangelism lies at the intersection of an array of scholarly disciplines. While both the content and function of evangelism itself can be specified and debated, what constitutes its "standard" methodology or the central loci of its subject matter is less clear. This could be because evangelism is still emerging as a discipline in its own right. It could also be because evangelism is in many ways the premier integrative discipline, and requires by its very nature a more complex and organic approach.

The range of diverse scholarly approaches to evangelism is abundantly evident in this issue. Scott J. Jones examines the theology of evangelism, providing a useful survey and critique of a number of positions while offering his own proposal. Jones argues that love of God and neighbor is the concept most central to the theology and practice of evangelism. In contrast, George G. Hunter III discusses several approaches utilizing social science research, noting conclusions reached and offering sugges-tions for making the implications of such research available to a wider public through writing and other media. Both articles clearly seek to use scholarship to serve the gospel and the church, both value the integration of theory and practice, yet do so in strikingly different ways.

Ronald W. Johnson demonstrates how theology can be linked with cultural analysis to critically evaluate current practices of ministry. He proposes replacing the now prevalent corporate church model with a kingdom church model as a more biblically faithfully and culturally relevant way of doing mission and evangelism in a postmodern world.

Historical scholarship is another discipline which can offer lessons for contemporary practice. Through an examination of conversion narratives Stephen W. Rankin concludes that theological commitment is not so much the result of Christian experience as its precondition. Larry S. McDonald draws insights from the evangelistic practice of Shubal Stearns, the highly influential leader of the Separate Baptists. Both of these articles have clear implications for the theology, teaching, and practice of evangelism.

Questions about what constitutes evangelism as a discipline is focused nowhere more intently than in planning an introductory course. In a brief article Scott Jones offers seven theses and a proposal about content of such a course for M.Div. students. This is just the sort of conversation that the Academy was designed to encourage and facilitate.

As always the *Journal* includes reviews of a number of significant new books, as well as the minutes of the most recent meeting of the Academy held in October, 1999, at the McAfee School of Theology, Mercer University, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Henry H. Knight III

Editorial: Listening as a Scholarly Discipline

As George G. Hunter's article in this issue of the *Journal* notes, listening is essential to effective evangelism. Writers of many of our key texts on faith-sharing or lifestyle evangelism--Richard Stoll Armstrong, H. Eddie Fox and George E. Morris, Rebecca Manley Pippert, Lyle Pointer and Jim Dorsey, among many others--all emphasize listening as a precondition for evangelistic conversation. Ronald W. Johnson has a book-length examination of the topic which raises the central issue: *How Will They Hear If We Don't Listen?*

There are sound reasons for this consensus. Listening with care and sensitivity is an act of respect for another person as well as a sign of caring. It is a way of showing their importance to us--indeed, it is fundamentally an act of love. The goal is not to look for logical fallacies upon which to train our apologetic artillery, but to genuinely hear their joys and pains, hopes and fears, questions and doubts. We only earn the right to share the good news we have received if we have first demonstrated by our listening that it has made a difference in our lives.

I want to suggest an analogy between this observation about evangelistic practice and our own engagement as scholars with others within and outside our own area of research and teaching. When I propose listening as a scholarly discipline, I am not suggesting it become in itself an area of study, but that it become a practice which informs all our scholarly endeavors.

As this issue of the *Journal* illustrates there are multiple approaches to the study of evangelism. In some cases fairly well-defined "schools" of research, such as the Church Growth movement and The Gospel and Our Culture Network, have advanced distinctive visions of evangelism, mission, and church renewal. Moreover there are even more research projects outside evangelism which nonetheless impinge on it for good or for ill.

Those of us who teach and do research in the field of evangelism do so because we are passionately committed to the gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God. Because of that, we are tempted to be impatient with those inside or outside evangelism who raise questions or objections to our approach. There is, after all, an urgency to our work, for there is a world in desperate need to receive good news. Yet I want to suggest that our teaching, research, and the cause of the gospel itself are better served by carefully listening to those differences than simply dismissing them.

Let me cite one example among many. There are those among us who have a missional perspective on the church that includes advocating the contextualization of worship. In North America that has often led to an endorsement of varieties of "contemporary" worship as that which is most relevant to

postmodern culture. Yet some among us (and many more outside) have been impacted by liturgical renewal, with its recovery of lively and foundational forms of worship which had been lost or distorted over the centuries. These liturgical and missiological insights emerged at approximately the same time, and both targeted the then current practices of much of Protestant and Roman Catholic worship.

Each brings a certain passion to its discovery. The missiologists want to remove the cultural barriers that artificially keep people from Christ and the worship of God. The liturgical scholars sought to recover the richness, depth, and liveliness they saw in earlier Christianity, and with it give worship greater integrity and faithfulness.

Unfortunately, these two groups tend to travel in their own circles, and insofar as they think of the other at all, do in disparaging ways. Misunderstanding is common, and so, unfortunately, are disdainful comments that all too often distort the other view. As I said, it is our passion for Christ that tempts us to react in this way, but I've come to the conclusion it does not serve us well.

Far better to listen with care. Even if we do not agree, or ultimately cannot find some "middle-ground," we can at least hear what the other position deems so valuable or fears so harmful. This could provoke us to think long and hard about their issues from our own perspective, and thereby lead us to more effective teaching and more perceptive research. In this way the spreading of the gospel is enhanced rather than hindered.

Moreover, if we listen to them, maybe they'll listen to us as well, and perhaps similarly benefit from the conversation. For as Ron Johnson has said, "How will they hear, if we don't listen?"

Henry H. Knight III

The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor

Scott J. Jones

When interviewing for my present position in evangelism at Southern Methodist University three years ago, members of the search committee asked me to define evangelism and indicate what were the most important books in the field, in my judgment. In a follow-up conversation, one of the senior faculty members indicated that those same questions had been asked of a number of candidates in the search, and that the committee had received a bewildering array of answers. He acknowledged that in any academic field there is vigorous debate about the boundaries, methodologies and standard works to be read. But in a field like theological ethics, he said, there was at least some degree of consensus about these matters, and one could discern the shape of the argument and the various positions held by reputable persons working in the field. These characteristics were lacking in the field of evangelism as far as he was able to see it.

In the *Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education*, an article by the then Dean Jim Waits of Candler School of Theology raised the same issues about the academic study of evangelism. In his address to the Academy in 1987, published as "Evangelism and the Theological Curriculum," he said:

> But in all these you will benefit by the most careful reflection on the boundaries and definition of the discipline *as discipline*. In my judgment, and I think in the mind of many of my colleagues, it is still an open question whether the kind of rigor, definition, and basic research about which I am speaking will be forthcoming. It is my hope that the work of this Academy will provide just such a stimulus to that development.[1]

Waits then posed a second question related to Reinhold Neibuhr's view of the seminary as "an intellectual center for the life of the church."

> The evangelist's identification with the seminary's role as "an intellectual center" for the life of the Church partakes of the hope that the entirety of the Church's approach to evangelism may be transformed:

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> • The possibility that a new theological passion and coherence may be contributed to the Church's witness.
> • The possibility that disciplined thinking and wholesome critiques may freshly assess the Church's methods.
> • The possibility that renewal and a new vitality in the Church's mission to this world may be achieved.[2]

I do not think Waits' questions are peculiar to him, or to United Methodists, or to those who teach in University settings. I think he correctly perceived some core issues for our work as scholars in the academic study of evangelism on behalf of the Church. After all, it is the task of theology to reflect critically on Christian witness, that is both word and deed, precisely so that our witness is always tested by its faithfulness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and its effectiveness for the mission with which God has entrusted his church.

In particular, I think that further attention needs to be given to the theology of evangelism. David Watson makes this point clearly in an article written five years later:

> When, for example, we take as our teaching paradigms those congregations with much to show for their evangelistic ministries, and then extrapolate from their evident success the principles by which others might do likewise, we must also ask whether their success is based on the kinds of myopic soteriology, centripetal ecclesiology, and sectarian eschatology that are so often to be found in our enculturated North American churches. . . .
>
> Not to beat about the bush, the issue is whether those of us who teach evangelism in our seminaries and schools of theology will accept the task of serious inquiry into the ministry of evangelism as an academic discipline, or whether we will assume the compromised role of `evangelizing' our institutions, thereby precluding any genuine professional relationship with our faculty colleagues, and thereby also limiting our research and writing to subject matter that is most immediately useable.[3]

Since Waits' address and Watson's article, some progress has been made in this field. A number of significant books and essays, some of which I refer to below, have addressed fundamental issues about the theology of evangelism, biblical perspectives on evangelism, and how evangelism ought to be conceived. However, we still have a long way to go. The first thirteen volumes of our *Journal* indicate very little interaction among the various articles. Far too infrequently did contributors to the *Journal* build on the work of another member or argue against the views of another scholar in the

field. Our discipline needs sustained engagement on a crucial set of topics, and a lively debate with no holds barred.

It is this kind of debate and engagement among scholars that will lead to significant progress in our field. For example, I think there are a number of discussions that appear to be insoluble or fruitless precisely because they are not put in their proper context. The long-running debate between evangelism and social action stems from what Jean Miller Schmidt called "the two-party" split in mainline American Protestantism around the turn of the century.[4] We stand now at a time when there is widespread agreement that evangelism and social action must not be separated. That in itself is an accomplishment to be celebrated. However, the accomplishment is illusory until we are able to tell why that is the case and guide others in securing the victory through sound theological arguments. Other concerns, such as the proper relationship between evangelism and mission, and the proper ways evangelism should be enculturated are crucial to the church's witness and thus central to the agenda of the academic study of evangelism.

Toward that end, I want to address the topic of the theology of evangelism and offer six theses and a definition of evangelism. The first three are preliminary, and the last three begin to articulate what I mean by the title of this essay, "The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor." The definition will take William Abraham's and modify it to reflect the six theses.

My aim in this essay is to build on the significant work done by John Wesley, Mortimer Arias, William Abraham, Richard Armstrong, David Bosch, Walter Brueggemann, Orlando Costas, George Hunter, Walter Klaiber, and others. I seek to move the conversation forward toward a more adequate theology of evangelism.

My first thesis is that the proper starting point for a theology of evangelism is to articulate its relationship to the reign of God. Mortimer Arias, William Abraham and others have given us an essential insight when they make the reign of God a central theme in understanding the gospel.[5] Perhaps it is axiomatic as well as etymologically sound to observe that evangelism has something to do with *to euaggelion*, the gospel. Further, it should be axiomatic for Christians that the Bible should be the primary locus of our discernment for how the gospel is best understood. Arias and Abraham follow many New Testament scholars who argue that the proclamation of the kingdom of God, or reign of God, is central to Jesus' whole ministry. Further, many argue that the preaching and teaching of the apostles centered on the reign of God and that our witness today should still focus on how it is "at hand" in the world today and to be anticipated as coming fully in the future.

Arias uses the kingdom of God as a way of tapping the insights of liberation theology and other movements for social

justice into the center of the church's evangelistic ministry. Abraham effectively uses the present-but-still-coming reign of God as the focal point for what initiation into the Christian life means, and argues for a new Christian catechesis focusing on six aspects of life in the kingdom. He argues that if the ministry of Jesus and the apostles was focused on the kingdom, then our ministry today should likewise be focused in the same way. Evangelism is best understood, he says, "as that set of intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time."[6]

Two correctives to Arias and Abraham have been offered in recent literature. Bosch shows how mission has changed throughout different paradigms, and the claim that the reign of God has been eclipsed should be revised for a more historically nuanced view of how it has changed through the centuries. Walter Klaiber, in his *Call and Response: Biblical Foundations of a Theology of Evangelism* argues that the gospel as formulated in the synoptic gospels centers on the kingdom, but in John's gospel and Paul's letters it has other emphases, the word made flesh and the word of the cross respectively. Thus, a more carefully nuanced analysis of the New Testament must acknowledge that the reign of God plays a different function in the theologies of the Johannine and Pauline literature. For those who treat the Bible as scripture, some sort of organizing theme must be used, and Arias and Abraham have made a good start at this by analyzing the reign of God as the key theme.

There have been other challenges to the basic thesis that the reign or kingdom of God is the best starting point for a theological understanding of evangelism. David Bosch's magisterial work *Transforming Mission* locates evangelism as an essential part of the mission of the church, which in turn must be seen as part of the mission of God in the world.[7] It is clearly not Bosch's intention to write a systematic theological treatise either on mission or on evangelism. However, his description of the emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm is full of theological ideas and commitments which beg for a more systematic examination. He defines evangelism as:

> That dimension and activity of the church's mission which, by word and deed and in the light of particular conditions and a particular context, offers every person and community, everywhere, a valid opportunity to be directly challenged to a radical reorientation of their lives, a reorientation which involves such things as deliverance from slavery to the world and its powers; embracing Christ as Savior and Lord, becoming a living member of his community, the church; being enlisted into his service of reconciliation, peace and justice on earth; and being committed to God's purpose of placing all things under the rule of Christ.[8]

It is not clear to what extent this approach to evangelism is consistent with the concept of "initiation into the reign of God," the central point of Abraham's definition. On the one hand, Bosch's "radical reorientation of their lives" appears to be simply another way of talking about initiation into God's reign. Certainly many of the conditions he mentions are cared for by Abraham's six elements of initiation. However, the fundamental organizing concept here is not the reign of God but the mission of God into the world. It is a theological concept, but one that is intimately tied to the practical life of the church. More work needs to be done on the relationship between evangelism and mission, building on Bosch's excellent work.

Ben Campbell Johnson's starting point in *Rethinking Evangelism: A Theological Approach* is self-consciously different. He discusses the "ghosts of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evangelicalism" which still haunt the church. Partly to remedy this problem, he proposes a different starting point:

> Without denying the intention of those who have begun their systematic quest with the doctrine of God, I believe a different starting point will yield a renewed perspective for evangelism and inspire methods appropriate for the task. I propose to begin a theology of evangelism with the Christian understanding of human beings. This approach may provide a needed corrective to the imperialistic style of evangelism we have deplored. We have already defined evangelism as an intentional outreach to persons, and so it would seem logical to begin our inquiry with the nature of persons—their needs, questions and desires. Evangelism must never end with only an exploration of human needs and questions, but perhaps this provides the best starting point.[9]

In other places Johnson differentiates this approach from "a traditional approach from above," but then seeks to fuse the two together.[10] It is not clear whether Johnson means by this the consideration of purely secular anthropologies or whether he seeks to begin from a Christian anthropology which itself originates from Scripture. He does both in his chapter two. Part of his analysis relies on Jung, Maslow and Berger and Luckmann. Another section relies on a traditional exegetical approach to anthropology. There is little connection between the two analyses.

However, the question which Johnson is addressing remains extremely important. It is clear that our theology of evangelism must take the human subject with utmost seriousness and make sure that our answers are correlated with humanity's questions. This has been one of the great contributions of the Church Growth school of thought in general and of George Hunter in particular, as they have

brought an empirical analysis of the actual concerns of real persons we are trying to reach.

For another alternative, consider Richard Armstrong's proposal related to service evangelism.[11] Malan Nel, in his recent article "Service and Evangelism: the Theology and Methodology of a Lifestyle" argues that Armstrong never intended service evangelism to be another method of accomplishing the task. Rather, it is a style "that has to do with the personality, character, commitment, and attitude of the evangelist."[12] Nel argues this approach is built upon an ecclesiology that sees the church as the servant of God.[13] Whereas the article talks more about style than theology, he clearly implies the centrality of a service ecclesiology to the practice of evangelism.

What do we make of these different starting points? By what criteria does one choose a starting point for a theology of evangelism? Harry Poe's survey of the different ways the gospel has been construed demonstrates the importance of these central ideas in the thinking of many theologians throughout Christian history.[14]

Two criteria should govern the selection of the starting point. First, it should be so fundamental to the nature of the Christian gospel that it is arguably the aspect of the gospel on which all else depends. It should be so central that no single aspect of the gospel could be fully understood without reference to it. Second, it should reciprocally allow for all the other parts of the message to take their proper places in the theological structure with the proper relationships between them.

This leads to my second thesis. The "reign of God" is logically a derivative concept from God's essential attribute, which is love, and God's most important requirement of us, which is love. On the first side, God has been described as having a number of different attributes. Christopher Morse, in his systematic theology *Not Every Spirit*, organizes the attributes under two key concepts. He says, "With each category of divine attributes, whether that of God's compassion, justice as righteousness, omnipresence, eternity, immutability, omnipotence, omniscience, unity, holiness, or glory, the dogmatic task is to show how God's love is to be understood as God's dominion and how God's dominion is to be understood as God's love."[15] This reference to God's love rests on basic biblical affirmations about who God is and why God does what God does. When the Scriptures describe God most simply, it is "God is love."[16] God's goodness in creation is due to God's love, and the sending of his son is understood to be an act of love: "for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."[17] Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God depends on the understanding that God is a loving God who seeks the lost, forgives the sinner and take the initiative at reconciling the world to himself. This is in complete harmony with the Psalmist's praise of God's steadfast love enduring

forever,[18] and the prophets' offer of forgiveness from a loving God who cannot stand the unloving things we humans do.[19] We cannot know God fully, but God has clearly revealed himself as a God of love.

Further, when Christ was asked which one of the commandments was most important from the law, he responded:

> "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.[20]

Christ was addressing an important and hotly contested exegetical issue of his time, the proper prioritization of the many commandments in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, one might argue that if "all the law and the prophets", that is the entire Scripture as it was then regarded, hangs on Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, then these commandments should also take center place in our understanding of the task of evangelism.

Thus, some may argue that God's dominion or sovereignty ought to be more significant than viewing God as loving, or that God's dominion and love are to be viewed dialectically as two foundational concepts, I suggest that the love of God is more foundational to the whole biblical message. God is sovereign, but that sovereignty is one rooted in God's love as expressed in creation. Further, the main message of the Scripture is the self-giving love of God graciously offered to all creation. This leads to my third thesis.

Third, a theology of evangelism should take as its fundamental starting point the commandments in Matthew 22 and parallels to love God and neighbor. In short, it should focus on the evangelistic love of God and neighbor. This phrase has an intentional double meaning. On the one side, there is the affirmation that the heart of the good news is God's steadfast love for all creation and especially for humanity. This news is genuinely good. Walter Brueggemann's approach to evangelism focuses on the announcement of victory in the drama of salvation.[21] Harry Poe's question is precisely the question that evangelists must wrestle with: what is the gospel? However it is expressed, the gospel must be some rendering of the basic biblical message of God's amazing love.

The other side of the intentional ambiguity of the phrase is our response. This is the heart of the Great Commandment and its corollary. Once we have been gripped by the grace of God, our appropriate response is to love God back with everything we have. There is just one thing needful—to love God. However, the second

commandment is like it, and it precludes one of our strongest tendencies. By doing religious activities, we think we can please God. The prophets were clear that worship without justice was not pleasing to God. Micah 6:1-8 is just one of many texts making this point, but the contrast between thousands of rams and ten thousands of rivers of oil on one side and justice, kindness and a humble walk with God on the other could not be more clear.

Two key words in the title need more clarification at this point. First is "love." We cannot afford to talk about love in sentimental and nice ways. We need to talk about love in its relationship to all of God's attributes. Love requires justice. So when Jesus spoke to the rich young ruler and advised him to give all he had to the poor, he was loving this young man. The word which the young ruler interpreted as a "no!" was really God's "yes!" Love understood in the theological sense is a commitment to the well-being of the other. From God's view, this requires a judgment against the sinful natures and actions that diminish the humanity God has intended for us. Yet, God's judgment is always a redemptive judgment, seeking to find the lost and restore the broken relationships. Love expresses itself as justice. Thus, the concerns for liberation that have marked the world's struggles during this last century should be understood in the context of God's activity of loving persons into their full humanity.

The other key term is "evangelistic." God's love for humanity seeks their salvation. Salvation comes from being in a right relationship with God, which, in Abraham's understanding, means being initiated into God's reign on earth. Thus, our love for others in the name of God always means we desire them to move from wherever they are toward the relationship with God that God intends them to have. To be more specific, my neighborhood is growing weekly with new residents. I do not know their names or much about them. However, I am called to love them, and my love for them means that I have many obligations to them. One among those obligations is that I should do what I can to enable them to have a saving relationship with God in Christ Jesus. Thus, I cannot love them without at the same time seeking to evangelize them.

I have already mentioned the unity between mission and evangelism. The ground of that unity is that God's mission is to love the world, and that part of that love is restoring them to the right relationship with God. To be very specific, churches that regard mission as fulfilling the requirements of Matthew 25:31-46—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those in prison, among other activities—without inviting those persons to initiation into the reign of God are not adequately loving those persons. The love of God and neighbor must be evangelistic love.

Fourth, evangelistic love of God entails loving all those whom God loves. It is clear from Genesis 1, John 3:16 and many other scriptural texts that God loves the entire world. The parable of

the good Samaritan in Luke 10:29-37 brings it even closer to home, as we are confronted with our desire to despise some people and not construe them as being covered by this commandment to love our neighbors. The tendencies of many Christian congregations is to love those who are already in their own group. We tend to be focused on those with whom we already have relationships. George Hunter's description of "apostolic congregations"[22] is an important corrective to this tendency. Other tendencies are for us to love only people of our class or race or nationality. While genuinely multicultural congregations are hard to build, there is not doubt that they express more fully the intention of God than do those who rest comfortably with "our kind of people." Stephen A. Rhodes has made a persuasive case that a multicultural church is God's will for us.[23]

Further, loving persons means loving even those who are of a different religion from ours. The evangelistic task aims at all of those who are not part of the reign of God in the world. Anyone who is not a practicing Christian stands in need of the transforming power of the grace of God mediated through the loving words and deeds of the Church. This means that non-practicing Christians, atheists, New Age followers, Muslims, Hindus, Mormons and all non-Christians need to be evangelized. Jews form a special case here because the Scriptures give them a special status. Further, to love Jewish persons evangelistically requires a cultural and historical sensitivity that is absolutely crucial.[24] In every case we need to presume that God has been working in their lives before we get there, and that we are not the ones with all the answers who are trying to impose our culture on theirs.

