

DISCIPLESHIP:
AN
EVANGELISTIC
APPROACH

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION	5
The Purpose of the Study	5
The Biblical Command	7
The Biblical Standard	9
The Mission of the Church	11
CHAPTER 2. THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE	17
Old Testament	17
New Testament	19
Reformation	24
The Awakenings	27
CHAPTER 3. THE POWER TO PERSUADE	31
The Holy Spirit	31
The Leading of the Holy Spirit	38
Successful Discipleship	40
CHAPTER 4. THE DISCIPLINE TO BE A DISCIPLE	46
The Call of a Disciple	46
The Instruction of a Disciple	48
Self Discipline of Disciples	51
CHAPTER 5. A DISCIPLESHP PLAN	55
A Planned Program of Discipling	55
The Evangelistic Revival	58
Communications	60
Assimilation	64
CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION	67
BIBLIOGRAPHY	75

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Purpose of the Study

Much of the literature written today concerning discipleship appears to be training manuals on how to witness. Some manuals require a week or two of intensive training on how to share one's faith and call for a decision. The content and manner of this chapter, however, are written as an introduction to discipleship as the writer believes the Lord intended it to be performed. The emphasis here is on the action of making disciples, not on teaching how to make disciples. This emphasis is based on the supposition that training to make disciples does not constitute discipleship, but only perpetuates the myth that one is a disciple. However, for the purpose of demonstrating how uncomplicated, and how quickly one can obtain the knowledge to be a soul winner, the last chapter contains some guidelines for effective witnessing.

The biblical command to make disciples is clear. The biblical mandate as to how this is accomplished is also clear. According to E. Y. Mullins, one such way to accomplish the making of disciples is found in the fourth chapter of John.¹ Jesus demonstrated a soul winning strategy by starting a conversation about water and concluding by promising the woman at the well everlasting water. Another approach to the making of disciples is demonstrated by Jesus when He told the educated Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again" (John 3.7). A similar approach is found in a conversation with the rich young ruler. Jesus told him that he needed to do one more thing to inherit eternal life--give up his riches and follow Jesus (Luke 18.22). Jesus provided still another approach to becoming a disciple when He said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt 18.3). These approaches to the making

¹E. Y. Mullins, Talks on Soul Winning (Nashville: Sunday School Board, Southern Baptist Convention, 1920), 22.

of disciples need to be studied again and again. When one studies these approaches, one finds that little time was spent on training. One finds that a great deal of time and effort was expended on the actual task of sharing the good news.

For the purpose of this paper, the first half of a two-part plan is discussed. The first part is evangelism, and the second part is the teaching of those who have been evangelized so that they might in turn become evangelists. In much the same way, L. R. Scarborough described the task of the Sunday School when he stated,

In Christ's commission he commanded two kinds of teaching. One is the teaching that wins men to Christ--evangelistic, soul-saving instruction. The other is soul-building, character-constructing teaching.²

The first part, evangelism, is the teaching of the unsaved for an outcome of faith, affection, and spiritual change toward the Redeemer. The second part, education, is teaching for spiritual growth to those who have been evangelized. This type of teaching should lead the converted to be more like Christ in thought and deed. In the pursuit of the goal to evangelize, this writing project focuses on Discipleship: An Evangelistic Approach. A follow-up writing project which may need to be considered would be Discipleship: An Educational Approach.

The Biblical Command

Evangelism is the means by which ordinary people become extraordinary soul winners in response to the bidding of the Holy Spirit of God. The desire of all Christians should be to show other people how to be born again. Even people who have had a recent salvation experience tend to want others to have a similar experience. They will go out of their way to tell others how to find the same Jesus that they have found.

²L. R. Scarborough, With Christ after the Lost (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1952), 67.

How unfortunate when a zeal for soul-winning is replaced by contentment or even complacency. Soon after conversion, many Christians forget that they were called to follow Christ as soul winners. Waning zeal for soul winning brings the need for a constant reminder that the fields are ripe unto harvest and that the Lord of the harvest is calling workers into His field. William Wistar Hamilton believes that "those who have been regenerated are evangelistic by birth."³ Further, he finds it unusual if they do not have a constant longing for seeing lost people saved. This unique longing is ever present before the Christian.