All of this presupposes that we know who our neighbors are. We need sophisticated empirical research and cultural analysis to understand those we are trying to love. Loving people well is difficult. Whether in friendship, marriage, working relationships or social service, we often spend years seeking to better understand those we are trying to love and serve. It is often extraordinarily difficult to know the motivations, desires, characteristics and perspectives of other persons. Yet loving them well requires just such deep understanding of who they are and why they do what they do. Other groups in our culture invest great amounts of energy into studying people. Marketers go to great lengths to gather data about your preferences. Military planners have been encouraged for centuries to study the enemy and know the enemy better than a lover knows the beloved. Christians need to know those they are trying to reach better than those motivated by profit and military victory. Our motivation is love, but it should be no less disciplined.

Fifth, evangelistic love of neighbor entails love for the whole person. The perennial debate about social justice and evangelism reflects a cultural aberration. The "two-party" split within mainline denominations has plagued American Christian witness for a

century. We now have the opportunity to close that split and insist that both sides are partly right and definitely incomplete. Yet, we must offer a solid theological ground on which to base this new, holistic approach to evangelism. The ground lies in how one loves a whole person. Yes, human beings are individuals. Yes, it is individuals that make commitments to God and accept the salvation God offers. Yet no individual exists outside of community and social systems, and loving the whole person means loving them in all of their relationships. Thus, to evangelize a poor black woman means that our efforts must simultaneously include addressing the structures of racism, sexism and poverty that contribute to keeping her where she is. Evangelizing white male suburban professionals means simultaneously including an awareness of how self-centered their lives often are. As a church our sins lead us to protect the privilege and power and build up our institutional assets rather than serve the God who demands justice for the poor and the oppressed.

Sixth, God's love for humankind was expressed most fully in the incarnation. The scandal of the gospel is not only God's death on a cross, but God's being born as a Palestinian Jewish peasant two thousand years ago. From the ministry of this divine and human person in a particular context and a particular culture and a particular language, Christianity dares to offer a universal gospel. The lesson of the incarnation is that evangelism requires contextualization of our evangelistic efforts. Just as the Scriptures are translated into new languages, so the message of the gospel must be adapted to new cultural contexts. Nor should we assume that the United States is, for religious purposes, a single culture. We must carefully look at the people we are trying to reach and then determine how to best help them experience the power of God in their lives.

The danger here is that the gospel might be compromised. We need to determine what elements of the gospel are so essential that they cannot be left out of any contextualized theology or evangelistic practice. Clearly, the current pattern of denominational life in the United States offers a variety of different answers to this question. But continued theological work might bring us closer to an understanding of just what things are essential and what things are adiaphora, or matters of opinion on which Christians can disagree and still recognize each other as Christians. This leads clearly into difficult waters. I presume that Christians from different branches of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Jesus Christ will disagree about what doctrines are essential to the gospel. Working out a theology of evangelism will bring out these disagreements, precisely because evangelism, *to euaggelion,* is the center of the Christian faith. However, in that dialogue each branch of the church has some insight to offer the whole church on this question.

Thus, I believe that a theology of evangelism ought to take as its starting point the evangelistic love of God for us and our evangelistic love of God and neighbor in response. Not only is this

central to the message of the Bible, but it is logically central to all of the concerns that evangelism seeks to address. Evangelism as initiation into the reign of God, evangelism's concern for social justice and liberation, its concern for service, its integral relation to mission, its proclamation of God's victory, and its inculturation into many different contexts all flow from this central idea.

My final proposal, then, is to adjust Abraham's definition of evangelism to take account of these six theses. It would then read, "evangelism is best understood as loving persons in the name of Christ with the intention of their being initiated into the reign of God."

NOTES

[1]Jim L. Waits, "Evangelism and The Theological Curriculum", *Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education* 3(1987-88): 45.

[2]Ibid.

[3]David Lowes Watson, "Research Evangelism: The Need for a Course Correction", *Journal of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education* 8 (1992-93):18-19

[4]Jean Miller Schmidt, *Souls or the Social Order* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Carlson, 1991).

[5]Mortimer Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984) and William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989).

[6]Abraham, 95.

[7]David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, American Society of Missiology Series, No. 16 (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

[8]Ibid., 420.

[9]Ben Campbell Johnson, *Rethinking Evangelism: A Theological Approach*. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 21-22.

[10]Ibid., 23.

[11]Richard S. Armstrong, *Service Evangelism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979).

[12]Malan Nel, "Service Evangelism: The Theology and Methodology of a Lifestyle", JAETE 13 (1997-98): 33.

[13]Ibid., 32.

[14]Harry L. Poe, *The Gospel and Its Meaning: A Theology for Evangelism and Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996). Poe sees a virtue in this diversity, arguing as his main thesis that "the different elements of the gospel speak to different levels of spiritual concern in different cultures at different times", p. 9.

[15]Christopher Morse, *Not Every Spirit: A Dogmatics of Christian Disbelief* (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press, 1994), 125-6.

[16]1 John 4:8, New Revised Standard Version. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations in this article are from this version.

[17]John 3:16

[18]For example, Psalm 136:1, ff.

[19]For example, Isaiah 1:18.

[20]Matthew 22:37-40.

[21]Walter Brueggemann, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991).

[22]George Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).

[23]Stephen A. Rhodes, *Where the Nations Meet: The Church in a Multicultural World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998).

[24]For a very perceptive treatment of this issue, see Ellen T. Charry, "Two Millennia Later, Evangelizing Jews" *in Reclaiming Faith: Essays on Orthodoxy in the Episcopal Church and the Baltimore Declaration*, ed. Ephraim Radner and George R. Sumner (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993).

Informing Apostolic Ministry: Research and Writing for Effective Evangelism

George G. Hunter III

In our lifetime, due to the "secularizing" forces within western history, North America has become the third largest mission field on earth. In the 1980's and 1990's, due to the fading of the Enlightenment project and the failed agenda of "modernity," many of North America's "post-modern" populations have become increasingly aware of Reality beyond what the senses alone can perceive, and many of North America's peoples have become more interested in "spirituality" and the supernatural. North America is now a more receptive mission field. The present opportunity to succeed the ancient apostles in ministry to prechristian populations is unprecedented on this continent.

Today however, in this promising context, more than eight in ten churches are stagnant or declining in their membership strength. Many churches are oblivious to the responsive peoples in their ministry area, and denominational executives are wringing their hands in futility more than ever before. Yet, in this same era, every type of church is experiencing conversion growth in at least some places, and every target population is responding to the gospel in at least some places--demonstrating, in principle, the outreach that is possible from all churches and to all peoples.

This setting has produced the greatest opportunity within anyone's memory for a distinct approach to publishing (and other expressions of "knowledge leadership") for the Christian Movement in the West. Many church leaders are discovering that their "main business" is to succeed the earliest apostles and their churches in outreach to vast prechristian populations. Leaders are also discovering the daunting complexity of communicating Christianity's meaning to people with no Christian memory, so they are more eager for help than ever before. (Most of their seminaries, after all, prepared them to be "chaplains," not "apostles"!) So this is an exceedingly opportune time to inform a generation of Apostolic Ministry and Movemental Christianity. May I suggest that the members and constituency of The Academy for Evangelism face an historic opportunity to help inform the Church's "domestic mission"; indeed, much of the opportunity will not be fulfilled if academic leaders in Evangelization fail to catch the vision and seize the moment.

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More specifically, I am suggesting that an "integrative" approach to research and writing is our most proven way to make our contribution. The integrative research I am commending blends biblical and theological reflection with field research. (The field research, in turn, generally blends insights from such methods as historical and archival research, observation, interviews and, sometimes, surveys.) The integrative writing I am commending blends the theoretical and the practical, AND blends the expression of the head, the heart, and the imagination. Let's reflect on these two components separately.

Donald McGavran, for our purposes, pioneered the integrative research paradigm that will increasingly inform the Christian Movement's future. McGavran, raised as a missionary's kid, schooled at Yale Divinity School in scripture, theology, and the Latourette tradition of understanding Christianity's expansion, and at Columbia University's Teachers College in field research methods, was perhaps uniquely (and providentially) prepared to pioneer this research tradition.

In the early 1930's, McGavran asked a question that became his life's obsession: "WHY do some churches grow, while others stagnate, and others wither and die on the vine?" The quest behind his question was for the multiple reproducible causes of the "conversion growth" of churches, everywhere. For 20 years, McGavran studied churches, denominations, and movements in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. He observed growing and declining churches, he conducted historical investigations of the periods of their dramatic increases or decreases, and he interviewed thousands of church leaders and (especially) thousands of converts. He wrote many case studies, he reflected upon his data for years and, through his Institute of Church Growth and then through Fuller Theological Seminary's School of World Mission, he encouraged others to pursue similar research. A number of his books, like *The Bridges of God* and *Understanding Church Growth*, and a number of departments and schools of mission and evangelism, and a number of regional Church Growth societies represent his enduring legacy.

In this same period, Lyle Schaller built upon the eclectic foundation of FIVE masters degrees to study churches and denominations across the USA, and somewhat beyond. Schaller gained entry to churches as a church consultant, and thereby studied churches for about 100 days a year for over 40 years. He single-handedly invented the field of "Congregational Studies," and he wrote more than 50 books. In *The Interventionist* (Abingdon, 1996), Schaller shared the observation and interview methods he learned to employ, the questions and themes of inquiry he found most useful, and many of the conclusions he has reached about the future of churches and denominations. Schaller's inquiring mind has ranged quite beyond the specific question about

how churches grow, but he has been at least as interested in effective outreach and church growth as in any other single theme, and his wider questions, such as his explorations in church typologies (as in *Hey, That's Our Church* and in his books on the small church, the middle sized church, and the large church) demonstrate the relevance to Church Growth of issues not usually addressed by Church Growth people.

Ron Crandall is one of the several scholars in evangelism and church growth who has included more quantitative methods in his research. In the early 1990's, Crandall was interested in how small declining churches experience "turnaround" and new growth. He launched a nationwide search of churches that had experienced "remarkable turnaround" in their recent history. He solicited nominations from executives within the nation's 50 largest denominations. He sent out 187 letters inviting pastors to participate in the study; 136 agreed. He sent questionnaires to those 136 churches, received 97 completed questionnaires, and followed up with on site observations and interviews in 15 of the churches. Crandall's book, *Turnaround Strategies for the Small Church* (Abingdon, 1995) confirms some of what we thought we knew before, while also containing a body of new insight, some of it counter-intuitive. For instance, we would have guessed that a church's turnaround is often catalyzed by a pastor who is a "visionary" leader (no insight in our field is more "commonplace" than that!). Crandall discovered, however, that visionary pastors catalyze their church into turnaround and growth by "courting the future." Crandall's "courting" metaphor involves an original, and potentially enduring, paradigm. He defines "courting" as "risking more than we usually know is wise on a possibility that may not happen, but we can't help ourselves because we are in love!" Something like THAT kind of leadership appears necessary for leading a small declining congregation into a new era of conversion growth; "vision," by itself, is not sufficient!

Ron Crandall's more recent project, *The Contagious Witness: Exploring Christian Conversion* (Abingdon, 1999), was actually 15 years in development. For 15 years, Crandall provided his students with a structured interview guide and assigned them to interview new Christians. He received the data from over 10,000 of these interviews. He tabulated the data from these interviews and submitted some 4,000 of the forms to more thorough analysis. While the project validates some things we thought we already knew, it contributes a body of new insight. For instance, Crandall "rediscovered" the significance of relationships in evangelism, while discovering the added insight that the Christian's transparent relationship with God counts even more than what the Christian knows or how she or he acts. Crandall adds to our lore at many points. Children, for instance, typically come to faith differently than adolescents, and adolescent girls typically come to faith earlier

and differently than adolescent boys. Among adults, he discerned contrasting conversion patterns among twenty-somethings, thirty-somethings, and forty-plus folks, and men over 40 are reached in distinctive ways. He discovered that TWO types of agents are typically involved in a person's conversion: One person catalyzes the perception that life could be different; a second person, typically, facilitates stepping over the line. The project, throughout, integrates Crandall's field data with biblical and theological sources. The project springs from C.S. Lewis' metaphorical reminder that we are called to be "carriers of the good infection."

My own research, compared to the quantifiers and numbers crunchers, is so "qualitative," "subjective," and even "soft" that its sends empiricists off fighting for oxygen! In one project, I integrated some field research in growing churches with the (then) existing Church Growth lore and with the insights from John Wesley's strategic insights for the expansion of eighteenth century Methodism. The book, *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit* (Abingdon, 1987) has, I am told, been formative for many leaders in Methodist, Wesleyan, and Holiness denominations and movements.

From a 1962 experience in ministry to the secular peoples at "Muscle Beach" in Santa Monica, California, I became interested in the growing numbers of "secular people" who populate our communities--the people with no Christian memory, who don't even know what we Christians are talking about--including the more marginalized populations who do not dress, or talk, or live like "good church people." For half a lifetime, as I could find or create opportunities, I have interviewed secular people, and converts out of secularity. I also learned from the occasional communicator and the occasional church that "specializes" in "apostolic ministry."

In this lifetime project, it took me much longer to get closure on some of the research questions than it "should have." For one thing, the secular population substantially changed--from modern to post-modern, and from little interest to obsessional interest in "spirituality." Furthermore, I discovered that, in any human population, there are many exceptions to any defensible generalization, so I had to interview an incredible number of people before the generalizations became clear. I also discovered that I am a slow learner; I had to reflect on some of my data for years before I was assaulted by the occasional "blinding flash of the obvious!" My books *How to Reach Secular People* (Abingdon, 1992) and *Church For the Unchurched* (Abingdon, 1996) gradually emerged. Each project, while most obviously fueled by the field research, also interacted with scripture, theology, and church history. My most recent project, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Abingdon, 2000) informs my ongoing "secular people" Project historically, suggesting that Celtic Christianity's approach to Europe's "secular

barbarians" in the fifth through tenth centuries shows us several ways forward in the twenty-first century!

The projects by McGavran, Schaller, Crandall, and Hunter show only four tips of a much larger iceberg. A hundred or more people, in this land and many others, have published integrative research and reflection upon Christian evangelization in the last quarter century. What has this research tradition discovered? Much of what we have discovered has, indeed, validated the evangelical tradition and verified what we thought we already knew. Much of the research based lore, however, adds to what we kind of knew before, and some of it is counter-intuitive--thereby challenging, and purporting to supplant, what we thought we knew before. McGavran, for instance, discovered that new converts are more reproductive in outreach ministry than a church's established saints!

I have found it useful to position our present research-based understanding of effective evangelism vis a vis the traditional lore reflected in the Church's best know definition of evangelism, the 1945 definition of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Evangelism: "To evangelize is so to present Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit that men come to put their faith in God through him, to accept him as their savior, and to serve him as their King in the fellowship of his Church." The excellent evangelism plan published by the Archbishop's Commission was, as far as I can tell, never implemented! But their definition of Evangelism has endured for so long, and is so often quoted, that it has become a veritable "sacred cow." In our time, we would substitute "people" for "men", but I am unaware of many people who have explicitly challenged, or even critiqued, the definition's substance. There are good reasons for its enduring strength and unchallenged status:

1. It implies the necessity, within God's redemptive design, of the human initiative of Christians toward prechristian people.
2. It affirms the roles of Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord.
3. It affirms the Trinitarian understanding of God and the respective roles of the three Persons in evangelism.
4. It understands the Church to play a central role within evangelism.
5. It views the new Christian's response as including both faith and service.
6. The definition's total thrust actually supports the ministry of evangelism, i.e., it is for it! (George Sweazey, first president of the Academy for Evangelism, used to comment that many denominational evangelism executives reminded him of executives for the American Cancer Society. They seemed more interested in containing it, or even eliminating it, than spreading and advancing it!)

For such reasons, the Commission's definition of evangelism has become so admired, and so universally accepted, that it would seem politically incorrect within evangelical circles, and perhaps even sacrilegious, to take issue with it. Nevertheless, it provides a convenient backdrop for perceiving, in clearer relief, how much we may have learned since 1945. Indeed, an informed approach to evangelism, now more than a half-century later, would amend its understanding of the essence of evangelism in many significant ways. The following 20 suggestions should make this sufficiently clear. I suggest **that we are now clear that . . .**

1. We do not present Jesus Christ so much as we present *the gospel* of Jesus Christ.
2. Most effective evangelism does not involve presenting, in the sense of a (one-way) presentation of the gospel, as much two way *conversation.*
3. Most effective conversations about the gospel involves the meaningful *interpretation* of the gospel, with some "tailoring" for the individual or target audience .
4. Most effective gospel conversations thus help people discover the *relevance* of Christianity's good news for their lives.
5. In evangelical conversations, the gospel advocate's active *listening* is virtually as important as what the advocate says; indeed, what the advocate hears influences what he or she says.
6. Most single episodes in effective evangelism do not attempt to present the whole gospel, (which would induce "information overload"), but presents the *facet(s)* of the multi-faceted gospel most relevant to the person's question, need, or struggle.
7. Most effective evangelism involves *multiple* conversations over time, weeks or months, rather than a single presentation or conversation.
8. Most cases of effective evangelism do not involve a single person who advocates, symbolizes, or incarnates the gospel for a seeker; *several persons* (or a group, or a whole congregation) serve as his or her bridges into faith, reminiscent of Paul's report that "I planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase."
9. So understood, evangelism is a *process*, rather than a single event, that the Holy Spirit is orchestrating in a person's life (in which we are privileged, episodically, to be involved).
10. The evangelism process typically involves (say) 20 to 30 *experiences over time*. Some of the 20 to 30 links in the chain that leads to faith and new life are experiences other than evangelical presentations or conversations-- like experiencing the Spirit in a worship experience, or observing

a credible Christian in action, or an experience of answered prayer. That is, the experiences that lead to faith include, but are seldom limited to, what the evangelist(s) does with the seeker.

11. The Holy Spirit is present not only in the witnessing Christian and in the gospel transactions, but has been *preveniently* with the Seeker, preparing him or her to be receptive to the gospel and the possibility of life change. Faithful evangelistic ministry builds on what the Spirit has been, and is, doing.
12. Evangelism probably includes, essentially, an appropriate *invitation* to receive and follow Christ through His Church. Though many people do not respond immediately when invited (the ball lies in their court for awhile), most people do not consider responding at all without a human invitation.
13. Often, *multiple invitations* are necessary to help the person respond; each stage in the "adoption process" takes time and, often, seekers need to know that the church really wants them.
14. Today, at least, most people do not first become believers and then become involved with the Church. Their involvement with the Church, in some form, usually comes first, and they discover faith *through* their involvement in the community of faith. So Christian faith, for most people, is "more caught than taught."
15. Today, we would stress the convert's Christian service *through* the Church to people in the wider community, not merely "in" the Church.
16. Furthermore, we would stress the new converts *witness* in and beyond the Body, as well as his or her service.
17. Increasingly, we observe, neither the Sunday School nor the church's worship service will be the initial port of entry for most secular seekers; not even a "contemporary seekers service" will be an effective port of entry for increasing numbers of pagans. More and more prechristians will be reached through *small groups* or through "*outreach ministries*"--such as interest groups, support groups, recovery ministries, etc. More and more, effective evangelism is "ministry based evangelism."
18. The Commission's definition omits what is now nearly a consensus part of most anyone's definition of evangelism, that the *goal* of evangelism is to make (new) disciples of Jesus Christ.
19. We are now aware that the essential task of evangelism is not so much the presenting of, say, traditionally faithful gospel words as the *communication* of the gospel's meaning to people in their context.

20. We are now much more aware that the communication process is enormously more of *complex* than merely the accurate "presenting" of faithful information; communication involves such factors as the perceived credibility of the witnesser (and the witnessing community), the "body language" of the communicator, the experienced relationship between the communicator and receptor, the images, attitudes, and feelings the receptor brings to the transaction, whether the receptor feels respected and understood, the cultural relevance of the church's style, language, aesthetics, and music, the emotional impressions created by the music and architecture, how interesting we unpack the Possibility, and a host of other known (and unknown) communication variables.

Now, some of those insights may not yet be widely known and practiced; indeed, several may still be disputed. The list illustrates, however, that reflection upon apostolic ministry has come a long way since the Archbishop's Commission distilled the mid-century understanding. I am confident that we could brainstorm that list of 20 into more than 100 insights or hypotheses. Furthermore, we have gained a potent body of strategic insight that represents no modification in our understanding of the essence of evangelism but teaches promising ways of planning, organizing, and implementing apostolic ministry. We have discovered, for instance, through integrative field research that . . .

1. The gospel spreads most contagiously along the lines of the kinship and friendship *networks* of credible Christians, especially new Christians.
2. The gospel spreads more easily to persons and people's who are in a *receptive* season of their lives, and there are many known ways of identifying likely receptive people while they are receptive.
3. The gospel spreads more naturally to a people through their language and the *indigenous* forms of their culture than through alien languages or cultural forms.
4 "First generation" groups, classes, choirs, congregations, churches, and ministries, and other *new units*, are more reproductive than old established units.
5. Churches that set growth goals, and engage in the *strategic planning* to achieve them, experience much more conversion growth than other churches.
6. Apostolic ministry is more effective when we target *people groups* than when we target areas.

These two lists suggest one large problem (at least): the gap between what researchers in evangelization have discovered and

what is known by most pastors and layleaders is wider than ever before. (Indeed, many churches are still pre-1945 in their understanding!) Some people might even suggest that, in view of the many declining denominations, the many years of research and reflection have been a "failure." That conclusion, I am sure, would be unwarranted. While Europe and North America are very different continents, and represent contrasting challenges to the gospel, the fact that American seminaries and denominations take evangelization much more seriously than European seminaries and denominations is, undoubtedly, one reason why European churches are more empty than American churches and American churches experience more conversion growth than European churches.

Nevertheless, a generation of published research in evangelism, church growth, and missiology has not had the impact anyone might have hoped for. I am aware of two causes for this, at least. First, many books on evangelization contain no new body of insight; indeed, some are so devoid of new insight as to be totally predictable! These books are often written by people who have strength in one discipline only, who lack the competence (or confidence) to interface two or more fields of study, to employ multiple research methods, to generate new hypotheses, and to integrate insights for the reader. Second, church leaders who are craving ways forward often fail to access many of the books and journals that carry the very gold they want. Why? Like scholars in other fields, some scholars in this field write for each other, or for respect in the academy, without translating their insights for the Missional Church. Some of the world's greatest apostolic ideas are collecting dust in remote corners of libraries; worthy ideas wrapped in esoteric jargon or numbing boredom! That fact effectively raises the other question: What kind of writing will be worthy of the Great Commission in the twenty-first century? What kind of articles and books will make available the ideas we discover to the church leaders on the front lines? What might we learn from the several writers in Evangelization who have had demonstrable influence, and from the best writers in related fields? I have observed that the most effective writers, at some level, know and follow most of the following guidelines:

1. They know that it is okay to make it *clear*!
2. They know that it is okay to make it *interesting*!
3. They know that it is okay to make it *inspiring*.
4. They know that it is worth the "sweat equity" required to write multiple drafts and, God willing, good literature. *Stylistic excellence* gives the message a fair chance; readers take good writing more seriously.
5. They often introduce a chapter, and/or conclude a chapter, with a *case study*.

6. Often, they state their main idea, and then flesh it out with evidence, *examples*, cases, etc.
7. Sometimes, however, they proceed more inductively, facilitating the reader's own "*discovery*" of the insight or idea.
8. They know that it okay, even useful, to include the *insights of other writers* upon whose shoulders they stand. (Your reader will not, likely, read all the good books in your field; so, summarize the insights from other writers that your reader needs to know, especially the insights that position the reader to appropriate your insights.)
9. They also know that it okay, even useful, to be substantially *redundant*, i.e. to (creatively) restate your own earlier published insights. (If your are a prolific writer, most of your readers will not read all of your books, not even your mother! You should, especially, restate the earlier insights upon which you are now building, or the insights you can nuance with more precision than before, or the insights that your reader needs to know to appropriate your distinctive insights in the current project.)
10. They also know, however, that total redundancy is a Sin against the reader (and probably against the Holy Spirit); if one has no *new insight* to offer, it would be better to "save a tree."
11. They know that we are now writing in an age of escalating costs for books; so *shorter*, and less expensive, books are much more likely to be purchased, and read.
12. They know that we are now writing in the entertainment age, and for a media conditioned, stimulation craving, interactive, "*alliterate*" generation of people who *can* read, but do not read without multiple incentives for reading. So, . . .
13. Good writers in our field WILL "stoop so low" as to make the journey interesting, stimulating, inspiring, even *entertaining*!
14. Furthermore, good writers provide material, including *stories*, that preachers, Sunday School leaders, youth leaders, and people who have "to give a program at church" will find useful.
15. We are well into an era in which people are exposed to ideas from many media, in which virtually the only ideas that "stick" to the point of changing assumptions, beliefs, paradigms, and actions are introduced, and reintroduced, to people in *multiple ways* over time. So, the effective book often is, increasingly, accompanied by (say) a workbook, a leaders guide, an audio tape, CD, or videotape; and the influential writer typically leads field seminars, shakes hands, signs books, speaks to conferences, gets interviewed on NPR, etc.

16. The best writers would remind us that it is almost impossible to remind Christians too often of the Vision that draws an apostolic people forward, or of the Great Commission that authorizes their apostolic ministry, or the Promise of empowerment that liberates churches for outreach, or of the Church's Reason for Being. Some of the best writers reflect the wisdom in Peter Drucker's suggestion that church leaders need to obsess on only two questions: 1. "What is our main business?" 2. "How is business?" The best writers inform and remind the reader, over and over, "that the main thing is to make the main thing the main thing." The best writers, like Leander Keck, advise the Church to "offer the gospel to the world. Its the only thing we have to give the world that the world does not already have." The best writers, like Vincent Donovan, ask church leaders "Why are your churches busily doing everything they can for people except the one thing for which Christ died and explicitly commissioned the Church?" Some of the best writers, like William Temple, remind the Church that "Humanity's alienation from God is a fact. Our main business is not to deny it, but to end it." Some of the best writers, like Donald McGavran, remind church leaders that, without the forgiveness, reconciliation, and new life that Christ offers, "People are lost, and they need to be found." Some of the best writers, like Sam Shoemaker, keep asking one haunting question: "Can your kind of church change this kind of world?" Even lesser writers, like myself, realize our greatest influence when we are *challenging church leaders* most forthrightly: "There are lots of lost people, like sheep without a shepherd, all over your community, who are looking for Life in all the wrong places. If your church has something better to do than reach out to them, then do it; if not, then reach out!"
17. Finally, the best pioneering researchers and writers of the past and present would also remind us that a vast *opportunity*, nationally and globally, awaits this generation of apostolic scholars. They would suggest that Theological Education offers no greater intellectual vocation, or privilege, than preparing the next generation of apostles, missionaries, evangelists, church planters, pastors, and witnesses. They would challenge us to reflect, teach, and write with the confident expectation that people whose faces we will never see, and whose names we will never know, will be reached, rescued, reconciled, redeemed, and restored, in part, by the ripple effects of our scholarship in history. They would suggest that many, perhaps most, of the most profound and revolutionary insights are yet to be discovered; most of the Christian Evangelization's most influential books still wait to be written; most of human history's greatest Christian movements are waiting to be dreamed, ignited and shaped. In the immortal words of Yogi Berra, "The future is not what it used to be!"

The Kingdom Church Model: Needed Paradigm Shift for Evangelism and Mission

Ronald W. Johnson

If the statistics are right, most churches and denominations are finding themselves in a state of plateau or decline. Even small spurts of growth from time to time do not comfort those who sense that somehow the world is not being penetrated with the good news of the gospel to the extent that it is reflected in meaningful change within the culture. As a result most denominations continue to tinker with programs or suggest new evangelistic emphases designed to get the attention of the masses. From Episcopals to Southern Baptists, the decade of the 90s was to be known as a decade of evangelism. Yet, when Y2K came the numbers showed little growth.

Shifting the current mission and evangelism paradigm for churches and denominations will not be without problems. A major hurdle to be overcome will be the need for many to move beyond an assumptive position that they are, as one preacher cited by Bill Leonard characterized Southern Baptists, "God's last and only hope."(1990:1) For most Christians who have grown up in churches, the mission and evangelism efforts of their denomination has interpreted an assumptive position that they are indeed equipped to conquer the world for Christ. The assumptive position that has been taken has generally not allowed for questioning of current methods, theological foundations, or an exploration of the obstacles presented by the postmodern world.

Four Hurdles

For some denominations a theological hurdle must be crossed. Southern Baptists, for example, must face the fact that their understandings of salvation only in terms of the apocalyptic must be modified. They must understand the wholistic nature of salvation in terms of not only soul but of the total experience of humankind. Writing on the need for a rediscovery of theology within the experience of human life, John Jonsson calls for a retranspositionalization process. According to Jonsson:

> Retranspositionalization relates to the biblical exegete's being retransposed in mind-set from the pursuits of abstract meaning to the encounter with the concrete biblical intention in human life.(1998:67)

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He aptly explains ". . . within the process of retranspositionalization, theology becomes implicated with every aspect of socio-human life and concern . . . ."(1998:75) Social justice and ministry issues must be taken seriously and viewed as a critical theological argument. World religions will need to be viewed more inclusively through the lens of Divine revelation to all humankind. Every Christian church must take seriously the reality of Divine revelation expressed in world religions and they must learn how to express their sense of the uniqueness of Christ within the context of world religions.

Approaching salvation as exclusively the end goal for persons ignores the present reality of the human experience and of the dynamic process of faith development. Simply believing that Jesus will come again to receive the saved and to usher them into a perfect world ignores the words of Jeremiah 9:23-24. In this passage God wishes to establish steadfast love, justice, and righteousness on the earth. These are the issues in which the Lord delights, according to Jeremiah. It is notable that God wishes to establish these on the earth and does not speak of them as needing to be established in heaven.(Cassidy 1997:17-23) These attributes are already in the heavenly realm, but they need to be on the earth. Evangelistic concerns of Christians should take seriously the earth issues that affect all of humanity.

A second hurdle that will need to be crossed is the ecumenical barrier. An assumptive position that believes one denomination or convention can evangelize the world better than another ignores cooperation with Christians all around the globe. More needs to be done across denominational lines and in cooperation with other Christians to accomplish mission to the world. Interfaith dialogue and cooperation is essential to a paradigm shift that will renew the mission of Christians.

The third hurdle is how we engage cultural change. A sober encounter with demographic changes, postmodernism, and the need for a contextual approach to mission is critical. The regional nature of some denominations like the Southern Baptists has insulated them in the past from the problems of demographic change, worldview shifts, and the need to understand the dynamics of culture. They find themselves in a different world today that will require facing the challenges that have been unmet and that threaten to place them in a small sub-cultural position if they fail to take seriously what is happening in the world. Denominational leaders need to listen to the work of sociologists and missiologists. The denominational agencies need to embrace dialogue with scholars who are studying trends. Churches need to move away from a programatic approach designed for religiously oriented persons toward an incarnational model of mission that will place the church among what George Hunter calls "pre-Christian" persons. Engaging the culture, instead of insulating away from it, is a must for the future of all churches.

While there are many other hurdles that need to be crossed in order to accomplish a major paradigm shift in the mission of Christians, the corporate hurdle is the most formadible. Since the 1950s the corporate model of denominational life and church life has dominated. The corporate model has caused churches like the Southern Baptists, for example, to invest in cooperation as the model for mission and to fund home and foreign missions by sending money to central mission agencies. The passion for mission has been delegated, along with funds, to the work of agencies who send others on mission for the churches. As a result, the passion of local churches for mission has been generally local or community based and has not been inclusive of the world except through the work of the mission sending agencies they sponsor. The average church member is led to feel that giving money to missions is the sum total of mission involvement to the world.

The evangelistic passion of churches is also limited by the corporate model. Evangelism programs are passed to the churches by the agencies for churches to implement. Little consideration is given to the context in which the church finds itself. It is assumed, in a corporate sense, that what will work in one part of the country will work in the entire nation. Therefore, evangelism is limited and not practiced in creative or contextual ways by the churches.

Given the problems that churches and denominations face today the kindom model for mission and evangelism, rather than a corporate model, seems to hold the most promise for a needed paradigm shift that could enable churches to more effectively carry out their mission to the world.

The Validity of a Kingdom Model for Mission

In order to suggest a paradigm shift for mission and evangelism that is constructed away from a corporate model and toward a kingdom model, it will be necessary to examine the concept of the kingdom of God. It is beyond the scope of this paper to consider every aspect of the kingdom of God; however, foundational concepts need to be explored to properly apply them to a new model for mission and evangelism.

Given the evidence that evangelism is central to the mission of Christians the kingdom of God becomes ". . . an important image for understanding the biblical vision of God's saving activity."(Driver 1997:84) God's saving activity, however, must be enlarged within the vision of all Christians. It must focus on the entirety of the human situation and cannnot be limited to the spiritual. The kingdom model has the potential to turn the churches inside out rather than allowing them to focus inward thereby overlooking the human situation. While most Christians indicate that they believe in mission to the world "the outward thrust of Christians and Christian communities into the world for the

conversion of every human situation in Jesus Christ remains problematic."(Jonsson 1998:78) A shift to a kingdom model will radically change the focus of most churches and challenge most Christians in ways that may make them uncomfortable. Christians cannot remain "at ease in Zion." Jurgen Moltmann indicates that the ideal of Western progress suggests that Christians can lead a life free from pain or suffering, but such a vision is impossible because it inflicts suffering and pain on others.(1975:167) The ideal, often found in the corporate church, is of a life without suffering and of easy believism. However, the dividends that are paid with such a view can cause Christians to think of themselves as powerless in helping those who are in the midst of suffering throughout the world. The temptation is most often to focus their vision inward on their own congregation's need. Many churches feel helpless to meet the world's need and thus limit their missiological vision to those nearest to the church community.

Moltmann warns Christians to remember that "Humanity only has a future if it looks to a common future."(ibid.) Each church will thus have to be responsible for the totality of humanity and make every effort to meet human need and spiritual need as far as its resources will allow. Beyond local resources, churches will need to link up with other churches to reach out to humanity and the world.

Many churches will not be able to depend on the corporate model to furnish them with answers to the need for world mission. They will find increasing challenges to become more creative and more visionary in order to accomplish the goals of mission to the world. The priority of vision will thus have to be a world perspective, beginning at home and moving dynamically outward. John Jonsson has summed up the need by saying:

> As long as there are growing numbers of people in the world who do not have the opportunity of hearing about Jesus Christ, the vocation of each witnessing church must be multiplied and intensified. The fact that the majority of the world's population is poor means that the promises of God must be shared in the gospel. The fact that people are struggling for personal justice, human freedom, and spiritual liberation means that the hope of the kingdom of God must be promised to them. The fact that there are dropouts in societies calls for the proclamation of the One who gives fulness of life. The fact that people are seeking meaning in life means that we must heed the call of Jesus Christ to discipleship, service, and risk. The fact that there is so much nominal Christianity means that we must return to our first love. The fact that there is so much threat to our future global existence means that we are being called to be peacemakers, announcing the One who "makes all things new."(1998:80)

Jonsson's analysis sums up the challenge for all churches to become kingdom oriented.

The movement toward a kingdom model should be an attractive one for churches like the Southern Baptists because they speak so often of the early church as their model for mission and evangelistic outreach. Southern Baptists, however, will need to discover the larger implications of the kingdom of God concept. The kingdom of God must not be limited to a local church's worship, fellowship, ministry, or outreach. The local church must visualize itself as a part of the larger work of the kingdom and vital to the establishment of God's reign throughout the world.

John Fullenbach has pointed out that:

> There are 114 occurrences of *church* in the New Testament referring to the Christian community, but the word *church* occurs only twice on the lips of Jesus. Can we conclude from here that the central teaching of Jesus was the Kingdom while the church occupied no significant place in Jesus' thought? Did the early church substitute the church for the Kingdom because the parousia did not come? It would be dangerous in theology to measure everything by the range of the names applied to it. The word *church* may not appear often in Jesus' teaching, but the very concept of the messianic community intrinsically bound up with the Kingdom implies what is meant by the concept church.(1998:249)

Hence, Christians should recognize the large scope of the work of the kingdom and be willing to participate in its work with all churches on mission to the world. It is precisely because:

> The Kingdom of God and the Church are two key New Testament concepts, both are crucial for the understanding of God's plan for humanity. They are central to the fulfillment of his redemptive purpose. While the Church cannot be identified with the Kingdom, for the latter is a large and more comprehensive term, the two are nevertheless in such close correlation that they cannot be separated either. (Kuzmic 1986:49)

According to Fullenbach the kingdom is to be understood as all-embracing and a dynamic concept that signifies God's active rule over all reality.(1998:249) The present prevailing image of the church among many Christians, however, is that of corporate organized religion with by-laws, constitutions, and structures that narrowly define its mission. Many view the church as an institution in the society which fulfills spiritual functions the way other institutions fulfill business, government, educational, or labor

needs. It is therefore easy to understand how Christians have limited the scope of the church within the kingdom of God and how society in general has allotted religion a role in the culture that keeps its distance from the more inclusive aspects of human life.

The symbol, kingdom of God, offers the church "a horizon of transcendence that will save it from enclosing itself again and again in stiffling structures."(Fullenbach 1998:252) Most denominations and churches have enclosed themselves within the stiffling structures of a corporate identity that has limited their mission vision. A recovery of understanding of the kingdom of God has the potential to create new images and visions of mission and evangelization to the world. For many churches in decline, a kingdom vision offers the only hope to renewal and growth. For churches in transitional areas, new visions of unreached peoples can become a reality. For churches content with their weekly worship routines, the kingdom vision can create a healthy discontent that there is much more that needs to be accomplished. Hence, a kingdom model for churches will produce the promise of a praxis of mission and evangelism that has the potential to fulfill the call of God upon each messianic community.

The Praxis of a Kingdom Model for Mission

Churches that choose to follow a kingdom model for mission and evangelism have the potential of developing a more wholistic approach. Within the praxis of mission kingdom churches will be less concerned with many of the barriers that keep churches from a vision of world mission. Within the evangelistic mandate churches will find themselves closer to a New Testament model of evangelization which, according to Mortimer Arias, moves away from evangelistic formulas and minitheologies and toward apostolic proclamation and in keeping with Jesus' wholistic method: teaching, preaching, and healing.(1984:1-3)

The kingdom model offers three possibilities of praxis in mission for local churches: the recovery of word and sacrament; the opportunity to offer the church's own life to the world; and a model for society as a whole to follow.(Fullenbach 1998:270)

The church on mission today should be about proclaiming in word and deed that the kingdom of God has come in the person of Jesus Christ.(ibid.) The culture has apparently only overheard the gospel. Many seem to have never truly heard it. The kingdom church should, therefore, not be about the business of moralizing the gospel, but announcing it. Mortimer Arias quotes Gabriel Fackre saying that in order to get the gospel out of the church, the story must first be told in all its fullness.(1984:70) This is especially important because as Fackre says ". . . the world is aggressively telling its own tale."(1978:12) Such half-truths and fictions told by the world must be set straight by the good news of the gospel.

When Christians truly perceive the kingdom of God as good news and the church as an instrument in the telling of the story the potential for evangelism becomes clear. The power of the witness is in the story. It is not in manipulation of evangelistic formulas or strategies built around it. It is to be found in everyday lives that communicate the story they celebrate each Sunday.

The importance of the story of the gospel was summed up in a World Council of Churches meeting in Melbourne in 1980:

> The proclamation of the word of God is one such witness, distinct and indispensable. The story of God in Christ is the heart of all evangelism, and this story has to be told, for the life of the present church never fully reveals the love and holiness and power of God in Christ. The telling of the story is an inescapable mandate for the whole church; word accompanies deed as the kingdom throws its light ahead of its arrival and men and women seek to live in that light.(WCC 1980:93)

Arias has indicated that it was because the story was good news that it was remembered, told and re-told, written and passed on. (1984:70)

If the gospel is to become alive in the culture, it must first become alive through story within the churches. Kingdom churches on mission open themselves up to the world and have greater opportunities for telling the story. As Schillebeeckx explains:

> The Church is not the Kingdom of God, but it bears symbolic witness to the Kingdom through its word and sacrament, and its praxis effectively anticipates that Kingdom. It does so by doing for men and women here and now, in new situations (different from those in Jesus' time), what Jesus did in his time: raising them up for the coming Kingdom of God, opening up communication among them, caring for the poor and outcast, establishing communal ties within the household of faith and serving all men and women in solidarity. (1990:157)

As the church recovers the power of the story of the kingdom of God and of the gospel its proclaimed word has the potential of taking on new life and its sacrament new meaning as the church reaches out to the world to include them in the story.

A second possibility for the kingdom church is that it has the opportunity to offer the possibilities of its own life to the world. The kingdom model constantly holds up before the church the images of the kingdom of God where justice, peace, freedom, respect for all persons, and redemption are key components.

The practical nature of the kingdom model emphasizes to the communities around the church that the messianic community has embraced for itself such images and that they are practiced within the community of faith. The issues of daily life are brought into redemptive focus and are made concrete by a kingdom community that chooses to practice peace, to call for justice, to honor all people, and to seek salvation. As Gerhard Lohfink illustrates ". . . the church should offer itself as a "contrast society" to society at large."(1985:150) Churches that delegate through corporate agencies the issues of justice, ministry to need, human rights, and evangelistic outreach will be unable to offer themselves in authenic ways to the communities around them. Postmodern persons in the larger society are not easily impressed with corporate attempts to meet human need. Churches, however, who are willing to give their lives for the sake of the issues at the heart of the kingdom of God are more likely to gain the attention of persons in the larger culture.

The third possibility of the kingdom model for the church is that it has the potential to challenge society with its unique message in ways the corporate church cannot. Since the ultimate goal of the kingdom is the transformation of the whole of creation, the church must ". . . understand its mission in the service of the imminent Kingdom."(Fullenbach 1998:270)

Each church that follows the kingdom model will decide for itself appropriate ways to challenge the culture around it and thus properly contextualize its message. The corporate church depends upon agencies far removed from the local context to furnish it with a vision, strategies, and materials for outreach. As has been stated in this thesis such an approach cannot be properly contextualized. No community is like another. Human needs vary. The way people groups process information is often culturally unique and demographic shifts make it impossible to assume that persons in the churches are like those in the larger society. If the church's message is to properly challenge society as a whole it will require that each church fashion for itself the vision given to them by the Creator for their local context and for the world.