Mankind must seek the Savior Who takes away sin. Believing in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection, coupled with a true repentance of sin, is the only hope man has in an otherwise hopeless world. The Bible declares in Rom 3.23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." In Gal 3.22 the Scripture states, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." The Old Testament says, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near" (Isa 55.6).

Man's lost condition is clear biblically in both the Old and New Testaments. The biblical command to evangelize is also clear. Christians should seek to evangelize the lost without fear. According to 2 Tim 1.7-8, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord." In light of this passage and John 9.4 which says, "We must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work," Christians should be busy winning the lost to Jesus.

Witnessing should be a way of life, and when it is, it will lead people to Christ. Leading people to Christ is a biblical command directly from Christ Himself to Christians. Jesus Christ, God's Son, is given the glory He deserves when an individual accepts Him as Savior. Witnessing must become a holy habit which brings people to Jesus Christ, and ultimately to salvation for those who believe. The making of disciples is a command, not a course in discipleship. Every effort needs to be made to place

³William Wistar Hamilton, Bible Evangelism (Richmond: L. H. Jenkins, Inc., 1921), 16.

before Christians, the church, and the community the fact that people go to Hell because Christians do not become involved in seeking the lost for the Savior. Further, the Christian's obligation is to search for and to witness to the lost. According to Heb 7.25 Jesus came to "seek and to save that which was lost." The Christian's responsibility by biblical command is to seek lost souls and bring them to Jesus, Who is the only One Who can save them. Christ wants Christians to make disciples for Him.

Jesus' example of making disciples should be followed by every Christian. Jesus saved Philip and Andrew and sent them to seek Peter and Nathaniel. God is a seeking God. Just prior to Pentecost, 120 Spirit-filled Christians prayed for the Spirit to speak. When Peter preached at Pentecost, the Bible records in Acts 2.6,7 that every man heard the Galileans speaking in his own language, and God added three thousand souls to His church. When Spirit filled Christians speak about the Savior, souls are added to the church. The time has come for Christians to wake up and pay attention to the biblical command of evangelism. God's biblical command to Christians is to follow Him by seeking the lost (Rom 10.13-15). Christians need to memorize and live by Paul's statement found in Rom 10.1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." The heart's desire and prayer of every Christian should be that all people might be saved.

The Biblical Standard

The biblical standard is set by the Great Commission which states, And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen (Matt 28.18-20).

A standard according to the Oxford American Dictionary, is "a thing or quality or specification by which something may be tested

or measured."⁴ In addition, the same dictionary defines a standard as "recognized merit or authority." The authority by which all things are tested and measured is Jesus Christ.

In this commission, as given by the Lord, are the marching orders of Christians from God Himself. The Bible is the authority and the standard by which Christians are measured. The Scriptures make it clear that man is alienated from God by sin. But when one becomes a child of God, kinship takes place. This kinship should include the belief that the Bible has authority to direct the Christian and that one accepts as a responsibility the commission to make disciples. The commission is to "make disciples." The commission can be divided into three parts which are "going," "baptizing," and "teaching." The Christian who heeds these words from Christ and follows His biblical standard will have a desire to see souls saved.

According to the Bible, one must enter God's kingdom by having a new birth. When one is born again, he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus and has a new birth. The new birth is given evidence by the new directions and new focus of one's life. This action can only be accomplished when one is changed by divine power. The regeneration of the child of God is a change from the old person to the new one in Christ Jesus. Only true repentance from sin will cause such a transformation.

The plan also contains a repentance clause. One must truly repent in order to enter God's kingdom. The Bible is clear that, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13.3,5). The repentance required must be genuine. It must be a repentance which turns one from the world and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, directs him to deny self and follow Jesus.

Evidence of repentance should be seen in an individual who desires to be saved. When the individual truly repents and turns to Jesus Christ for salvation, he becomes a new creature. After salvation, this new creature should demonstrate his salvation by a continued changed attitude about how he lives. This attitude should be reflected by a willingness to serve God.

⁴oxford American Dictionary, (1980), s.v.
"Standard."

The Mission of the Church

The mission of the church historically has been the bringing of people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Christ used a plan of making disciples which brought men to Him for salvation. He took men who had been baptized and discipled by John the Baptist and taught them that they were to seek the lost. He made disciples of Peter, Nathanael, and Phillip (John 1.35-45). He called His disciples to be fishers of men when He instructed them to fish for the souls of lost men (Mark 1.16-18). Christ called His disciples to be disciple-makers. In this same setting of declaration, Jesus emphatically stated that His church would be built on the foundation of Christ as the Son of the living God. He further declared that even hell cannot stop His church.

Another mission of the church, in addition to bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, is to make disciples. The manner in which this occurs is based on the premise that the needs of humanity can only be responded to by a Savior Who brings to them His saving grace. When disciples are made based on God's redemptive plan, the result is regeneration which in turn results in a new birth and a visible transformation, thus meeting humanity's greatest need. Humanity's greatest need then can only be met by Christ Jesus when people take Him as their Savior.

One of the needs of the church today, as it relates to evangelism, is to motivate Christians to make disciples. When one is motivated to meet the needs of humanity by making disciples, one will be responding to Christ's call to harvest "the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4.35).

The motivating incentives found in a true burden for the lost are several. One of these incentives is that materialism and greed have replaced spiritual needs. Another incentive is that the enemies of Christ are converting more people to pagan religions than Christians are to Christianity. The primary need of people today is still to have a relationship with God. Remembering that hell cannot stop them, Christians fulfilling the mission of the church can be motivated to make disciples. Divine power is provided to Christians fulfilling the mission of the church.

A marvelous occurrence takes place in the act of evangelism. Believers are given the power by the Holy Spirit of God to bring people into God's kingdom. God's redemptive plan for sinners is singular in nature. This one and only plan is to make disciples. Joe R. Stacker puts it this way:

Great commission churches teach 21st century disciples all that Jesus commanded and taught. Jesus said, "Go . . . make disciples." That principle will not change, even if our methods do.⁵

Christians need to discover (or rediscover) soul-winning. The time has come to introduce (or reintroduce) Christians to the true meaning of making disciples. God's people need to grasp the urgency of making disciples. The time has come to stop teaching and learning and to start going and doing. What is needed today is a hands-on ministry plan of being a disciple by making disciples. Soul-winning is the basis for making disciples. The mission of the church is to win the lost to Christ. The church which is not attempting to make disciples by winning people to Christ is not living up to her divine call. The main task of the church is to make disciples. The program of every church should be an evangelistic program. Churches should win people with the knowledge of the truth. Churches which do not seek to win people to Christ miss God's divine purpose and requirement. An organization which claims to be a church of Christ needs to make soul winning a priority. The Christian church today needs to be an organization of soul winners.

Disciples are people who commit their lives to Christ and follow Him and serve Him in the task of making other disciples who will do likewise. These disciples should have a true burden for the lost and understand the motivating incentives which fill their lives. Being a member of an organized church or religion is not enough incentive for making disciples.

Religions of all types and beliefs are growing in a world where people are taught that they can be god. The gods of this

⁵Joe R. Stacker, "Personal Visitation and Church Growth," in Going . . . One on One, ed. Harry M. Piland (Nashville: Convention Press, 1994), 28.

world are an abomination to God. These individuals (gods) have committed the sin spoken of in the first commandment and require a Savior provided by the Only God. The motivating factor for Christians surrounded by false religions should be revival. A renewed interest in revival would arouse Christianity to the fact that one lives in a lost and dying world. The godless movements are winning more people to their cause than Christians are to the cause of Christ.

The whole world has continued to fall deeper and deeper into sin. People are rebelling against God. As a result, crime and violence are everywhere. The human race without God is doomed to degradation. Sin robs all of society and invades the lives of everyone. The Christian who confronts not only the sin of the world but his own sins as well, could be taking the necessary steps to winning a lost world to Christ.

Christians need a strong motivating incentive to evangelize and share Christ with a sin-filled world. The missionary zeal of atheists is quickly replacing the strong Christian missionary effort of years past. The importance of the church designed to make disciples should not be underestimated. The making of disciples is of critical importance and contains several aspects which should be explored.