These three possibilities function together for the sake of mission and evangelization. The kingdom model for the church does not allow for the dichotomization between ministry, mission and evangelism as does the corporate; rather, the complex mission of the church is fully realized as the church understands itself participating in the kingdom. Such threefold mission finds its expression among Catholic authors in *Redemptoris Missio*:

> The Church is effectively and concretely at the service of the Kingdom. This is seen especially in her preaching, which is a call to conversion. Preaching constitutes the Church's first and fundamental way of serving the coming of the Kingdom in individuals and in human society . . . .

> The Church, then, serves the Kingdom by establishing communities and founding new particular Churches and by guiding them to mature faith and charity in openness toward others, in service to individuals and society, and in understanding and esteem for human institutions.
>
> The Church serves the Kingdom by spreading throughout the world the "Gospel values" which are an expression of the Kingdom and which help people to accept God's plan. It is true that the inchoate reality of the Kingdom can also be found beyond the confines of the Church among peoples everywhere to the extent that they live "Gospel values" and are open to the working of the Spirit, who breathes when and where he wills. (Fullenbach 1998:271)

The kingdom model is not a perfect model and must always view itself as a preliminary anticipation of the Kingdom.(ibid.) Yet, the kingdom model has the best opportunity to challenge the church to actually participate in the kingdom of God and to allow the church to break away from a corporate identity that may not fully challenge its understanding of mission and that may dilute it or delegate it away from the church.

Howard Snyder adequately sums up the practical nature of the kingdom model in five ways:

1. Kingdom consciousness means living and working in the firm hope of the final triumph of God's reign. In the face of contrary evidence Kingdom Christians hold on to the conviction that God will eventually swallow up all evil, hate, and injustice. It is the firm belief that the leaven of the Kingdom is already at work in the dough of creation to use Jesus' own parable. This gives Christians an unworldly, audacious confidence that enables them to go right on doing what others say is impossible or futile.

2. Understanding God's Kingdom means that the line between sacred and secular does not exist in concrete reality. God's Kingdom means that all things are in the sphere of God's sovereignty, and therefore, of God's concern. All spheres of life are Kingdom topics.

3. Kingdom awareness means that ministry is much broader than church work. Christians who understand the meaning of God's Reign know they are in the Kingdom business, not the church business. They see all activity as ultimately having Kingdom significance.

4. In Kingdom perspective, concern for justice and concrete commitment to the word of God are necessarily held together. An awareness of God's Kingdom, biblically understood, resolves the tension between the two vital concerns. Those committed to the Kingdom want to win people to personal faith in Jesus Christ, for the Kingdom is ultimately the longing of every human heart. They are also committed to peace, justice, and righteousness at every level of society because the Kingdom includes "all things in heaven and on earth"(Eph 1:10) and the welfare of every person and everything God has made.

5. The reality of the Kingdom of God can be experienced now through the Spirit who gives the believer the first fruits of the fullness of the Kingdom in the here and now. Particularly in their liturgy Kingdom people anticipate the joy of the Kingdom. The different charisms given by the Holy Spirit witness concretely to the Kingdom present and are appreciated by all as clear manifestations of the powerful presence of the Kingdom in the midst of their daily life. (1991:154-155)

Each of the five observations made by Snyder are critical in the understanding of the kingdom church. As they merge together they help to fashion a vision for the church that allows its mission to flourish and to fully participate in God's salvific intention for the whole of humanity.

The Kingdom Model As Hope For Wholism in Mission

The evangelical focus of the gospel has historically fueled the mission advance of most churches and denominational agencies. Southern Baptists, for example, have reflected the opinion of modern day church growth advocates such as Peter Wagner regarding the mission of the church. Wagner, in an essay entitled, *On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy*, has stated that the definition of mission is debatable but that it revolves around the relationship of the cultural mandate and the evangelistic mandate. Wagner's opinion is that both the cultural and evangelistic mandate are essential parts of biblical mission; neither being optional. His conclusion, however, is that evangelism is the highest priority. David Bosch approximates more correctly what mission is about by saying:

> Mission refers to *Missio Dei* (God's mission), that is, God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, God's involvement in and with the world, the nature and activity of God, which embraces both the church and the world, and in which the church is privileged to participate. *Missio Dei*

> enunciates the good news that God is a God-for-people. (1991:10)

Whereas Wagner defines mission largely as an outreach or evangelical activity of the church, Bosch's approximations of mission are much more wholistic and emphasize God's mission in which the church is privileged to participate. Southern Baptists, for example, being much closer to Wagner than Bosch find themselves with a dichotomized view and approach to mission. It is a view that is unfavorable to a wholistic kingdom model but entirely favorable to a corporate approach where mission can be easily separated into missions, evangelism, and ministry functions.

A further problem is that dichotomized evangelical approaches to mission do not adequately take into account John Jonsson's concern that evangelism be properly defined as the whole gospel for the whole person in the whole of society. Evangelicals who reject conciliatory approaches to the holism of mission strategy miss the importance of bringing into the full context of human life the word of God that touches every aspect of human experience.

Bosch can inform all Christians and help them understand that the missionary ventures of the church, properly called missions ". . . refers to particular forms, and related to specific times, places, or needs, of participation in *Missio Dei.*"(ibid.) Focusing on missionary ventures with an exclusivistic evangelistic passion often leads churches in directions that ignore the larger realities of *Missio Dei.*

If Christians are to move to a kingdom model which promises a more wholistic approach to mission they will have to commit themselves, in the words of David Bosch to be:

> Service to the *Missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany. (ibid.)

Such a wholistic approach will be critical to the shift needed to move Southern Baptists to the kingdom church model. The kingdom church fully embraces the *Missio Dei* and participates fully in it representing God to the world in the fullest expression of God's word.

A View of the Kingdom Church

The remainder of this paper will suggest how the needed paradigm shift toward the kingdom model for mission could function. There are five critical components to the kingdom model for mission that churches must realize and that will comprise a major paradigm shift in the contextualization of mission for them.

Component One: Immersed in Mission

The first component in the kingdom model suggests that churches will need to become fully immersed in mission. This is vital, as Paul Knitter has said, because ". . . if the mission of Jesus was the Kingdom of God, it cannot be otherwise for the mission of the church."(1996:108) In order to accomplish such immersion churches must distance themselves from the corporate model of mission that has been so familiar. National agencies must move beyond Enlightenment thinking toward a more postmodern and catalytic approach. Mission sending agencies should focus their energies not upon exclusive appointment of missionaries, as in the case of the Southern Baptist Convention, but upon advocacy functions, training functions, and research. They should function to help build a climate and vision for mission on foreign fields and at home. Agencies should not be charged with setting standards for those who wish to go on mission, but should be an additional resource to missionaries commissioned and sent by local churches.

As long as the mission sending agencies are seen as placement organizations for career missionaries local churches will continue to be limited in their mission vision. Few persons in comparison to the total membership of the entire denominations properly visualize themselves as being on mission with God. Emphasis should be focused away from the mission sending agencies and toward the local churches in the commissioning and preparation of missionaries.

A kingdom model would suggest a partnership between existing mission agencies and local churches. Local churches should determine under the leadership of God who will serve on mission. Local churches should be helped by the mission agencies to learn about potential mission fields and priority needs at home and abroad. Churches that cannot adequately fund missionaries could be funded by the mission agencies out of mission endowments. Mission sending agencies will still be needed for support and language training, for example. Every effort, however, should be made to place the vision for mission within the local church and to furnish that local church with resources, training, and support for church members who wish to work in foreign lands and at home.

Component Two: Salt, Light, and Context

A second component concerns the evangelistic thrust of the local churches. Kingdom churches will take seriously their role as witnesses within the culture but will be careful to understand the context of the culture and how to properly communicate the good news. Alfred Krass has suggested that the kind of evangelism that is needed is contextual evangelism, one that is ". . . alert to the current

historical and cultural moment in each place where the church is called to witness."(1978:85) Evangelism programs should not be developed by national agencies and merely handed to the churches for implementation. Kingdom churches should instead focus on their witness according to the Biblical metaphors of salt and light within the context of their own communities. They should be willing to add the flavor of the gospel to the daily dialogue of the culture thereby enhancing the human experience of God. Kingdom churches should also be light expressing the hope of the gospel in ways that challenge the darkness of the culture's misunderstandings of God.

National agencies concerned with evangelism should seek to help church members express the story of their faith and to find entry points to the culture that they might otherwise overlook. Churches should be able to utilize consultative resources that could be provided by national agencies and evangelistic leadership within the Convention.

Churches who seem to have difficulty in understanding their cultural context, for example, should seek the help of specialists who can spend time on the local church field. Agency leaders could work with the local church to properly contextualize evangelistic activities within the communities surrounding the church. Demographic research data could be provided to churches in the form of community studies conducted by national agencies. Local associations of churches could benefit as national leaders help analyze data for the churches.

Specialists should seek to help the church be wholistic in its outreach by addressing every aspect of human need within the mandate of the gospel. Churches desiring to become kingdom oriented should be helped by specialists to properly contextualize their total ministry efforts within communities. Above all, the specialists should help lead the local church to discover God's vision for its ministry and suggest ways that the vision of the church can be implemented within the community.

Component Three: A Ministry-based Mindset

A third characteristic of a kingdom church is a ministry-based approach to the whole of its mission. The passion of evangelical churches for the communication of the gospel can be best realized through a ministry-based approach.

Christians must abandon the propositional approach to evangelism which Knight says ". . . misconstrues personal revelation and misunderstands the relation of language and truth."(1997:92) Postmodern persons are reluctant to accept propositions historically used in a modern form of evangelistic presentation. The message of the gospel has its best chance of being heard as it is ministered within the context of the human story.

Each member of the church should be taught the importance of ministry and that they are called to ministry. Pastors should not exercise exclusive rites over baptism and other ordinances of the church. Laypersons should work alongside ministers as the gospel is demonstrated in word and deed. Ministers should serve as mentors of laypersons and teach skills of ministry.

An ethos of ministry needs to permeate the kingdom church. Krass has said "To be personally attached to Jesus is thus to understand oneself as called to the same servant ministry as he was."(1978:127) Every opportunity to meet human need and to address the human situation should include the story of the kingdom of Christ and his gospel. Ministry should not be focused exclusively on those who are needy but should be practiced toward all persons. Every person with whom a kingdom church member comes into contact must be viewed as one whom God loves and toward whom the church wishes to demonstrate care.

Ministry should not be used as a license for the proclamation of the evangel, rather the gospel should be viewed as woven within the total fabric of the kingdom church's ministry. Ministry should expand its focus to every issue within the human experience. Social justice concerns, ecological issues, health concerns, the need for reconciliation, and peace are part of the kingdom church's outreach.

A ministry-based mindset will focus the kingdom church's attention on the world. Its reason for being will reflect the concern of Jesus that all persons might have life in abundance. The kingdom church will focus its energy, its resources, and its attention toward the demonstration of abundant life in Jesus Christ for all humankind.

Component Four: An Inclusive Spiritual House

A fourth characteristic of the kingdom church will be culturally inclusive worship opportunities. The household of God (Eph. 2:19), the family of faith (Gal. 6:10), the dwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 3:16), and numerous other images are used throughout Scripture to invite persons to encounter God. The fundamentally social character of God's temple, according to John Driver, means that relationships are important. (1997:188) The kingdom church will invest in relationships that are open and invitational to all who wish to worship God.

The kingdom church will understand the reality of pre-Christian seekers who are interested in spirituality but who are not necessarily well informed about Christianity. George Hunter, III, reminds that many pre-Christian persons ". . . have little or no experience of church."(1996:20) The kingdom church will, therefore, not establish pre-requisites about worship or spiritual exploration for those in the general community. Instead the image

of the messianic banquet will dominate. All will be invited to explore the spiritual feast.

The kingdom church will be sensitive to those who do not "know the rules" of worship. Educational opportunities will be made available for persons who wish to know more or to "test the waters" before they commit to church participation or membership. The emphasis of the kingdom church will be upon invitation and not upon recruitment of persons.

Kingdom churches do not feel a need to adhere to denominational labels in order to define themselves. They define themselves in terms of distinctives, such as believer's baptism, but offer persons opportunities to explore the distinctives for themselves. Emphasis is not upon numbers in the kingdom church, but upon the worship and knowledge of God.

Component Five: Commitment to the Family of God

The kingdom church model suggests a commitment to the concept of the family of God. Christians are not isolated by denomination but are embraced in the household of faith. The kingdom church is ecumenical in its vision, outreach to communities, ministry involvement, mission advance, and concern for the world. The kingdom church should be eager to work with all Christians for the sake of the gospel. The primary reason, according to Knitter, is that the focus of the church's mission is that of ". . . building up the Kingdom of God and building up the Church to be at the service of the Kingdom."(1996:109)

The isolation that has existed in Christendom brought about by denominational differences must be broken down if mission is to advance. If the world is to encounter the living Christ it cannot witness divisions in Christ's body, the church. Every attempt should be made to foster openness and dialogue between faith groups.

The kingdom church should be an advocate of willing participation with any church community called to mission. In doing so it recognizes that the kingdom of God is broader than any denomination, church, or Christian group. Sharing of resources, information, and expertise should be a natural expression of the kingdom church so that the kingdom can benefit from all sources. Knitter insists that the church is called to a twofold service: one is to witness to the kingdom and to promote the realization of the kingdom of God in the world. The second service is to proclaim Jesus Christ and to build up a community of faith as disciples.(ibid.)

As Christians embrace the concept of the family of God in the ecumenical sense they soon discover that the mystery of God is at work everywhere. The wholeness of the kingdom is strengthened and fellowship is enhanced as churches work together for the sake of the kingdom. According to Knitter, "In a Kingdom-centered

mission theology, Christians are better able to keep their priorities straight."(ibid.)

Conclusion

While the five components of a kingdom church are not exhaustive, they do represent for many churches a marked paradigm shift and do take into account the challenges to the mission of churches outlined in this paper.

The use of the term, "kingdom church," will continue to be a challenge to some. The term must not be misunderstood. It does not refer to a Christendom model nor does it refer to the development of a monolithic hierarchy of religious systems. The New Testament writers constantly portray Jesus as a pivotal figure who redirects the understandings of his followers from their captive concept of the coming kingdom to a cosmically extended assertion of the reign of God.(Poe 1996:185) Such redirection will be the constant challenge of Southern Baptists' understanding of the kingdom oriented church.

The kingdom model implies participation with God as God's kingdom is made known on the earth. Every realm of human experience, physical and spiritual is touched by the kingdom concept. The reality of the kingdom of God opens the door to life in the kingdom and extends the kingdom through the participation and witness of all believers in God's mission.(ibid.)

Southern Baptists, for example, are not used to thinking along kingdom lines. They are more at home with denominational identity. Yet, the challenge to shift to a kingdom church model as the basis for their mission is crucial to their survival as a denomination given the uncertain direction of their mission programs, aging membership, and the realities of post-denominationalism. The kingdom church model offers new hope because of the fundamental character of kingdom people. As David Bosch so aptly explains in his quote of Snyder:

> Kingdom people seek first the Kingdom of God and its justice; church people often put the church work above concerns of justice, mercy, and truth. Church people think about how to get people into the church; Kingdom people think about how to get the church into the world. Church people worry that the world might change the church; Kingdom people work to see the church change the world.(1991:378)

Kingdom people are eager to participate in the *Missio Dei*. They realize that "The *Missio Dei* purifies the church. It sets it under the cross--the only place where it is ever safe." (Bosch 1991:519)

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Theology in Eighteenth-Century Conversion Narratives: What History Might Teach Us

Stephen W. Rankin

A recent edition of *Discipleship*, a popular journal dedicated to practical advice for Christian living, featured an article entitled, "Views from the Outside: Three Nonbelievers Talk about Jesus and Those Who Follow Him." The article aims to help Christians understand people outside the faith in order to do a better job evangelizing. One of the people featured had professed an evangelical faith for a time and then had turned to Buddhism. The other two had never been Christian. One found the "narrowness" of Christianity unacceptably confining with regard to what happens to a person following death. One was offended that some of his Christian friends did not think that his Hindu beliefs truly reflected God's will. The third person—the Christian-turned-Buddhist—preferred Buddhism's perceived broad scope of salvation: "Everybody has a path. They're just different paths versus the right path and the wrong path."[1]

A *Newsweek* article on teenage spirituality makes a similar point. The subtitle states, "Young people are openly passionate about religion—but they insist on defining it in their own ways." Although youth are intensely spiritual, they are also doggedly individualistic about specific beliefs and how one holds them. For many of them, "God is whatever works for you."[2]

For all the determination to hold on to as much individual freedom as possible, the attitudes these articles illustrate suggest an assumption about both the nature and will of God.The idea that God is "whatever works for you," must depend on at least an implicit notion that God's nature (if God is personal at all) is essentially benign and that God does not make many demands or have many claims.[3] This sort of God is understood to be primarily a helping or encouraging presence, but without much authority. Christian spirituality influenced by this sort of thinking would deal much less with the question of accountability to God than our Christian forbears did and this seems, at least anecdotally, to be the case in much of popular culture. Such an attitude has direct bearing on both the way we talk about the nature of Christian conversion and the motivation with which we do evangelism.

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In this article I will argue for a reconsideration of the place of specific theological convictions related to Christian conversion. I will look at a period of time in which conversions occurred in large numbers and among people who talked and wrote extensively about them—the eighteenth century revival movement known as Methodism. John Wesley, as its founder and doctrinal mainstay, provides the starting point, after which stories from preachers and rank and file members will reveal a consistent theological orientation regarding conversion. We will conclude by considering whether that view is relevant, even necessary, for effective evangelism today, or whether it represents a roadblock.

Since conversions will be the focus of this piece, a definition of the term is in order. I will use 'conversion' to mean a change of mind, attitude, behavior and self-awareness. Sometimes the changes in attitude and behavior are dramatic, sometimes very subtle, in the following accounts. In each case, however, the people thought of themselves in a distinct new way on the basis of their understanding of God's claim on their lives and the boundaries within which appropriate response could occur.

Methodist Conversion Narratives

The significance of John Wesley's evangelical conversion has been the subject of sharp debate,[4] the attention for which normally falls on his account of May 24, 1738, and his famous heart-warming experience. Less well known is that, prior to this event, he engaged in a series of significant theological conversations with a Moravian missionary named Peter Böhler. The subject of their interchanges was the nature of saving faith, particularly whether or not true saving faith drives away all doubt and fear. Böhler said that it did. Initially, Wesley disagreed with him, but on March 5, 1738, he was driven to concede: "By whom (in the hand of the great God) I was on Sunday the 5th clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of 'that faith whereby alone we are saved,' with the full, Christian salvation."[5] This discovery so shook Wesley that he considered "leaving off preaching." Böhler encouraged him to continue to preach faith until he had it himself, which he did. Wesley wrote that he immediately began to preach "this new doctrine"[6] and it was not long before people began barring him from their pulpits. Wesley's evangelical conversion on May 24 followed logically from his intellectual conversion on March 5. It may be an overstatement to say that Aldersgate could not have happened without this prior change of mind, but the force of the account in the Journal leads one to the conclusion that the theological change of mind was singularly significant.

A similar set of guiding theological principles can be seen at work in other conversion accounts within Methodism. Mrs. Martha

Clagget was one of John Wesley's first converts following Aldersgate. She wrote her testimony to Charles Wesley.[7] As a young girl she apparently was quite religious. As a teenager she went to boarding school, where she learned to "love the pleasures and vanities of the world and to grow cold to religious exercises and as the former increased the latter decreased."[8] An illness helped her to consider her spiritual condition. She prayed for healing and received it, but it did not turn her frame of mind toward God. She eventually went to London and married. She had five children and, since she had difficulty giving birth, she feared for her life with every pregnancy. During this period she heard George Whitefield preach about "original sin and man's fallen estate," which awakened her sense of accountability to God. She said that Whitefield also spoke of "new birth and change of nature, *which I thought I understood, but since find I did not* (emphasis added)."[9] Although the precise doctrinal question differs from that which engaged Wesley's mind prior to his conversion, Mrs. Clagget, like Wesley, underwent first some sort of doctrinal or theological change. Then, assessing her condition in light of this new understanding, she became convinced that she did not have what she needed. She was, in effect, converted to a new self-understanding on the basis of a new theological conviction. She labored for a time with her sense of self as a sinner needing salvation, but did not immediately receive assurance of having gained it. Then came a conversation with John Wesley, "who, like the apostle's good angel, opened the prison door, bid me arise up quickly, and told me that Christ loved me and gave himself for me. That if I would only believe, I might that moment receive the atonement."[10] Within a few days, Mrs. Clagget felt that she had been set free from sin and had the joy of new life in Christ.