The importance of a disciple-making church has several aspects. The world cannot be won to Christ by weekend retreats, revivals, or other annual evangelistic events. The work of making disciples is a daily effort until Jesus returns. The personal growth of Christians can more readily take place in an evangelical church setting. If Christians are to grow in an evangelistic posture, they will need to be surrounded by the fellowship of others who serve Christ by making disciples.

The importance of the church can be seen in the development of the young people. Young people learn more by example than they do by sermon. Children raised in an evangelistic, disciple-making church grow up in the nurture and admonition that winning the lost is important to them and to the kingdom of God.

The importance of the disciple "going" must be recognized. The three thousand souls saved at Pentecost were not saved in a

church building. The prayer which brought the Spirit of God to save them was accomplished in the church's prayer meeting by 120 Spirit-filled believers. After prayer and preparation, they went out and experienced the power of God using them to make disciples.

Jesus assures the Christian that He provides the power to evangelize the world. He has provided the appropriate message for Christians to deliver to a sin-sick world. Jesus said that if Christians will only share the gospel with the lost, He will reap the harvest. These ought to be sufficient motivating incentives for all Christians to be burdened for the lost.

In summary, the purpose of this study is to look at the action of making disciples, not on teaching how to make disciples. The biblical command to make disciples is clear. It is demonstrated by the soul winning strategy used by Jesus. In the pursuit to evangelize, one must use an evangelistic approach rather than an educational approach. The biblical standard is set by the Great Commission (Matt 28.18-20). The mission of the Church historically has been the bringing of people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Disciples are made of people who commit their lives to Christ and follow Him and serve Him in the task of making other disciples who will do likewise.

Chapter two consists of a review of the historical perspective of making disciples and evangelism. The Holy Spirit's role and purpose in making disciples are discussed in chapter three as they present biblical truths concerning the power of the Spirit. Chapter four is directed to the calling of a disciple, with a reminder that the call is a holy calling. The intent of this writing is to motivate Christians to make disciples. This writer also recognizes that some people will desire training before taking any soul-winning action. For those individuals needing such training, the "how to" portion of discipleship is in the last chapter. It contains material for a disciple to use to win someone to the Lord. The material covered will include good communications and the modeling of an appropriate Christian lifestyle. The conclusion of the book is devoted to a call to make disciples. Exhortation and encouragement, coupled with the knowledge that the Holy Spirit will lead in the making of disciples, should stir the hearts of Christian to reach the lost for Christ.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Old Testament

A historical perspective of the Old Testament contains numerous occurrences where God called ordinary people to make clear His message of redemption. God-called men were commanded to speak to an unrepentant people and nation. They were assigned the responsibility to make disciples by returning men to God from their sins. Many God-made preachers and prophets spoke to corrupt and perverted people about God's plan for making disciples.

Christians need to take seriously the responsibility to warn the lost about their spiritual death. God expects a disciple to tell the unsaved to turn from evil. God used Ezekiel to speak to the house of Israel concerning their wickedness. God would have His spokesperson today to ask the same question of the lost.

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? (Ezek 33.11).

David understood the need to make disciples and his personal need to have a restored relationship with God. David asked God to restore the joy of his salvation so that David could teach transgressors God's ways, and that sinners would be converted. A disciple with a heart for converting sinners to God's way will want to maintain the joy of God's salvation. David requested of God that his spirit be renewed so that David could sing of God's righteousness.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and

sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness O God, thou God of my salvation; and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness (Ps 51.10-14).

When Christians seek to renew the joy of God's salvation, they seek to do the will of God. David cried, "Wilt thou not revive us again; that thy people may rejoice in thee? Show us thy mercy, O lord, and grant us thy salvation" (Ps 85.6-7).

No sin is so dark that it cannot be made white by the blood of Christ. The entire Godhead pleads with lost sinners to repent. A message which appeals to good reasoning may be used as a means of making disciples. Such a message is demonstrated as,

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isa 1.18).

Reasoning with the lost within one's own family about the sins in their lives should not be overlooked. Discipleship begins with the responsibility to make disciples of family members. God commands His people to love Him with all their heart, soul, and might. In addition to loving God in this manner, one is exhorted to teach these commandments diligently to his children. So forceful is the command that one can feel the urgency expressed as Moses described the method needed to teach the commandment. Moses spoke to the fathers of Israel saying,

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk to them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deut 6.4-7).

Man's nature places him in need of redemption. Man, by his nature to sin, has alienated himself from God. This alienation

requires that man be won back to God. Solomon considered men to be wise who make disciples and win back lost mankind to God: "He that is wise winneth souls" (Prov 11.30). The literal meaning of this great passage of Scripture is "take alive." Souls are to be taken alive and brought to God that they might be won back to Him.

New Testament

New Testament discipleship of the first century was spread by many methods and techniques. The gospel of Jesus Christ was shared in synagogues, open-air, small groups, and large groups. Families were approached in their homes and converted, along with many of their slaves. In addition to the preaching of the Word, the written Word was disseminated testifying to the saving power of Jesus Christ. The effectiveness of this discipling was noted by the non-Christian world.

Christians were a force to be reckoned with as exhibited by letters requesting advice in how to deal with Christians. Extrabiblical evidence from non-Jewish historians testifies to a "Christus" who was sentenced and put to death by Pontius Pilate. Such records state the Christians' Christ is to be sung to as to a God. Extrabiblical history records speak of Jews being thrown out of Rome because of Christ. Other records indicate Christ was the One Who was crucified and had followers who actually worshiped this crucified One. Other writings from the Jewish community, which include the historian Josephus, mention Christ, make reference to Him as James' brother, and note that He was sentenced by Pilate to die on the cross.⁶

Biblical evidence of a historical perspective on discipleship is noted in the lives of John the Baptist, Jesus, Peter, John, Philip, and Paul. The great teacher Jesus was of course the epitome of one who makes disciples. John the Baptist, the God-ordained forerunner of Jesus, gave his life that the world might repent of sin

⁶Earle E. Cairns, Christianity through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 45-6.

and turn to the Lamb of God, Jesus. Peter became a powerful preacher when he received the power of the Holy Spirit of God. John, Philip, and Paul all had a similar desire for making disciples. Men like John, Philip, and Paul were clear in their thinking that Christ was the message for the lost, and that the Holy Spirit could give them the power to proclaim Him.

The discipleship of Jesus is revealed in the development of a new value being placed on mankind. Through His coming Christ gives dignity to man as a child of God. He broke down all known barriers to people relating to one another as the "church." He placed within mankind the need for His love and then loved them so much that He died for their sins. His discipleship is reflected in His authority, in His sincerity, and in His character. In His authority He spoke as never a man had spoken; in His sincerity He revealed Himself to the world; and in His character He was pure love, unlike other personalities around Him.

Early expansion of discipleship from a historical perspective was fulfilled by the disciples of Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit. With Jesus' departure the disciples used the guidance of the Holy Spirit to begin the Great Commission of Acts 1.8. The early expansion of making disciples began in Jerusalem as the Holy Spirit established Himself with the early Christians at Pentecost. Further expansion of the commission occurred in Judea and Samaria when the Holy Spirit filled new believers as Peter and John joined the work of Philip in Samaria and laid hands on the new believers that they might be filled with the Holy Spirit. In the house of Cornelius, the Holy Spirit was at work even as Peter preached. The expansion and outreach for disciples continued with Paul's second missionary journey to Ephesus where the Holy Spirit's power was evidenced once again. The command of Acts 1.8 is "you shall" or in the New International Version "you will" be witnesses to me was taken seriously by the disciples. God was going to be glorified as the Gospel spread in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The emphasis is on the imperative, "you will."

The Palestinian expansion of disciples from the biblical account begins in Acts 8. The center of focus shifts from the Jerusalem Church and focuses on the activities of spreading the

gospel to Judea and Samaria. The spreading of the gospel in Judea and Samaria was important in that the focus of discipleship was on different races. Philip in Samaria shared Jesus and the Holy Spirit with a people whose descendants were not taken into captivity. Gentiles, enemies of the Jewish people, were converted to Christianity. Philip, continuing his call to spread the Gospel, assisted an Ethiopian high official in accepting Christianity and baptism prior to returning to his country.