John Nelson, a bricklayer, became one of the earliest Methodist preachers working as John Wesley's assistant. Wesley asked many such men to write their conversion stories, which were then published as a way of encouraging readers toward the same experience. Nelson was reared in a conventionally religious home. As a young man, he moved away from his spiritual roots. He married and engaged in his trade. During these years, he had a sense of spiritual restlessness and suffered, according to his testimony, severe pangs of temptation to sin, even though he remained upright in outward moral behavior. He heard George Whitefield preach, whose sermon brought to him, as it had Mrs. Clagget, a new sense of accountability to God. He became convinced that his spiritual restlessness was directly related to the sin at work within him, which, though he managed to avoid falling into it behaviorally, he still felt its grip upon his desires. He, too, began to seek relief from God and wrote of particularly strong spiritual torment. Then he heard John Wesley preach. His testimony shows his frame of mind:

> I fell down to prayer again, but found no relief; got up and walked again: then tears began to flow from my eyes, like great drops of rain, and I fell on my knees a third time; but now I was as dumb as a beast, and could not put up one petition, if it would have saved my soul. *I kneeled before the Lord some time, and saw myself a criminal before the Judge* (emphasis added): then I said, 'Lord, thy will be done; damn or save!' That moment Jesus Christ was as evidently set before the eye of my mind, as crucified for my sins, as if I had seen Him with my bodily eyes; and in that instant my heart was set at liberty from guilt and tormenting fear, and filled with a calm and serene peace. I could then say, without any dread or fear, 'Thou art my Lord and my God.'[11]

One could easily read this testimony from a psychology-of-religious-experience perspective as that of a tortured conscience seeking relief. This is often the way such stories are read. What I find interesting is the self-understanding expressed in his words, "I saw myself a criminal before the Judge." If we bracket the psychological question for a moment and look at the statement in theological terms, a specific claim emerges: We are accountable to a God who, as Judge (notice Nelson's use of the definite article), has the right to determine our destiny.

In Joseph Entwisle's account of John Kershaw, we see again this period of new understanding and introspection prior to conversion. Entwisle was a Methodist preacher, under whose preaching Kershaw came to faith in Christ:

> About a year ago, he happened to come to our chapel in Halifax, where he heard me preach; and it pleased God, under that sermon to *convince him of sin and show him his want of it* (emphasis added). He continued from that time to attend preaching; desiring to be brought into closer union with the people of God. About four months ago, one of our pious friends, returning from the preaching on a Lord's day, met with him on the road, and entered into conversation with him, inviting him, at the same time, to attend the class meeting. He did so the next week and the first time he went, the Lord delivered him from all condemnation, filled his soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory.[12]

The cognitive change that Kershaw experienced looks quite similar to that of our other subjects as he moved from one set of theological convictions to another. In this case the language relates to the concept of sin. To be sure, the account does not clearly state what Kershaw believed prior to his meeting the Methodists. Nonetheless, the account indicates that his self-understanding changed from

something to that of a sinner. One may presume that he earlier thought of himself in more self-affirming terms. His conclusions about himself match those of Mary Clagget and John Nelson. This new understanding set the stage for the conversion to occur.

One final story, before offering some analysis, comes from a letter by a Joseph Green written to Benjamin Heap in 1755. This one is interesting because it shows a person mid-way in this conversion process. He, like the other people we have met, had had an awakening to a new understanding of his accountability to God, but, at the time of writing this letter, he had not yet experienced resolution to his spiritual dilemma. The letter begins, "Dear Brother, or desiring so to be"[13] Green marvels at Heap's composure in the face of trials and attributes it to "the Lord's comfort"[14] of a person's soul. He does not yet share this comfort, but gives thanks to God, who "has not left [him] without hope of mercy,"[15] even though he is sometimes tempted to think otherwise.

Although, at the time of writing, Green did not yet have the confidence that he was a full Christian, he still rejoiced that God had brought him out of the pit of hopelessness. He concluded, "I could greatly rejoice if I was brought into the light and liberty of the dear children of God and accept in Christ the Beloved. I hope this will be accomplished and that in a little time."[16] Thus we see here a man convinced of his need to be in a condition before God that he could not yet say with confidence that he enjoyed. At the same time, he believed that God would give it to him. This is theology at work, not mere psychology of religious experience. His language is laced with scripture. Even though he could not, by experience, give testimony to being legitimately a Christian, he certainly had the mindset for it. In this sense he stood in a similar condition to John Wesley between March 5 and May 24, 1738.

Conclusions

These few conversion narratives exemplify an ample body of quite similar stories from this period. The Arminian and Wesleyan Methodist Magazines, dating from the late eighteenth century are replete with such accounts. Hundreds of letters and private diaries of Methodists, not to mention other evangelicals of this period and the pietists before them, tell a similar story. In the early twentieth century, Sydney Dimond did a study of one hundred thirty two such conversion stories recorded in John Wesley's Journal alone.[17] Dimond's scholarly interest lay in social psychology. Still, he recognized the legitimate connection between doctrine and experience.

A historian studying these documents would need at least a rudimentary knowledge of foundational evangelical doctrines—original sin, individual accountability to God, God's wrath in the face of sin, justification and new birth offered in Christ and, finally, the sanctification of believers—in order to understand what happened during this period of time. She or he would quickly see how the conversion narratives we have studied nicely fit such a theological framework. In fact, scholars have noted how so many of these stories fit an established form or style of language and thought. For the historian this quality actually reduces their reliability as accurately reflecting what actually happened.[18] For our purposes, however, it reinforces the awareness of a theological context that gave shape to the conversion narratives. Clearly, our subjects understood themselves to be accountable and subject to judgment of a holy God. This knowledge created the psychological dynamic of anxiety, until resolved by a sense that, through their repentance from sin and acceptance of grace in Christ, God had forgiven them. What stands out is the strong sense of accountability to a God who is understood to be holy, who must judge sin and who just as readily is merciful, ready to forgive and restore.

This is all familiar territory to the student of evangelism. Such theological matters long have been part of the complex set of issues that scholars commonly engage in order to assess the significance of a religious movement. In describing this "conversionist" theology, John Walsh, an eminent scholar of British Methodism, wrote:

> The preaching of a doctrine and the foundation of a polity were means to an end. The due end was that *a new awareness of God in Christ* (emphasis added), and a new equipment of moral power through the operation of the Holy Spirit, should come into the lives of the people, to the renewal of Church and State.[19]

The "due end" of the doctrine of these evangelical sermons was "a new awareness." I would argue that that awareness is a new theological understanding. In the accounts we have perused we have seen a consistent set of dynamics at work: preaching (or evangelistic conversation) led to a new understanding of the way God operates and of the claim God has on individual people. Hearers gain a new sense of their accountability to God and they felt compelled to respond. Evangelistic activity anticipated and expected conversion, even though hard-fought and hard-won. That it demanded a comprehensive change no one disputed.

But do we have in this discussion nothing more than time- and culture-bound responses? For practitioners today, does doctrine have any more weight than merely helping a person make sense of his or her religious experience? The question here is one of the direction or movement of the interplay between theological ideas and psychological states. In a fiercely pluralistic world, it is easy (if not

assumed and expected) to start with one's own sense of alienation or loneliness, for example, and attribute it to a lack of spirituality. One can then shop around for the set of teachings that seems best to make sense of one's feelings. In such a scenario, specific doctrines serve a secondary role and may be swapped whenever they no longer seem functional, because the prime motivation is spiritual balance, not necessarily a right relationship to God. That idea is tied to a specific set of theological convictions. If they are not held, the kind of "conversion" called for is different. Hence, "God" can be thought of as "whatever works," as the aforementioned *Newsweek* article shows. In this context, religious conversion happens fairly easily and probably does not involve the kind of intense soul-searching and spiritual agony demonstrated in the stories of people who lived during periods of intense revival.

Thus, the context for evangelism today obviously is quite different from that of the eighteenth-century. Do we adapt our methods to match the context? How do we build an evangelistic strategy? Is the presentation of particular theological claims a necessary part of this strategy? If we "talk doctrine," at what point in the conversion process do we introduce it—when we first start interacting with a non-Christian or later, during some sort of catechesis?

Reading the conversion narratives of an earlier generation of Christians reminds us that theology once played a more prominent role in evangelism than it sometimes does in our time. It challenges the illusion of diversity in the marketplace of spirituality. It questions whether people are actually "finding their own path" to God and suggests that they may be traveling an already well-trod path of constructing a very manageable idol. Once a person entertains the notion that God is not only personal, but has universal claim to the world; once that person considers his or her accountability to such a God, personal questions and desires, even felt needs, begin to pale. A new self-awareness begins to dawn and the need for conversion becomes compelling once again.

NOTES

[1]Beth Lueders, "Views from the Outside," *Discipleship* 114 (November/December 1999), 26-31.

[2]John Leland, "Searching for a Holy Spirit," *Newsweek*, 8 May 2000, p. 61.

[3]It may also illustrate the extent to which a non-theistic understanding of the divine has penetrated western thinking. If "God" is non-personal, then the notion of God's will becomes irrelevant if not absurd.

[4]The question of the significance of whether Wesley became a Christian or already was one and simply experienced assurance at Aldersgate has been the bone of contention. That question goes beyond the scope of this article. I am interested in the reflection that helped to shape what happened in Wesley's conversion, regardless of whether he became a Christian at that moment or already was one. A person who is interested in this subject may consult Randy Maddox, ed., *Aldersgate Reconsidered*, (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1990), or Kenneth J. Collins' new biography, *A Real Christian: The Life of John Wesley*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.

[5]W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater, eds., *The Works of John Wesley*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988), 18:228. The phrase "with the full Christian salvation" was added to the published journal in 1774, making this passage all the more tantalizing for people trying to figure out exactly what happened to Wesley in this significant period of his life.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]My thanks to the Rev. Tom Albin for sharing the fruits of his research regarding many primary-source accounts of the spiritual lives of early Methodists.

[8]Mrs. Mary Clagget to Charles Wesley, July 24, 1738, Early Methodist Volume of Letters (EMV), 41, John Rylands University Library, Manchester.

[9]*Ibid.*

[10]Mrs. Mary Clagget to Charles Wesley, 24 July 1738.

[11]Thomas Jackson, ed., *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers*, (London: William Nichols, 1865), 1:18.

[12]Diaries Box, Lamplough Collection, 641, John Rylands University Library.

[13]Joseph Green, Manchester, to Benjamin Heap, location not given, ALS, 15 March 1755, PLP 46-9-1, John Rylands University Library, Manchester.

[14]*Ibid.*

[15]*Ibid.*

[16]*Ibid.*

[17]Sydney G. Dimond, *The Psychology of Methodism*, (London: The Epworth Press, 1932), 50.

[18]Frederic Stuart Piggin, "Religion and the Industrial Revolution: An Analysis of E.P. Thompson's Interpretation of Methodism," *University of Wollogong Historical Journal* 2 no. 1 (1976): 8-37.

[19]John Walsh, "Methodism at the End of the Eighteenth Century," in Rupert Davies and Gordon Rupp, eds., *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, 4 vols., (London: Epworth Press, 1965-1988), 1:288.

FRONTIER THUNDER: PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM AND CHURCH GROWTH FROM THE LIFE OF SHUBAL STEARNS[1]

Larry S. McDonald

If a Hall of Fame was established in the United States for its religious leaders, Shubal Stearns would surely be among its first inductees. Without doubt, Stearns ranks as one of America's greatest, although largely unheralded, religious leaders and innovators. Few other American Baptists prior to the twentieth century wielded as great of an influence in his homeland. His personal charisma and magnetic power over audiences rivaled that of George Whitefield, and his extensive labor, both directly and indirectly, left a legacy that will endure into the twenty-first century.[2]

Stearns led one of the early Baptist groups settling into Virginia and North Carolina. This group, the Separates, became the most important of the area's Baptist assemblies. In fact, Sandy Creek Baptist Church, founded by Stearns, has been designated the mother of all Separate Baptists.[3] Some Southern Baptists see it as the mother of Southern Baptist churches.[4]

Separate Baptist progress between 1760 and 1770 is unparalleled in modern Baptist history. Morgan Edwards describes Sandy Creek Baptist Churches' influence as pervasive, almost irresistible. He writes glowingly, "From this Zion went forth the word, and great was the company of them who published it: it, in 17 years, has spread branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi; southward as far as Georgia; eastward to the sea and Chesopeck [*sic*] bay; and northward to the waters of Potowmack [*sic*]."[5] The Separate Baptists are largely responsible for planting Baptist faith and polity so deeply in Southern soil.

Indeed, the South's best known Baptists, the Southern Baptists, owe much of their success to Stearns and Sandy Creek's legacy. Charles Taylor notes, "that the number and prosperity of the Baptists within the limits of the Southern Baptist Convention is largely due, under God's blessing, to the work begun by Elder Stearns."[6] Likewise, Leon McBeth acknowledges the impact of Separate Baptists upon the Southern Baptist Convention as he writes, "Understanding the later development of the Southern Baptist Convention apart from the contributions of Separate Baptists would be impossible."[7]

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Southern Baptists owe much of their evangelistic fervor and zeal for planting churches to Shubal Stearns and the Separate Baptists.[8] Walter B. Shurden identifies four traditions within the Southern Baptist Convention, one of which is the Sandy Creek tradition. He characterizes the Sandy Creek tradition as primarily one of ardor and revivalism.[9] This ardor and revivalism has been described as an intensely evangelistic preaching which consumed the Separate Baptists with a sense of urgency and enthusiasm, almost like Pentecost.[10] The Separate Baptists "preached anywhere; in homes, in farm buildings, in open fields, in public markets, in houses of worship, or anywhere they were able to gain the attention of people."[11] The zeal of the Shubal Stearns and Separate Baptists had a profound impact upon the Southern Baptist Convention.

Stearns' impact in evangelism and church growth stemmed from five principles which could be emulated by those desiring to have the same effect. In fact, Stearns appears to be a precursor to many of the teachings of the modern day church growth movement. He claimed reliance on the Holy Spirit, made demographic observations (of people density and movement), and understood the ministry issues of leadership, training, delegation and multiplication. Stearns mobilized believers and churches to unite by casting the vision of reaching non-Christians. These principles rely on Stearns' understanding both of God's intrinsic holiness and his own personal piety. A brief biographical sketch of Stearns will help contextualize his unique understanding of evangelism and church growth in the eighteenth century.

Stearns' Early Years

Shubal Stearns was born on January 28, 1706 to Shubal and Rebecca Larriford Stearns in Boston, Massachusetts.[12] Reared in Connecticut, he joined a Congregationalist Church in Tolland. George Whitefield greatly influenced Stearns by his preaching during the Great Awakening in 1745. Through Whitefield's influence, Stearns attended a "New Light" or "Separate" church where he ministered for six years.[13] This "new light" congregation believed in emotional preaching, personal piety and evangelism as opposed to the so-called "old lights" who repudiated raw emotionalism and defended the existing state church order. Additionally, the new lights became known as "separates" because they separated from the state churches and required a profession of regeneration prior to membership.[14]

In addition, these New Light churches experienced a controversy over infant baptism. Wait Palmer, the New Light pastor of the Baptist church in North Stonington, Connecticut, may have been the first to challenge Stearns on the issue of infant baptism versus believer's baptism. After a thorough study of the Bible, Stearns declared himself a Baptist and received baptism from Palmer on May 20, 1751 in Tolland. Ordained by Palmer and Joshua Morse, Stearns became the pastor of a new Baptist church in Tolland where he served for approximately three years.[15]

The challenge to spread the gospel on the western frontier captured Stearns' heart. Requesting volunteers from his church to accompany him and his wife, Stearns set out to answer what he believed to be God's call. Five couples responded, and in August of 1754 they departed for Opekon, Virginia where they met Daniel Marshall, Stearns' brother-in-law. Marshall had ministered to the Mohawk Indians before moving to Virginia. Under the guidance of Rev. John Garrard, they established a Baptist church on Cacapon Creek in Hampshire County, Virginia.[16]

Ministering to Virginians was difficult. The area was sparsely populated. Regular Baptists, already established in the area, did not look favorably upon their new neighbors, the Separate Baptists. On June 13, 1755, Stearns received a letter from friends in the Peidmont area of North Carolina. While that letter no longer exists, Stearns reiterated its contents in a letter to Noah Alden, who had followed him as pastor of the church in Tolland, Connecticut. He said the people in North Carolina reported "that the work of God was great in preaching to an ignorant people, who had little or no preaching for a hundred miles, and no established meeting. But now the people were so eager to hear, that they would come forty miles each way, when they could have opportunity to hear a sermon."[17]

Stearns and fifteen others left Virginia in the summer of 1755 traveling to the Sandy Creek area in Guilford County (now Randolph), in central North Carolina. Joining Stearns and his wife were "Peter Stearns and wife, Ebenezer Stearns and wife, Shubal Stearns jur. and wife, Daniel Marshall and wife, Joseph Breed and wife, Enis Stinson and wife, Jonathan Polk and wife." Soon after their arrival, they organized the Sandy Creek Baptist Church on November 22, 1755.[18]

Shubal Stearns became the church's pastor and quickly established himself as a dynamic preacher and leader. Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed became his assistant ministers even though they were not ordained. Under Stearns' leadership Sandy Creek's initial membership roll of sixteen ballooned to 606 people as the church began aggressive outreach within the community.[19] Rapid growth mandated the planting of new churches. In 1758 six congregations organized themselves into the Sandy Creek Baptist Association.[20] This new association eventually included churches in Virginia and South Carolina.[21] Thus a handful of transplanted New Englanders electrified North Carolina. The question is "What made Stearns and his cohorts so successful?" A thorough examination of his ministry at the Sandy Creek Baptist Church

suggests that Shubal Stearns followed five distinct principles that enabled him to evangelize America's frontier.

Dependence Upon The Holy Spirit

For Stearns, evangelism and church growth began with his own personal piety. Stearns believed that the Holy Spirit of God established personal purity within believers and empowered them for ministry. Contemporaries noted that purity of life, godly simplicity, pious ardor, invincible boldness, and perseverance characterized Stearns, Marshall, and Harris.[22] Later historians would testify that Stearns' "character was indisputably good as a man," and that Stearns "evidenced complete dependence upon the Holy Spirit."[23]

Stearns' desire to maintain a pious lifestyle before God and others, as well as his personal piety became hallmarks both of the Sandy Creek Baptist Church and Association and the Separate Baptist movement. One historian states that the "most [noteworthy] characteristic of the Separates was their dependence on the Holy Spirit and their sense of his presence in their meetings."[24] The strict discipline practiced by the Separates resulted in high moral and ethical standards, earning them high praise as simple, sincere Christians of remarkably sound judgment. The associational meetings were characterized by a pervasive sense that God's power rested upon the preachers.[25] On October 16, 1765, Stearns wrote a letter to friends in Connecticut discussing revival meetings in which he had participated. Stearns concluded the letter by stating, "The power of God was wonderful."[26]

Stearns endeavored to live his life in submission to the Holy Spirit's leadership. He believed that personal holiness and the ability to minister effectively were inseparable. That is, submission to the Holy Spirit's leadership produced a purity of life that was readily apparent to others. Subsequently, he believed this purity resulted in the power of the Holy Spirit upon his ministry. Thus, church growth in Stearns' mind began with church leadership, especially among pastors. As spiritual leaders, Stearns believed pastors needed to mind their own spiritual health before they could care for others.

Prioritizing Evangelism

Beyond personal holiness, Shubal Stearns believed that ministers and their congregations should practice intentional evangelism. Evangelism rarely happens by accident and Stearns was described as having rousing missionary zeal.[27]

This priority Stearns placed on evangelism quickly became a distinguishing feature of the Separates at the Sandy Creek Church. By contrast, the Particular Baptists in the Jersey Settlement, an area

near Sandy Creek, began one year prior to the Sandy Creek church. While having two of the most able pastors and preachers of the Philadelphia Association, Rev. Benjamin Miller and Rev. John Gano, the Particular Baptists had little impact beyond their own membership and neighborhood. New church planting never became a part of the Jersey Church ministry. In the years to come, however, the Separates influenced Gano and he became an evangelist.[28]

The history of the Sandy Creek Church clearly portrays commitment to evangelism. The church began with 16 members and multiplied to 606 within a short time. Not only did the Sandy Creek Church grow, but it started other churches in the process. From 1755 to 1772, a seventeen-year period, forty-two churches traced their lineage to the Sandy Creek Church.[29] Contemporaries claimed that Stearns and his friends were aggressive and possessed an invincible boldness which spread throughout that church body.[30]

The impiety and generally poor religious state of the Southern colonies in the eighteenth century are well documented.[31] Stearns preached the basic message of new birth, conviction and conversion, with a definite time and place of conversion being a key element in one's personal salvation.[32] Stearns' innovations may have led to the earliest record of a public invitation in American church history.[33]

Shubal Stearns and the Separate Baptist had an urgent commitment to make a clear and simple gospel presentation to as many lives as possible. This message centered on Jesus Christ coming in the flesh, living a sinless life, dying on the cross for the world's sin, and his resurrection following three days in the grave. Stearns believed that responding to this message by exercising personal faith in Christ produced a conversion experience. William L. Lumpkin observes, "With relentless intensity a twofold conviction was borne in upon the hearts of the Separates . . . the urgency of the missionary task and the readiness of men to accept the truth if only they could hear it. . . . A frantic urgency filled the missionary enterprise."[34] Stearns had both a passion for evangelism and the ability to excite that same passion in others.

Mobilization of Laity for Ministry

If Stearns relied on the Holy Spirit's empowerment and believed strongly in personal evangelism, he also understood the value of mobilizing his churches' laity for evangelizing the unconverted. Lay participation in ministerial acts distinguished the Sandy Creek Baptist Church from its beginnings. Members at Sandy Creek were always encouraged to exercise their gifts of ministry.[35]

Four factors stimulated and reinforced lay participation in Separate Baptists.[36] First, the pastors encouraged the development

of leadership from within their own congregations. Second, the Separates used a style of discipleship in which pastors used lay assistants in ministry. Whether within a local church, or in newly planted branch churches, or as traveling companions, the laity received practical, hands-on ministry training. Third, the Separates' style of worship included a public confession of faith by a new convert, thereby encouraging even the newest lay person to share his or her faith. Fourth, the Separates emphasized a family devotion and responsibility to the local church that encouraged lay involvement.

Daniel Marshall and Joseph Breed, neither of whom were ordained, assisted Stearns at Sandy Creek even though the church initially had only sixteen members.[37] Certainly such a small congregation had no compelling need for these two additional ministers. Yet Stearns had an eye on the future. These assistant pastors received "on the job training" for future ministries that would reach beyond the scope of Sandy Creek Church and even Stearns himself.

Elnathan Davis stands as another example of Stearns' ability to mentor his disciples and inspire dedicated service to the church. Davis heard that Stearns, being small in stature, was to baptize John Steward, a very large man. Convinced that drowning would be the inevitable outcome, Davis took several of his friends to observe the baptism. However Stearns' preaching so captivated Davis that it frightened him away. It was not long until Davis returned and converted to Christianity.[38] In recounting this story Morgan Edwards states, "Immediately he [Davis] began to preach conversion work, raw as he was, and scanty as his knowledge must have been."[39]

Although Stearns enjoyed a certain celebrity status within the Sandy Creek Church and Association, he was undergirded by a multitude of others committed to strengthening the church and evangelizing the unconverted. When the laity of a church is trained and organized for ministry, a strong foundation exists.

Strategic Planting of Other Churches

Stearns' vision went beyond the Sandy Creek Baptist Church of which he was pastor. Having a vision to plant other churches, he instilled this concept in those near him. Daniel Marshall, his assistant and brother-in-law, founded Abbott's Creek Church located approximately thirty miles from Sandy Creek.[40] In 1760, another church was organized at Little River, North Carolina. Church membership of Little River grew from 5 to 500 within three years.[41]

Stearns applied careful, strategic planning in choosing the physical locations for these new church plants. This is best

illustrated with the Sandy Creek Church where Stearns observed road patterns and population make up before choosing the church site. The designated spot he chose promised to become a strategic center from which he could minister to a growing and spiritually needy population.[42]

The population make-up of the area where Stearns started the Sandy Creek Baptist Church was English-speaking newcomers moving from north of the Carolinas, most of whom were not Christians. This English speaking element became more important than all the foreign speaking groups combined.[43]

Three trails converged at Sandy Creek which made it one of the busiest crossroads of the southern frontier. The first trail, the Settlers Road, ran from north to south from Pennsylvania to South Carolina. The second, Boones Trail, went from Wilmington westward to the Yadkin settlements. The third trail, the Trading Path, ran from southeastern Virginia (Norfolk) to the Waxhaw country.[44] William W. Barnes claims that when Stearns reached the Sandy Creek area, he heard a voice within that said, "Here I Stand."[45] The wisdom of this choice was soon evident.[46]

Stearns' planning paid high dividends. According to one source, "By 1776 the Baptists had become a power in the colony, having established at least one church in every county."[47] David Benedict identified an even greater area of influence as he stated, "the Separates in a few years became truly a great people, and their churches were scattered over a country whose whole extent from north to south was about 500 miles; and Sandy Creek Church, the mother of them all, was not far from the centre [*sic*] of the two extremes."[48] Edwards gives a more comprehensive statement of the breadth of this church planting vision as he stated, "From this Zion went forth the word, and great was the company of them who published it: it, in 17 years, has spread branches westward as far as the great river Mississippi; southward as far as Georgia; eastward to the sea and Chesopeck [*sic*] bay; and northward to the waters of Potowmack [*sic*]: it, in 17 years become mother, grand-mother, and great Grandmother to 42 churches, from which sprang 125 ministers, many of which are ordained . . ."[49]

Stearns' far-reaching impact stemmed from his vision to plant new churches, his ability to instill that vision in others, and his insightful choices of church locations. He enjoyed remarkable influence through the multiplying of churches.

Organized Association of Churches

The final element in Stearns' master strategy was to organize churches into associations in order to promote corporate strength. In 1758, Stearns established the Sandy Creek Baptist Association. This association was the first in North Carolina, the second in the

South, and the fourth in America.[50] Stearns believed the association would help to "establish stability, regularity, and uniformity among the Separate churches."[51]

Although no minutes of the Sandy Creek Association exist from 1758 to 1805, there are some accounts of the associational meetings. Benedict indicates the meetings were primarily preaching, exhortation, singing, and conversation about ministry. These assemblies provided ministers with a time of mutual encouragement and spiritual refreshment. Often people came long distances to observe the meetings simply out of curiosity. As a result of visiting these associational meetings, these guests would frequently petition the association to send preachers to their areas.[52] James Reed attended the first meeting of the association and described it by saying, "At our first Association we continued together three or four days. . . . The great power of God was among us. The preaching every day, seemed to be attended with God's blessing. We carried on our Association with sweet decorum and fellowship to the end. Then we took leave of one another, with many solemn charges from our reverend old father, Shubal Stearns, to stand fast unto the end."[53]

Unanimity in all decisions characterized the early Sandy Creek Baptist Association. In 1770 the associational proceedings were blocked due to lack of unanimity. Lack of agreement existed on the issue of associational authority, especially in disciplining churches and ordaining pastors. Stearns also may have held too strong of control.[54] The second day of meetings and most of the third day were devoted to fasting and prayer. A proposal was then brought to divide the association into three groups, each one organized by its individual state. The churches in North Carolina kept the name Sandy Creek, while the churches in South Carolina took the name Congaree, and the churches in Virginia adopted the name Rapid-ann (Rapid-ann soon changed its name to the General Association of Separate Baptists). Yet even following this division, the churches continued to grow and multiply. Whereas in 1771 the Virginian churches had 1,355 members, by 1773, they had increased their enrollment to 3,195 members.[55]

The Sandy Creek Association of North Carolina faced more difficulties as families left the state. Edwards indicates that in 1771 fifteen-hundred families left the area following the controversy with the Regulators and the battle of Alamance.[56] But as the families left, they carried with them the evangelistic and missionary zeal of their home churches and association. G.W. Purefoy describes this as he states, "This emigration into East Tennessee soon resulted in the formation of five Baptist churches, which for several years belonged to the Sandy Creek Association, but were afterward organized into the Holston Association, which is the mother of the Tennessee Association, and no doubt of others in the state. Elder Tidance Lane, who has already been named as being converted under the ministry of Elder Shubal Stearns, was a prominent minister among them."[57] The great influence of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association was evident even given the division of the association and the changing population of the area. This dispersion only increased the spread of the Separate Baptist movement and the gospel message.

Conclusion

Shubal Stearns died on November 20, 1771, at the age of sixty-five. He served the Sandy Creek Baptist Church as Pastor for sixteen years. Stearns and his church influenced many lives as it became "mother, grand-mother, and great grandmother to 42 churches, from which sprang 125 ministers, many of which are ordained and support the sacred character as well as any sett [*sic*] of clergy in America . . ."[58]

Roger Finke and Rodney Starke have suggested that American churches have grown in proportion to their aggressiveness and their otherworldliness.[59] Stearns' life and methodology lend credence to their argument. The Separate Baptists succeeded largely because of their defining characteristics,[60] with Shubal Stearns being the chief exemplar of these. From Stearns' life it is clear that he depended upon the Holy Spirit, had a clear priority of evangelism, was committed to mobilizing the laity, and had a vision to establish and organize together new churches. Stearns' primary goal remained the furtherance of God's kingdom. Lumpkin summarized the influence of Separate Baptists by stating, "THE SEPARATE BAPTIST MOVEMENT[61] in the South was undoubtedly one of the most formative influences ever brought to bear upon American religious life. . . the Separate Baptist movement contributed notably to the spiritual life and vitality of American Christianity. It infused such life into the Baptist denomination in America as to raise it from obscurity to prominence within a quarter of a century. By reason of this brief history it made Baptists the principal beneficiaries in America of the Great Awakening."[62] Lumpkin then states that Stearns "was the chief light and the guiding genius behind the Separate Baptist movement. . . Rarely has a religious leader seen such rapid and magnificent results from a few years of labor. Surely the Lord was in it."[63] Stearn's life emulated principles of evangelism and church growth which can still be followed today for the strengthening and expansion of churches.

NOTES

[1]This paper was presented at the meeting of The Evangelical Theological Society in Danvers, MA, November 1999.

[2]For information on Stearns see George W. Paschal, "Shubal Stearns," *The Review and Expositor* 36:1 (January 1939): 57 and Charles E. Taylor, "Elder Shubal Stearns," *North Carolina Historical Papers* 2:2 (January 1898): 99. See also H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 227-228, A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, 4th Edition, (New York: Charles Schribner's Sons, 1902), 296 and William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South: Tracing Through the Separates the Influence of the Great Awakening, 1754-1787*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961) .

[3]Morgan Edwards, *Materials Towards A History of the Baptists in the Providence of North-Carolina*, vol. 4, (n.c.: n.p., 1772), 19. See also Newman, *A History of Baptist Churches*, 292.

[4]Walter B. Shurden, "The Southern Baptist Synthesis: Is it Cracking," *Baptist History and Heritage* 16:2 (April 1981): 2-11.

[5]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 19-20.

[6]Taylor, "Elder Shubal Stearns," 101.

[7]McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 227.

[8]James D. Moesteller, *A History of the Kiokee Baptist Church in Georgia*, (Ann Arbor, MI.: Edwards Brothers, 1952), 15.

[9]Walter B. Shurden, "The Southern Baptist Synthesis," See also John F. Loftis, "Factors in Southern Baptist Identity as Reflected by Ministerial Role Models, 1750-1925," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 1978).

[10]Noel Ray Lykins, "North Carolina Separate Baptists: A Study in Frontier Baptist Expansion in the Eighteenth Century," (Th.M. Thesis, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC, 1961), 98.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Letter from Edward C. Stearnes of the New York State Association of the Stearns Family along with a Genealogy of the Starnes Family from Bonds Genealogies and History of Watertown of the Boston Genealogical Society. Obtained from the North Carolina Baptist History Archives at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

[13]Robert B. Semple, *A History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia*, Revised and Extended by G.W. Beale, (Richmond, VA: Pitt & Dickinson Publishers, 1894), 12.

[14]James D. Mosteller, "The Separate Baptists in the South." *The Chronicle* 17:3 (July 1954): 143.

[15]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 21.

[16]David Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in American and Other Parts of the World*,4th Edition, (New York: Lewis and Colby, 1848), 683.

[17]Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists*, vol 2, 2nd Edition, with notes by David Weston, (Newton, MA: Backus Historical Society, 1871), 530.

[18]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 18.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 46.

[21]George W. Purefoy, *A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association, From Its Organization in A.D. 1758, to A.D. 1858*, (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1859), 62.

[22]Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 684.

[23]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 21 and Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 40.

[24]Paschal, "Shubal Stearns," 51.

[25]See Mosteller, "The Separate Baptists in the South," 148 and Purefoy, *A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association*, 64

[26]Isaac Backus, *An Abridgment of the Church History of New-England, From 1602-1804*, (Boston: n.p., 1804), 251.

[27]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundation in the South*, 28.

[28]Paschal, "Shubal Stearns," 53.

[29]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 18-20.

[30]Newman, *A History of Baptist Churches*, 293-294. Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 684. Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 38.

[31]See Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

[32]Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 683. Also see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992).

[33]Steve O'Kelley, "The Influence of Separate Baptists on Revivalistic Evangelism and Worship." (Ph.D. Dissertation, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, 1978), 130

[34]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 24.

[35]Loftis, "Factors in Southern Baptist Identity," 83.

[36]Ibid., 139-148.

[37]Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 683.

[38]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 26-27.

[39]Ibid., 27.

[40]Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 684.

[41]Ibid., 685.

[42]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 30.

[43]Ibid., 37-38.

[44]Ibid.

[45]W.W. Barnes, "Sandy Creek--The Holy Land of Baptists," *The Chronicle* 19:2 (April 1956): 70.

[46]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 30.

[47]R.D.W. Connor, *The Colonial and Revolutionary Periods, 1584-1783, History of North Carolina*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing, 1919), 196.

[48]Benedict, *A General History of The Baptist Denomination*, 684.

[49]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 19-20.

[50]Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 685.

[51]Robert A. Baker, *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1607-1972*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974), 50.

[52]Benedict, *A General History of the Baptist Denomination*, 685.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 57-59.

[55]Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches*, 297-298.

[56]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 18-19.

[57]Purefoy, *A History of the Sandy Creek Baptist Association*, 72.

[58]Edwards, *North Carolina*, 20.

[59]See Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-1990.*

[60]Mosteller, "The Separate Baptists in the South," 146.

[61]Author's emphasis.

[62]Lumpkin, *Baptist Foundations in the South*, 147, 162.

[63]Ibid., 59.

Introducing Evangelism to M.Div. Students

Scott J. Jones

In a room with six evangelism professors, there are probably seven opinions about how an introductory course in evangelism should be shaped. It is inevitable that different scholars will have different views about how the field should be understood, what books are most important, and what practical experiences should best shape the students' formation in ministry. However, it is imperative that those of us who teach in theological education begin a dialogue about both the shape and the content of introductory courses in evangelism to enhance our work as a discipline of academic inquiry and pedagogy.

This essay is intended to start a conversation and perhaps an argument about such matters. However, to minimize fruitless disagreements, it is important to specify the academic context presumed by my proposal. I am assuming that such an introductory course is being taught in the larger context of a Masters of Divinity curriculum. Several corollaries go along with that. Most of the students will be preparing for pastoral ministry in local congregations in the United States. Students will also be taking or have taken courses in biblical studies, theology and church history. Students will be taking other courses in the practice of ministry such as pastoral care, education, worship and preaching. Further, given the pressures of the M.Div. curriculum, there will be many students who take only one course in evangelism.

Given this assumed context, I then offer seven theses about the shape of an introductory course in evangelism. First, such a course should be biblically based. While one might argue that this should be true of all M. Div. Courses, it is especially so here. The subject matter of evangelism is *to euaggelion*, the gospel. Many of the debates about the definition and practice of evangelism stem from different interpretations of the gospel as defined by Scripture. While one cannot spend nearly enough time in such a course outlining the biblical foundations for evangelism, some time ought to be spent grounding students in the exegetical options and why theologians argue in different ways about evangelism. This may be an argument for Introduction to Evangelism being a course taken later in one's seminary curriculum, after basic courses in biblical studies and in systematic theology have already been taken.

Second, such a course should be historically conscious. Again, there is not time to discuss the history of evangelism. But

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students should be aware that evangelism has taken different forms at different times in the church's history. Most students enter seminary with pre-conceived ideas (both positive and negative) about evangelism, and historical study can make it clear that different conceptions are often grounded in different historical contexts. Tracts, revivalism, small groups for discipleship, crusades, televised sermons and other "obvious" forms of evangelism all had particular times and places in which they arose and which should be understood if those forms are to be considered as options for evangelistic practice in the future. Books like David Bosch's *Transforming Mission* that argues for different periods of the church's understanding of mission in general and evangelism in particular, or Loren Mead's *Once and Future Church* indicate to seminarians the possibility that evangelism both has been different in the past and may be (or should be?) different in the future.

Third, the course should be theologically diverse. Students should understand that there are different understandings of evangelism representing the theological spectrum within Christianity. Liberation theologians, Roman Catholic theologians, Protestant theologians, Liberals, Conservatives, African Americans, Women and others should all be heard if possible. Again, it is not possible to give adequate time to each perspective. But the course should lead students to an awareness of how many different understandings there are.

Toward this end, significant attention should be paid to the definition of "evangelism." Evangelism is a form of ministry that is not tied to a specific activity. Classes in preaching, education and worship all have cognate activities that are recognizable and clear. The boundaries of these activities may be porous or ill-defined; one is not always sure what counts as worship, for example. But there is an activity of the gathered Christian community that serves as the focal point for understanding worship and the reflection upon that activity that constitutes the disciple of liturgical studies. However, evangelism by most definitions, includes many different practices which focus on the initiation of the person into the Christian life. Thus, all other areas of ministry have evangelistic implications. Even church administration has its proper concern with how pre-Christian persons perceive the buildings, grounds and signage of the congregation and thus it has an evangelistic aspect. Precisely because evangelism is a form of ministry that overlaps all other forms of ministry, the question of its definition is of high importance. Depending on how one answers the definitional question, standards of excellence and modes of practice can be very different from one Christian community to the next.

Fourth, it should be practically focused. Like all courses in practical theology, there is an important relationship to theoretical knowledge and thus the disciplines of biblical, historical and systematic theology. Those disciplines have become more aware in

recent years of the important dialectical relationship between theory and practice, but they give more emphasis to theory. This discipline must focus on the practice of evangelism and giving students as much practical focus as can be gained in a classroom setting.

Fifth, the introduction to evangelism should be congregationally centered. Many scholars such as William Abraham, Darius Salter and David Bosch[1] have stressed that it is the Christian community—the church—that both does evangelism and then incorporates those who are evangelized. Personal evangelism, crusade evangelism, evangelism in the media and other specific ways in which the evangelistic task is carried out all depend on the prior conception of a congregation's total ministry in this area.

Sixth, like all practical theology, the study of evangelism must be extremely sensitive to contextual issues. Because evangelism is highly relational, it must take into account the social, cultural, geographical, racial, ethnic, political and gender factors that help to shape person's lives. Thus, African-American evangelism may well have differences from Korean-American evangelism, and both may differ from evangelistic practices in Africa and Korea. Just as the gospel by its very nature must be enculturated into different settings, so evangelistic practice must be enculturated as well.

Seventh, the introduction to evangelism must then set the foundation of the discipline in such a way that further specialization can take place. Students must be made aware that they have only begun to learn all of what evangelism entails, and that further study is advisable. The theological curriculum could well include courses in the history of evangelism, theology of evangelism, faith-sharing, revivals, congregational systems theory, crusade evangelism and the use of electronic media in evangelism. The course must be both introductory and yet foundational.

All of us who teach such courses struggle with the constraints of time. It is never possible to give adequate attention to all of these components, and yet it is imperative that some attention be given to all of them. I regard these seven components as the framework on which any good, comprehensive introductory course on evangelism should be based. Toward that end, I offer an outline of the course that I teach at Perkins School of Theology at SMU:

I. Biblical Foundations of Evangelism
David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*

II. History of Evangelism
David Bosch, *Transforming Mission*

III. Theology of Evangelism
John Wesley's Sermons
Mortimer Arias, *Announcing the Reign of God:*
Donald McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth,*
Darius Salter, *American Evangelism: Its Theology and Practice.*
William Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism*
Walter Brueggeman, *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storied Universe*
David Bosch, *Transforming Mission.*

IV. Contemporary Practice of Evangelism
George Hunter, *Church for the Unchurched*
Stephen Rhodes, *Where the Nations Meet: The Church in a Multicultural World*
Carlyle Stewart, *African-American Church Growth: 12 Principles of Prophetic Ministry*
Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message and Mission*
Marva Dawn, *Reaching Out Without Dumbing Down: A Theology of Worship for the Turn-of-the-Century Culture*

Term Paper Assignment
Students write a term paper with three parts. Part 1 answers the question, "What is evangelism?" Part 2 describes the evangelistic practice of a congregation that they have visited as a first-time visitor. They must interview the pastor and lay leadership of the evangelism team and describe what the whole congregation is doing in this area of ministry. Part 3 then evaluates that congregation's ministry in light of the criteria outlined in part 1 and the description in part 2. Specific suggestions for improvements are expected.

I have no doubt that improvements can be made on the specific books and assignments in this course. I have made such changes each time it has been offered. However, I have a much stronger investment in the goals of the course and its basic structure. It is toward a conversation around those issues in particular that I seek to contribute within the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.

NOTE

[1]See William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism.* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989), Darius Salter, *American Evangelism: Its Theology and Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), and David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission.* American Society of Missiology Series, No. 16. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991).

BOOK REVIEWS

The Worship Maze: Finding a Style to Fit Your Church.
By Paul Basden. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999.
158 pp.

This book joins a recent spate of books trying to make sense out of the variety and vicissitudes of worship in contemporary Protestant congregations. Paul Basden, a Baptist pastor and adjunct professor of divinity at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University, seeks to provide a guide for church leaders who must navigate through the rapids and eddies of current worship options. This book is well organized, clearly written and should prove highly accessible to the general reader, especially lay leaders.

The bulk of Basden's book surveys five "styles of worship" at play on the American scene: liturgical, (say Orthodox or Anglican), traditional (like establishment Lutheran or Presbyterian), revivalist (some Methodists or Baptist), praise and worship (such as Pentecostal and some Afro-American congregations), and seeker services (typified by Bill Hybels of Willow Creek and Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral). Basden is a careful enough to note that these "styles" are archetypal and often blended in the liturgies and practices of modern local congregations. After summarizing the historical and liturgical backgrounds of each of these "styles," Basden offers his opinions about their strengths and weaknesses along with his "warnings."

The first third of the book introduces a brief overview of worship in the Christian tradition. Basden then attaches a succeeding chapter about the interplay of worship, evangelism and church growth. The last third of the book weaves together Basden's own constructive understanding of worship. These perspectives are augmented by Basden's insights to some very practical worship issues in parish life. Throughout the book (see especially Chapter Ten), Basden addresses several of the current dissonant issues about music in worship. However, in the end, as it was in the beginning, this pastor/author unambiguously claims "nothing I do is as important to the church as leading the people in God-honoring, Christ-centered, Spirit-filled worship." (p. 142f).

What then does this appreciative reviewer think about this useful book? Well, first, it is a very congenial introduction and would be especially useful for those congregational leaders looking for a primer on Christian corporate worship. An excellent bibliography is appended for those who want to probe deeper. Second, worship in this book has a fence around it. Worship here is confined to the Christian community's corporate or gathered worship, services that pastors usually design and promote. Yet I wonder if such a narrowing will carry in our day? Does not the burgeoning "spirituality urge" in our society--that yeasty questing

for an encounter with the transcendent--beg for congregational leaders to encourage worship experiences that complement Sunday worship? How is corporate worship to link up with worship in private settings and family round-tables? Third, there is an abstractness in this book that begs for particularity. By this I mean that Basden's portrayal of contemporary worship feels disengaged from the socio-cultural settings in which Basden's worship styles might take root. Are worship styles in inner-cities interchangeable with worship services in remote rural settings? If so, why is this so; if not, why not? Does the homogeneity of most American protestant congregations already predispose a worship style different from a heterogeneous, multicultural congregation? To state this another way, what is to keep any one of Basden's styles of worship from sliding down the slippery slope to a benign gnosticism, where only a few inside folks know the code language and cultic ways? I wonder if Basden senses this concern when he gives "high marks" top the "seeker service." (p. 95)

One further question lingers in this reviewer's mind. Perhaps it is also a question that bothers many pastors and congregational leaders: how does one know when real, authentic, God-encountering worship has occurred? Regardless of which one of the five styles a congregation chooses, how do human leaders know the difference, say, between worship of the Triune God and entertainment? If a pastor/scholar like Basden would put his mind and pen to this vexing but persistent question, his good book would be even more helpful to the women and men who lead worship in our day, or so this reviewer believes.

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The Contagious Witness: Exploring Christian Witness.
By Ron Crandall. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1999.
179 pp.

Ron Crandall, McCreless Professor of Evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary has produced a critical volume for the Western world that cannot be ignored by either evangelism instructors in academia or practitioners of evangelism. His tireless research since 1983 in understanding the process of conversion largely focused on denominations related to the Wesleyan -- Arminian family. The key focus of his investigation was to discover "the relationship between living an authentic life of faithfulness and telling others how they can come to know God and become the persons they were created to be" (p. 7).

The research approach Crandall took is simple but the research base he developed is impressive. The interview instrument used is reproduced as an appendix in the book. This study is based on data collected from 10,000 individuals, 6,000 of whom were interviewed face-to-face. More than 2,000 Asbury students contributed in the interviewing efforts for the project over a course of 15 years. Another 3,000 hours were spent in processing all the data.

Before giving the fruit of his analysis of the massive data he had collected, Crandall rightly begins with theological foundations for evangelism. The author in Chapter One examines the relationships of the three persons of the Trinity and develops from it a biblically-undergirded apologetic for evangelism that even a layperson could understand.

Drawing from the writings of Saint Augustine of North Africa, Jonathan Edwards of New England and C.S. Lewis of England the author concludes that the essential nature of God is love (I John 4:8,16). Therefore, the Holy Trinity is a dynamic love relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Using C.S. Lewis imagery in *Mere Christianity* the offer of eternal life is a loving invitation to join in a liberating and energizing dance the Godhead has enjoyed from before the foundation of the world. This is why the author refers to the Trinity as the contagious God.

In chapter two, Professor Crandall borrows the metaphor from C.S. Lewis who described Christian conversion "as catching a good infection." This "good infection" is the transforming Gospel. The author illustrates that this universal Gospel has one message of hope from God for human beings in both testaments by developing the themes of "the glory of God," "the Kingdom of God" and "the new covenant." The relationship between the Kingdom of God and the Church needed more elaboration.

In chapters three, four and five, Crandall displays the analysis of the data of hundreds who came to faith as children, as adolescents and as adults respectively. Replete with charts, tables and life stories, the author delineates unique characteristics of each age group and provides perceptive insights of how to nurture someone in their faith walk. All Christian workers including teachers in Christian schools could profit from them. What is also helpful in these chapters is the frequent co-relations that are made between the Asbury findings and other similar scholarship in Europe and North America.

Our contagious God desires everyone to catch the good infection and be Spirit-saturated contagious carriers to their world. This is what chapter six seeks to do by blending theology and research. It prescribes steps and counsel for parents, friends, church leaders, and congregations to follow, systematically. To illustrate the practicality of what can happen, Crandall testifies that he was personally "infected " as a young boy through a nine-year old

contagious carrier and how God used numerous other carriers to help him grow "one degree of glory to another."

The reviewer is puzzled by Crandall's narrow definition of evangelism when he distinguishes it from contagious witness. He defines contagious witness as all that a Christian is and does for the glory of God but evangelism as the specialized activity of "communicating to others how they can join us in the Christian experience" (p. 139). Seemingly, he is attempting to resolve the age-old tensions between the being and telling aspects of Christian witness. However, this marked distinction is not apparent in the excellent P.R.E.P.A.R.E. Evangelism Training model that he outlines in the close of the book (pp. 155-159). It is abundantly evident that Crandall believes both components are essential to produce fully functioning Christian disciples who will reproduce themselves.

Though a bibliography is not included, this volume is highly commended as a textbook in an advanced course in evangelism or church edification because of its significant content, well-documented end-notes, subject index and Scripture index.

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The Continuing Conversion of the Church.
By Darrell L. Guder. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2000. 222 pp.

Conversion in the New Testament: Paul and the Twelve.
By Richard V. Peace. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1999. 397 pp.

Whether evangelism is understood as proclamation, faith-sharing, making disciples, or initiation, it remains inextricably linked to conversion. Whatever else evangelism does, it offers the promise of new life based on what God has done in Jesus Christ and will do through the Holy Spirit. These two books place conversion at the very center of evangelism, but in quite different ways.

Richard Peace argues that our understanding of how conversion occurs determines in large measure our evangelistic practice. Because Paul's conversion as an instantaneous, point in time event became the "model" conversion, evangelism was shaped in ways that would elicit similar conversions. The problem was that not all conversions seemed to follow this pattern, and not all that did seemed to persist. It is in the conversion of the twelve in Mark that Peace finds a more processive complement to the Pauline model.

Peace begins his study with an examination of Paul's conversion, largely as recorded in Acts, in order to discover the essential elements of conversion for the early church. These he finds to be insight, turning, and transformation, each of which contains within itself aspects of the other two.

Then he turns to Mark to see if he finds the same three elements in the more gradual conversion of the twelve. Here he makes a fresh contribution to Markan studies by arguing that its central theme is in fact the conversion of the twelve, "the step-by-step story of how the disciples come to understand who Jesus actually is," (112) as well as what constitutes a proper response (repentance, faith, and discipleship). The disciples' gradual discovery of who Jesus is develops as they come to know him through six christological titles: teacher and prophet, which culminates in the confession of Jesus as Messiah; and Son of Man and Son of David, which culminates in the confession of Jesus as Son of God.

In a final section Peace discusses the implication of the conversion of Paul and the twelve for the practice of evangelism. "Encounter evangelism," which includes mass, personal, and media evangelism, assumes that conversion follows the Pauline model. While it is effective for some people, it is ineffective and sometimes detrimental for others. Peace proposes "Process Evangelism," drawing on small groups, spiritual disciplines, and worship, as appropriate for those whose conversion is more of a spiritual pilgrimage than an event.

While much of Peace's particular argument hinges on whether one is persuaded by his conclusions concerning the outline and purpose of Mark, it seems to me that Peace remains generally convincing even if one is not. For it is clear that people experience conversion in a variety of patterns, and therefore that multiple forms of evangelism are not only appropriate but necessary.

Peace seeks to expand the usual meaning of conversion to include pilgrimage as well as event, and evangelism to include process as well as encounter. Guder, preferring the more processive term "evangelization," seeks to enlarge the meaning of conversion and evangelism in a different way. He argues that evangelization by the Christian community must "be directed both to itself as well as to the world into which it is sent." (26)

Guder develops his argument with care. He begins by rooting the good news in the particular history of God with Israel and in Jesus Christ. Motivated by God's compassionate desire to heal a broken creation, God's mission has God's reign as its goal and the cross as its central content. With the resurrection the person and work of Jesus Christ became the climax of God's salvation history and the focus of the good news. The Christian community exists as a witness to what God has done in Jesus Christ.

The "translation of God's love into human history, commencing with Abraham and climaxing in Jesus, is the great and

gracious risk of the mission of God." (78) As this gospel became the message of the church, it was "empowered and directed" (78) to take the gospel to all cultures throughout the world. The translatibility of the gospel means that within a culture God's self-revelation in Christ is received in such a way that "Jesus is recognized as Lord and Savior, his call to discipleship is followed, his teaching received and implemented, and the apostolic witness extended" (83) through forms and practices appropriate to that culture. As a corollary, this means that there is no single normative cultural expression of Christianity; what is normative is the salvation events themselves as witnessed to in scripture.

All translation, however, unavoidably involves reduction. This reduction is continually being overcome by the Holy Spirit, who continues the work of translation as the community seeks to live, worship, and struggle with this gospel. Moreover, the gospel doesn't just take form within a culture, it also challenges that culture. Thus both the ongoing translation and inherent challenge of the gospel necessitate the continuing conversion of the church.

The risk of translation to the mission of God is not so much in its reduction as it is "that sinful humans are its agents." (93) Guder defines sin as "the constant attempt to bring under human control what we are not qualified to control." (76) Thus all cultures seek to maintain control by resisting the challenge of the gospel and by making their reduction of the gospel universally normative for themselves and others. For Guder, "reduction + control = reduction*ism*." (100); it was through such a reification, for example, that salvation became overly-individualized and managed by the Constantinian church.

Given this tendency for control and the consequent need for the church's ongoing conversion, Guder explores the implications for both the local and institutional church. For the local church renewal in worship, indwelling the scriptures, and living as incarnational witnesses are central. Guder has an interesting and important section on "Disagreeing Christianly" (165) as one of "the most powerful forms of incarnational witness." (165) Guder then shows how the institutional forms of the church are especially prone to cultural captivity, constituting "a formidable obstacle to institutional renewal" (199), and provides concrete questions designed to enable institutions to confront cultural conformity and invite their own conversion.

I have found it difficult to fully present the rich discussions in these two texts in the short space of a review. I hope this is, in Guder's terms, only a necessary and inevitable reduction. But perhaps even these short summaries will serve as invitations to read the books themselves. They will be valuable as course texts, especially in seminary-level courses, and deeply enrich the growing literature on the theory and practice of evangelism.

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Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality.
By George R. Hunsberger. Grand Rapids,, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998. 341 pp.

Members of the Academy who are teaching courses on contemporary evangelism, missions, and church growth have been given a special gift by George Hunsberger. The subtitle of this book emphasizes its subject, "Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality." The debate over universalism and individualism in the field of missiology and evangelism has cried out for a theology that enables professors and church leaders to speak clearly to a diverse and often conflictual world of multiple ethnic and cultural groups.

Hunsberger is careful to define the terms he is using and thus helps the reader to be clear about the foundational points of Newbigin's theology. "Cultural Plurality" is defined in a way that includes a multiplicity of varied cultures "which together cohabit the earth, seen in their similarities, differences, discrepancies, and interrelationships." He states that a "theology of cultural plurality" is not about providing a theology or religious dimension to the discussion but about responding "theologically to the phenomenon of culture, cultures, and the plurality of cultures found in the world."

A significant part of the book is devoted to the discussion of the importance of the doctrine of election. Newbigin and Hunsberger are not espousing an extreme Calvinist approach to the doctrine, or one that stresses the reason for the choices made by a sovereign God. They emphasize the purpose for those choices which is to call out a people to be God's witnesses to the love of God for all people of all cultures.

Further discussion in the book lays a helpful approach to the meaning of history in light of the presence of the Kingdom of God. This approach gives rise to a theological basis for political action, interpretation of contemporary history, and implications for a theology of cultural plurality.

Chapters five and six discuss the issues of conversion and community and the involvement of the Gospel in a secular world. In chapter seven Hunsberger charts an agenda for a continuing discussion of a theology of cultural plurality.

I found this book to be very stimulating and provocative. It stimulated my imagination about the outcomes of an evangelism and mission philosophy that takes seriously the idea of building strategies and programs on a theology of cultural plurality. It helped

to clarify my own thinking about priorities and diverse groups in communities all over the world. It was provocative in that it enabled me to assess my own church's engagement of cultural diversity in the local community.

Students in courses in missions, evangelism, and church growth would certainly benefit from reading and reflecting on this book. The book should be required reading for professors and students who are concerned with urban evangelism and church growth as well as those preparing for missionary service in other countries.

Hunsberger has given us another rung in the ladder as we prepare to reach a higher plane in the education of ministers for missions and evangelism. The book provides many helpful tools for those who resonate with the late Lesslie Newbigin's challenge to contemporary Christianity. The limitation of the book, it seems to me, is that it focuses on the thinking and writing of one person (which was it's intent). We need more research and writing that integrates the philosophies of other contemporary thinkers and compares or contrasts them with Newbigin.

Derrel R. Watkins is Oubri A. Poppele Professor of Health and Welfare Ministries, Saint Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, MO, and Professor Emeritus, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Selling Out the Church: The Dangers of Church Marketing.
By Philip D. Kenneson and James L. Street. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1997. 160 pp.

This is one of the most important books on evangelism and church growth written in the last ten years. Kenneson and Street's goal is "to give sound reasons for believing that the marketing medicine is injurious to the long-term health of the church." (155) While their argument is defective in some important ways, it is a very significant corrective to the approach commonly found in books influenced by the church growth and marketing schools of thought.

They enter the debate about church vitality, church growth and evangelism by examining the works of Norman Shawchuck, et. al., *Marketing for Congregations*, George Barna, *User Friendly Churches, Marketing the Church, Finding A Church You Can Call Home*, and *A Step-by-Step Guide to Church Marketing*, and Lyle Schaller, *Create Your Own Future*. They take their analysis further to consider marketing textbooks used in business schools.

They argue that the marketing approach advocated by these and other authors is not neutral, but actually has implicit theological

values that are antithetical to the gospel. Rather than curing the church of its cultural captivity, market-driven churches "embody and extend certain widely accepted habits of thought and action that we think impede the church's attempts to be faithful to its calling." (22) First, market focuses on self-interested exchange, and by using marketing notions we lose the central Christian notion of gift. "In effect, the `good news' has been filtered through a rather fine marketing sieve, the result being that many of the less marketable claims that God has on our lives have been removed, leaving for the consumer those aspects of the Christian faith most readily translated into terms of self-interest." (62)

Second, the vision of a church as a service agency focuses on the felt needs of individuals, thereby operating "with the explicit dogma that all felt needs, by virtue of their being felt, are legitimate." (73) This contradicts classical theological anthropology that denies that people can be trusted to know what is best for them.

Third, this approach leads to people doing what comes naturally to them, and reinforces the various walls of cultural segregation (race, ethnicity, economic class, etc.) that divide people from each other.

Fourth, the marketing approach tends to substitute quantifiable means for the real mission of the church. They define that mission, at several points in the argument, as a call to be "a sign, a foretaste, and a herald of God's present but still emerging kingdom." (23) Because marketing corrupts the church's mission, its identity and character are also at stake. They hope this book is part of a larger conversation about precisely those issues. Their question is really "Can the market-driven church remain Christ's church?" (16)

Kenneson and Street are to be applauded for shifting the argument to crucial issues of ecclesiology. They profess concern that the Christian Church in the United States is sick, and that serious remedies are called for. They profess a passion for evangelism. However, the primary deficiency of their work is precisely that their ecclesiology lacks a distinctly missional component.

Nowhere do they argue at all, let alone convincingly, that the mission of the church is adequately characterized by being sign, foretaste and herald of God's reign. Surely all of those are included in the mission. But where is there any understanding of mission as transforming individuals and social systems?

This mistake then leads them to undervalue the many advantages that the marketing approach can lead to a holistic understanding of faithful congregational ministry today. They have eloquently articulated the issues and highlighted many of the egregious failings of the marketing approach. They have succumbed to a number of false dichotomies that can be resurrected by a more adequate missiology. Nevertheless, as a counterpoint to the influential trends of marketing, Kenneson and Street are an essential part of the conversation. Thoughtful pastors as well as seminary students will find this an important resource.

Scott J. Jones is McCreless Assistant Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Transitions in Worship: Moving From Traditional to Contemporary. By Andy Langford. Nashville, Tenn., Abingdon Press, 1999.

The book deals basically with the all-important question, how do we travel from the predictable and usual worship format to unpredictable, exciting and creative ways to communicate the Gospel through worship? The book is a timely one inasmuch as it is witten in the context of a highly secularized culture. It is written with the idea of finding new ways to reach an alienated and unchristian generation, which remain unchurched up to now.

There are no simple answers to the many questions that normally emerge any time that the matter of contemporary worship is discussed. However, before anyone dismisses the possibility of a Satuday night service with a praise band, a synthesizer and both musicians and clergy dressed casually, it would be wise to read this book.

Andy Langford, who has written extensively in the area of worship, provides us not only with sound and basic theological understandings but also sound and practical advice as to how to go about starting a contemporary worship service. He includes both the possibilities and the pitfalls.

Langford identifies clearly the four foundation stories upon which worship is built, namely: the Word of God, the sacraments, prayer and fellowship.

From an evangelistic perspective, the new forms of worship must be designed in order to convey the grace of God abundantly and to transform lives. I think, the book succeeds in opening up that paramount possibility today.

Roberto Escamilla is Professor Emeritus of World Evangelism, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, in Delaware, Ohio.

Reinventing Your Church.
By Brian D. McLaren. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1999.
223 pp.

I need to begin by saying I didn't like the cover. Besides that, I thought "Oh no, another book to review on leading your church through change." But (and I realize this isn't the typical opening paragraph for an academic book review) I haven't been more pleased with any book in a long time. I wrote in the back after reading the first chapter or two, "The kind of book you want to buy 10 copies of and send to friends who are fighting with all their energy for the future of the church."

Brian McLaren is the pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church near Washington D.C., founder of the Seed Fellowship network of church planters, and serves on the board of International Teams, a mission agency. Earlier in his life he was an English professor in higher education and did his graduate research in deconstructionism. He understands both by academic preparation and personal involvement in mission and ministry what postmodernism is and what it means for the church. Besides that, he writes well.

The book is filled with references to the gurus of missions, church growth, and evangelism, but the work is not another anthology of ideas. McLaren makes his own distinctive strategic contributions to leadership, ecclesiology, and evangelism. As he addresses the need for the church to change to meet the shifting paradigms of postmodernism he holds gently in dynamic tension the old wine and the new wineskins. He goes so far as say postmodernism may indeed be God's gift to help us rediscover the mystery of life and the wonder of the gospel as we move forward with both humility and confidence. I love his playful yet non-demeaning critique of traditional solutions to our problems, and the way he assists the reader to engage the future positively in harmony with the Holy Spirit and all of the best from our past.

The book itself consists of an introduction and thirteen chapters, each of which is a particular strategy for "reinventing the church." He begins with a bang-Strategy One: Maximize Discontinuity. Rather than portraying the change we need as a few baby steps, he reminds us that such tinkering will only make the church a little less behind the curve. He counsels that there is no single change that we can make and then say, "OK, that's over with." Change is built into the cosmos and into the Incarnation. He writes: "One of the biggest questions on my screen these days is, How does the Spirit of Jesus Christ incarnate in a postmodern world?" (p. 69).

One of the most helpful and tender strategies proposed is number nine-Save the Leaders. Recently I have become more and more aware of wonderfully gifted younger ministers who are part of the postmodern world and are trying to help the church adjust to

meet its future and its Maker. Many of these men and women have been brutalized by fearful and stubborn "blockers." With McLaren I want to say "If you are a leader thinking of quitting, may I offer you one piece of advice in the form of a plea? Please don't use a permanent solution to a temporary problem. . . . Remember, that there's no shame in being injured on the front lines" (pp. 122-23).

I could say more about the strategies and his focus on world mission. I could celebrate his excellent insights into today's world and the one just over the horizon. I could mention his cultural sensitivity and his balanced awareness of both the dangers and the potential blessings awaiting us if we together can become more open to the Spirit who has been reinventing the church for 2000 years. But I won't. Read the book for yourself. You'll be the richer for it.

McLaren reminds his readers "This is a book of working strategies, not idle speculations. Its greatest value will be realized as you experiment with and implement those strategies that ring true with the most relevance and urgency in your situation" (p. 203). The book would make an excellent text for seminary students. More than likely they would identify with it more than their professors. I intend to use immediately. It's the kind of book I've been waiting for. It could also serve as a study text for ministers to use in a weekly reading group, and for lay people to use as a quarterly Sunday school text or small group resource. The Appendix is nicely filled with questions and suggestions for just such a purpose.

I wish I could have been less "enthusiastic," but you know we Methodists. And after all, every now and then it's just plain fun to be excited by a new book. Guess what? I am.

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America's Preacher and His Message: Billy Graham's View of Conversion and Sanctification.
By Timo Pokki. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1999.
353 pp.

This volume is the published version of the author's dissertation completed at Helsinki University. It is a very readable volume, yet includes the expected indexes, appendices, extensive bibliography, and notes. Unlike most studies of the world famous evangelist, Pokki uses a systematic theological approach to analyze Billy Graham's evangelistic message. While the focus is particularly on Graham, the analysis helps us to understand the theological posture of a major segment of popular American Evangelicalism.

Pokki bases his work on recorded and published sermons and four popular publications: The Holy Spirit, How to be Born Again, Peace with God, and World Aflame. He describes the eclectic nature of Graham's theological views as Calvinistic in theory and Arminian in practice. On the one hand Graham emphasizes the free will of man for "making a decision" for Christ. On the other hand, he believes that a truly regenerate person cannot totally fall away from saving grace. This combination of Calvinistic and Weslyan Arminian traditions is common within Baptist circles.

Pokki concludes that Graham's view of sanctification is also based on "decision." The believer must yield himself to the Holy Spirit. This surrender is a definite conscious act that begins a process of sanctification.

In analyzing Graham's beliefs, Pokki gives us a window through which to see the current range of theological views held by members of the Evangelical Movement. In some segments of evangelicalism, a struggle exists between the Calvinist and Arminian positions. However, the majority tends to hold eclectic beliefs much like the Baptist tradition.

Pokki's work is descriptive and avoids value judgements about Graham's beliefs or those of others holding similar views. His primary purpose is simply to identify Graham's beliefs and explain their antecedents. The author exhibits a remarkable understanding of the religious climate in America. He does, however, confuse Fuller Theological Seminary with Gordon-Conwell in reference to the seminary Billy Graham has supported for many years. (p. 4)

This volume provides the student with a helpful understanding of how theology flows from our view of ministry and vice-versa. It also highlights the tension between various popular traditions and the difficulty in following one position consistently. This is a good beginning for further investigation into the theology of American evangelists.

Kenneth D. Gill is Associate Director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel. By Ronald J. Sider. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999. 254 pp.

From the pen of the well-known evangelical social activist, Ronald J. Sider, now Professor of Theology and Culture at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, comes a seminal work on the theology of a wholistic gospel of Jesus Christ. This volume is a welcome republication of an earlier book under the title, *One-Sided Christianity? Uniting the Church to Heal a Lost and Broken World* (Zondervan, 1993). The new title taken from the Manila Manifesto (1989) is more attractive to the reader and better reflects its content.

The book is divided into four parts with a total of 11 chapters all progressing to prove the inseparable partnership of evangelism and social concern in Gospel witness. The material of each chapter is well-organized and the first 10 chapters begin with an anecdote from the author's life journey. The breadth and depth of research reflected in the notes and bibliography along with the name and Scripture indices add to the value of the book.

Reading Ronald Sider's personal pilgrimage in chapter one is most revealing and intriguing. In it he highlights the personalities and events that shaped his thinking and involvement. Coming from a Canadian evangelical farm family, Sider received Jesus Christ as his personal Savior at the age of eight. Growing up he was not affected by the early twentieth-century divisions caused by social gospel--fundamentalism controversies. He confesses that his parents demonstrated their Christian faith in both word and deed.

During his university days the friendship with evangelical historian and apologist, John Warwick Montgomery proved crucial to anchoring his Christian faith. Living in the United States through the sixties in the midst of acute social turmoil and reading about William Wilberforce and Charles Finney, Sider was convinced that passionate devotion to both evangelism and social concern was biblical and possible.

Through Sider's organizing a meeting leaders on social concern during 1973 Thanksgiving weekend elder evangelicals joined younger ones to produce the watershed document, the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Action which inevitably heightened the significance of social responsibility in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974.

With the appearance of Sider's best-seller, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* in 1977, the wholistic gospel entered center stage in missiological thought. Since then Ronald Sider has comfortably dialogued and interfaced with leaders in the World Evangelical Fellowship and the World Council of Churches. To avoid a one-sided Gospel, Sider strongly urges evangelicals to engage in social action and ecumenicals in passionate evangelism.

Convinced that the centrality of the Kingdom of God in the message and life of Jesus, Sider develops a kingdom theology rooted in messianic hope of the Old Testament prophets. Jesus considered the Kingdom to already be present (Lk 4:21; Matt 12:28) but not reached its culmination (Mk 4:3-8; 8:11; Lk 21:27). In announcing the "dawning Kingdom," Jesus was declaring total warfare with Satan who had introduced sin and brokenness into His perfect creation. Jesus, the eternal Word-become-flesh, preached and healed. He challenged the evils of the status quo of his day and showed special concern for the poor, oppressed, weak and marginalized. Therefore, in chapter four the author powerfully

argues that the Gospel has to be defined not merely as forgiveness of sin but also as the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

In order to enthusiastically be involved in a wholistic mission, Sider believes one must understand the biblical picture of salvation. So, he undertakes in chapters five and six to biblically and theologically explain "salvation," "atonement," "repentance," "conversion," "reconciliation," "grace," "discipleship." One disappointment is the non-incorporation of the content of the appendix, "Is Social Justice Part of Salvation?" into this section of the book.

The scripturally-informed rationale supporting the titles, "Why Evangelize?" (chapter seven) and "Why Do Social Action?" (chapter eight) reveals the author's equal and strong commitment to obey both the biblical commands. Sider offers brilliant clarity in the confusing debate as to the relationship between evangelism and social action. They are distinct, albeit are closely related activities. The key test to "distinguish evangelism and social action is in terms of intention" (p. 163). Evangelism is the set of activities whose primary intention is inviting non-Christians to receive Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. Social action is the set of activities whose primary intention is improving the physical, psychological, socio-economic and political well-being of people. Though both are important, however, the author rightly agrees with the Lausanne Covenant which states evangelism is primary. A reader could wish these distinctions could have appeared much earlier in the book.

The ideal model proposed by Sider in chapters nine and ten is the Incarnational Kingdom Christianity model as opposed to the four models he critiqued in chapter two. It reflects Christ's approach whose evangelism was incarnational and contextual in that He applied the Gospel to the total context of the persons addressed. Therefore, biblical evangelism both results in and aims at social action. Conversely, social action fosters evangelism. Since both lead to the other and mutually support each other they form an inseparable partnership in wholistic mission. Models are described in Sider's book, *Cup of Water, Bread of Life*.

No global Christian should neglect the balanced instruction, theological reflection, and ministry wisdom the author brings in this heart-searching volume.

T.V. Thomas.

Directory of Schools and Professors of Mission and Evangelism, 1999-2001
Edited by John A. Siewert and Dotsey Welliver, Wheaton, Ill.: Evangelism and Missions Information Service, 1999. 218 pp.

Beginning as a section in the *Mission Handbook* published by the Missionary Research Library in 1958, the predecessors to this volume developed into a separate *Directory of Schools and Professors of Mission in the USA and Canada* in 1982, was published by World Visions's MARC. After MARC's 1995 edition, publishing responsibilities were transferred to EMIS of the Billy Graham Center. Under EMIS the *Directory* has been expanded to include evangelism, and the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education has joined three missiological societies as a sponsor.

The *Directory* is divided into two parts. The first is a compilation of schools of mission and evangelism, which include any college or graduate institution offering courses in evangelism and/or mission. Under each school is a listing of degrees, programs, courses, and faculty. The second section is a list of professors and members of professional associations.

A book like this generates a wealth of data, and a brief analysis of some of it is provided by Scott Moreau. Even this quick look at the range of programs and types of courses raises a host of questions about the shape of the two disciplines and the teaching goals of each. While the *Directory* itself is quite current, EMIS is continually updating its data base, providing the most accurate information available on the teaching of mission and evangelism in the USA and Canada.

We are indebted to EMIS for this most useful resource. It is not only a handy way to locate colleagues and examine other programs but a contribution to our thinking about the content and goals of evangelism as a theological and practical discipline.

Henry H. Knight III

Waking to God's Dream: Spiritual Leadership and Church Renewal.
By Dick Wills. Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1999. 112 pp.

Wills argues that there is an important relationship between the two parts of his subtitle. While acknowledging the importance of indigenous worship, small group ministries, and empowerment of the laity, he claims that "the fundamental need is for the pastor to be a 'spiritual leader.'"(76). Noting that there are not many role-models for spiritual leaders in mainline denominations, he hopes "that this book has opened to you the possibility of spiritual leadership that is based on a relationship with God through

Jesus."(105) It should not be seen as another model of ministry, but a model of a relationship with Christ and a way of doing ministry based on that relationship.

This book shares Wills' insights and experiences at transforming his own ministry and the life of Christ United Methodist Church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He gives eleven principles guiding this transformation, but only three of them begin to indicate the new approach to ministry that underlies the dual transformations. His first principle, "Joy comes from walking with God and is not dependent on external circumstances" speaks to the pain many pastors feel at trying to have a career rather than be faithful to God. His fourth principle, "Not my ideas, but a willingness to be part of what God is blessing" indicates his search to follow God's guidance rather than to ask God to bless what Wills had already determined to be the right way forward. His seventh rule, "You cannot share what you do not have" is then followed by practical suggestions about nurturing one's spiritual life as a pastor.

Despite his claim that you should not look to his church as a model to follow, he does explain a number of organizational strategies that are worthy of consideration. His Wesley Fellowship Groups, modeled on John Wesley's eighteenth-century class meetings, are a type of small-group discipling ministry that is worthy of serious consideration. The claim that a church should be focused on its mission in its decision making is not new, but the claim that it should abandon voting except in essential areas is a different approach.

Throughout the book Wills recounts how God has worked in his ministry and in the life of this congregation to transform lives. He shares some successes as well as many painful episodes. He is clear about the personal and financial costs involved. At many points, pastors will find themselves saying, "Wills is talking about me and my congregation, and maybe showing us a way to be more faithful and fruitful."

Its short-comings include a tendency to pose false dichotomies. It is not clear why voting and democratic governance is always opposed to discernment and the leading of the Holy Spirit. It is not at all clear what will happen at Christ Church if a significant number of key leaders discern different directions as the Holy Spirit's guidance of the church. The ecclesiological section is superficial and not well-integrated into the rest of the book.

However, these criticisms ask the book to do more than it is intended to accomplish. The book is written primarily to inspire (literally) pastors. It could easily be used for a course in spiritual formation, or as part of a renewal retreat. Wills has led an exciting and significant transition in a mainline congregation. He correctly places his focus on the spiritual life of the pastor and the congregation rather than on technique, method and model. He is deeply concerned for "people who had grown comfortable in a

church that was safe, predictable and dying." By sharing his insights into this essential ingredient of spiritual leadership, he will give many pastors a gift that is both easily read and inspiring.

Scott J. Jones

Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education
Twenty-Seventh Annual Meeting
McAfee School of Theology
Mercer University
Atlanta, Georgia

PROCEEDINGS

Friday, October 8, 1999

9:00 Morning Worship led by Dr. Loyd Allen, associate dean of the McAfee School of Theology. His meditation focused on evangelism as inviting people to a place at the table where they will belong and be accepted as family.

9:25 PLENARY SESSION - Charles Roesel took as his theme The Lord's Prayer and the importance of being able to pray "Our" Father. He explored how evangelism requires that we reach those who are not like ourselves, but who are hurting people. The prayer Christ taught began in love and continued in faith. "Thy Kingdom Come" requires that we desire to know God's will. The most miserable person is not the lost one, but the Christian who is out of fellowship with the Father. "Give Us This Day our Daily Bread" requires dependence and reliance on God. "And Forgive Us" requires that we acknowledge our own frailty and sin. "As We Forgive" requires that we forgive others so that we can bury the anger and bitterness. "And Lead Us Not Into Temptation But Deliver Us From Evil" requires that we realize our own susceptibility to do stupid things. Roesel stressed that we must represent in our lives the character represented in the prayer of Jesus to be effective witnesses. A period of questions and answers followed around the theme of Ministry Based Evangelism.

10:30 Break

11:00 George Hunter, Dean and Professor of Evangelism and Church Growth at the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism of Asbury Seminary

"How to Research and Write Evangelism Texts"

Hunter advocates a model of integrative research which combines biblical and theological reflection with field research. He provided the examples of Donald McGovern, Lyle Schaller, Ron Crandall and himself as models for how to do this kind of research for publication. Hunter then critiqued his model in light of the definition of evangelism developed by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Evangelism to demonstrate what we have learned about evangelism since 1945. Nonetheless, a growing gap exists between what researchers have discovered about evangelism and what most pastors and laity know. Hunter proposes seventeen characteristics of what kind of writing needs to be done to reach the church leaders.

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Scott Jones, Professor of Evangelism at Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University

"The Evangelistic Love of God and Neighbor"

Jones raised the issue of another approach to writing from that suggested by Hunter, namely, the theology of evangelism. He offered six theses toward this aim. One, the reign of God represents a central theme in understanding the gospel (see Mortimer Arias and William Abraham) [Approaches to understanding the gospel have received attention in recent years: the exploration of human need represents an evangelism from below (Ben Johnson), service evangelism represents an ecclesiology that sees the church as the servant of God (Dick Armstrong and Melan Nel), the variety of approaches to starting points may be seen across the centuries (Harry Poe).] Two, the reign of God is derivative of God's most essential attribute and expectation of us (love). Even sovereignty is rooted in God's love. Three, theology of evangelism should focus on the evangelistic love of God and for one's neighbor. Four, the evangelistic love of God means loving all those whom God loves. Five, evangelistic love for one's neighbor involves love for the whole person in all of the dimensions of life. Six, God's love for humankind was best expressed through the incarnation of God in Christ. Conclusion: evangelism is loving persons in the name of Christ with the intention of their being initiated into the reign of God.

2:25 Hal Knight, Professor of Evangelism at St. Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, Kansas and Editor of *The Journal of the Academy for Evangelism*

"What's New In Books"

Knight presented a brief overview of new books in evangelism, including:

1. Alvin Reid, *Introduction to Evangelism* (Broadman & Holman, 1998)
2. Frank P. DeSiano, *The Evangelizing Catholic: A Practical Handbook for Reaching Out* (Paulist, 1998)
3. Nick Pollard, *Evangelism Made Slightly Less Difficult: How to Interest People Who Aren't Interested* (InterVarsity, 1997)
4. Jeffrey Arnold, *Small Group Outreach: Turning Groups Inside Out* (InterVarsity, 1998)
5. David S. Young, *Servant Leadership for Church Renewal* (Herald, 1999)
6. Brian D. McLaren, *Reinventing Your Church* (Zondervan, 1998)
7. Dick Wills, *Waking to God's Dream: Spiritual Leadership and Church Renewal* (Abingdon, 1999)
8. Elmer Towns, C. Peter Wagner & Thom S. Rainer, *The Everychurch Guide to Growth: How Any Plateaued Church Can Grow* (Broadman & Holman, 1998)
9. Tony Benitone, *Making a Church From Scratch* (Bristol, 1998)
10. Craig Van Gelder, ed., *Confident Witness -- Changing World* (Eerdmans, 1999)
11. George R. Hunsberger, *Bearing the Witness of the Spirit: Lesslie Newbigin's Theology of Cultural Plurality* (Eerdmans, 1998)
12. William J. Abraham, ed., *Evangelism: Essays by Albert Cook Outler*, Vol 6 of The Albert Outler Library (Bristol, 1998)
13. Ronald J. Sider, *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel* (Baker, 1999; originally published 1993 as *One Sided Christianity*)
14. Kent R. Hunter, *Confessions of a Church Growth Enthusiast* (Fairway, 1997)
15. Andy Langford, *Transitions in Worship: Moving From Traditional to Contemporary* (Abingdon, 1999)
16. Paul Basden, *The Worship Maze: Finding a Style to Fit Your Church* (InterVarsity, 1999)
17. John Siewert and Dotsey Welliver, eds., *Directory of Schools and Professors of Mission and Evangelism*, 1999-2000 edition (Evangelism and Missions Information Service, 1999)

EAGERLY AWAITED:

18. Ronald K. Crandall, *The Contagious Witness: Understanding Personal Conversion* (Abingdon, 1999)
19. Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., *Can We Talk? Sharing Your Faith in a Non-Christian World* (Abingdon, 1999)
20. George Hunter, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Abingdon, 2000)

3:00 Break

3:30 Roberto Escamilla, Associate Professor of World Evangelism, Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, Ohio

"Invitational Evangelism"

Invitational evangelism is for the sake of the outsider. It involves the person and their circumstances. When people are in greatest darkness, we have an opportunity to show people a way out -- hope. Something must happen in the life of the hearer; thus, we preach for a response. No one attends the great feast unless invited by God, and those who consider themselves least worthy are the ones who most eagerly come to the banquet. Augustine's definition of evangelism was, "One loving heart setting another heart afire." George Whitefield was able to appeal to the emotions as well as to the intellect and the will. How do you announce from the pulpit that God forgives? This was the passion of Luther. Invitational evangelism addresses the problem of sin in all its many manifestations. All people need God because of sin. Without the Holy Spirit we do not have the power to extend the invitation. Invitational evangelism depends upon the prevenient grace of God. Nonetheless, the gospel invitation must be expressed in terms accessible to new and changing cultural contexts which differ from the traditional formulas. In Wesley's terminology, invitational evangelism offers people Christ.

4:30 Break

6:00 Dinner

7:30 Sam Wilson, Professor of Missions and Evangelism at Trinity Episcopal School of Ministry and President of the Academy

"President's Address"

Dr. Wilson addressed the systems and structures in which evangelism takes place and their impact on evangelism. While acknowledging the spiritual dimension of evangelism, Dr. Wilson focused on the sociological issues which favor or inhibit innovation and creativity in evangelism. The address focused on the institutions in which professors of evangelism teach:

1. Are our present structures already adaptable to change?
2. Can curricular or instructional structures import applications to facilitate change?
3. Can present structures create the new paradigms?

We need to ponder why structures continue in theological education and in ministry which do not favor evangelism. Wilson advocates the avoidance of centralizing power, the embrace of a healthy diversity that leads to competitive creativity, rejecting an over emphasis on unity at the expense of change, avoidance of a mid-level management mentality that rationalizes stagnation. Wilson reminded us that though change is a definer of the modern period, all change is experienced as loss. Change agents need to be sensitive in leading change.

8:15 A period of discussion followed the address which focused on how relationships, networks, and integration can take place within theological faculties.

8:35 Adjournment

Saturday, October 9, 1999

9:00 Worship led by Ron Johnson, Professor of Evangelism at the McAfee School of Theology of Mercer University, Atlanta, Georgia and Treasurer of the Academy.

9:15 Ron Johnson

"The Kingdom Church and Evangelism"

Johnson explored the need for a shift from the corporate understanding of church to a kingdom understanding for groups like Southern Baptists. A shift from a programmatic approach for religiously oriented people toward an incarnational model for non-religious people

will be necessary to evangelize an increasingly pagan society. The kingdom model provides an outward thrust that places the work of God on a global stage. The Kingdom model provides a basis for connecting the local with the global. This model also addresses the multifaceted dimensions of the human condition. As the postmodern/postdenominational person grows dissatisfied with the corporate organizational model, the kingdom model provides a basis for conceptualizing how the different areas of ministry relate to each other and evangelism.

Johnson identifies five components of the kingdom church:

1. To be immersed in mission locally and abroad
2. Salt/Light in context in which evangelism is appropriate to its location
3. Ministry based mind set for the whole of its mission
4. Inclusive spiritual house
5. Commitment to the family of God

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Journal of the AETE was established to provide a medium for the responsible sharing of ideas among those engaged in the teaching of evangelism, primarily at the seminary level, as well as those whose ministries involve them in serious research and writing in the field. In addition to scholarly articles and book reviews, the Journal includes the Minutes of the annual meetings of the Academy and occasional items of interest to AETE members.

The Editorial Advisory Committee of the Journal is seeking well-written, high quality articles relating to any aspect of evangelism, and issues relevant to the theology and practice of evangelism, including biblical, doctrinal, pedagogical, and methodological concerns, and matters relevant to evangelism and the cognate disciplines. Responses to articles in previous issues of the Journal will also be considered. Manuscripts should be submitted both on paper and on a floppy disk (WordPerfect format preferred; however, ascii text can also be processed). Henry H. Knight III, Editor, Saint Paul School of Theology, 5123 Truman Rd., Kansas City, MO 64127 (tel. 816-483-9600; FAX 816-483-9605); E-Mail address: HALSPST@aol.com). Book reviews should be sent to Dr. Kenneth Gill, Book Review Editor, AETE Journal, 501 College Avenue, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187 (tel. 630-752-5918; FAX 630-752-5916; E-Mail address: Kenneth.D.Gill@wheaton.edu).

Manuscripts (including book reviews) should be double spaced (including endnotes, tables, and appendices), using only one side of a page (8 1/2 x 11 inches). Articles should be carefully documented, with notes appearing at the end. For style, including the citation of sources, authors should be guided by the University of Chicago Press' *Manual of Style* or K. L. Turabian's *Manual for Writers*. For spelling punctuation, capitalization, etc., use an up-to-date style manual, such as *The Gregg Reference Manual*, published by McGraw-Hill. For example, pronouns for Jesus and terms like gospel (except when it refers to a book of the Bible), eternal life, kingdom of God, body of Christ, are not capitalized. A good rule is, "When in doubt, don't capitalize!" The use of gender inclusive language is expected.

Manuscripts need to be submitted by May 15 in order to appear in the following October issue. The desired length of articles is normally 3000 to 5000 words, with preference on the shorter side. Book reviews are usually in the 600 to 750 range. Authors and reviewers are requested to indicate their present place of employment, complete title, and full name. They may include a brief explanatory statement about their article, if such is needed. Contributors receive no compensation except for five complimentary copies of the issue in which their article appears.

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