In addition to Philip spreading the gospel to non-Jewish converts, Peter was expanding the gospel as he preached to Gentiles. This expansion occurred when God spoke to Peter and he followed the Holy Spirit to Cornelius. Cornelius a Roman centurion had been praying to God. God sent Peter to tell him about Jesus. Expansion into all the world had begun as God commanded.

God's command was to go into all the world, and as early church leaders were forced out of Jerusalem, they began preaching to Jews and then later to Gentiles. The Holy Spirit's power produced large Gentile populations of disciples such as the church established at Antioch in Syria. From this church Paul would expand his ministry.

Christianity would not have been the same without Paul. Several reasons may be noted to make this point. Paul was divinely called to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 9.3-6). The apostle Paul's role in the worldwide expansion of discipleship was clearly directed by the Holy Spirit. Paul was clear that he, himself, had to be constantly subject to God's power in his life, lest he fall away like others in the gospel ministry of which he was aware. Paul's ministry to the early church was clearly directed by God in that Paul provided all future generations clear and concise theological guidance. Paul's ability to share deep revelations with the uneducated has given the world a gospel which can be understood, not shrouded in mystery.

Paul certainly was possessed with the view of an evangelist. Paul could not stay in one place very long before he would get another vision of souls in danger in another location. His conversion was quite dramatic as was his preparation. At every opportunity Paul was learning the depth and breadth of the

gospel. In his soul winning zeal, Paul was able to lead one person to the Lord or whole provinces. He learned that God would save a sorcerer or a high ranking Roman citizen. Paul broadened his vision as he visited the cities in Asia Minor. He received the "Macedonian call" and remembered the efforts in Galatia, Achaia, and Asia. Paul had taken the Roman Empire for Jesus, and he accomplished it one person, one city, one province at a time. Paul's efforts, even while in chains, and his vision to spread the gospel world-wide became a reality.

Paul's methods of evangelism perhaps stemmed from his personal philosophy of "becoming all things to all men, that by all means he might save some" (1 Cor 9.22). Paul was a one-on-one soul winner. Paul would share Jesus with all types of people, wherever he went, with whomever he met.

Paul had a basic message to the lost which always had four doctrinal points. Paul believed and preached that the deity of Christ was the foundation of faith. He believed in the inerrant Word of God. He believed that the gospel was for all people, Jew and Gentile alike. Additionally he believed the church was given the divine task of spreading the gospel. Paul's message about Jesus would tell of Christ's deity, His atonement for man's sins on the cross, His resurrection from the dead, and Christians' hope in His return to claim His own. Paul preached as his Master preached. Paul exhorted converts to love others even as Christ loved them. Paul was careful to instruct the believers in all situations. He had advice for the home, the family, government, slavery, and prejudice.

Paul converted the lost and transformed them into bodies of believers called churches. Through the organization of churches, Paul expected the gospel to be shared, and that it would be disseminated, and that Christ's kingdom would last until Jesus' return. Paul was truly called on the Damascus road to be a soul winner for His Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

Reformation

The Protestant Reformation, an evangelism explosion against the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic system,

was a discipleship event of major proportion. God was ready to bring about layman-led involvement in the spreading of the gospel. The religious movement that would attack corruption and deprivation within the Roman Catholic Church would result in arming the common people with knowledge of God's saving grace, not that of the pope. Several devoted men of God were able to stand firm against an entrenched system of sin. Men like Luther, Zwingli, Knox, and Calvin will long be remembered for their theological contributions to make disciples of the masses. Many souls would be saved, for the kingdom, because of their actions.

Martin Luther was representative of these men. Born to German peasant parents, Martin Luther was intelligent and attained the Master and the Doctorate of Theology degrees. He was Roman Catholic and dutifully called on their patron saints for help. His mother, a very superstitious woman, passed on much of her fear to him. Martin Luther called on one of these saints when he feared he would die during a thunderstorm. His plea to St. Anne included the statement that he would become a monk if she spared his life. His life was spared, and he entered a monastery.⁷ Luther's conversion occurred after studying Augustine's and John Huss' doctrines.

Luther was influenced at Erfurt during his philosophical studies to believe in the need for divine intervention if anyone would be saved. He was looking for salvation and could not find it in Catholicism. He slowly developed the realization that the Roman Catholic church was not the authority of God but that the Bible was the true authority of God. Luther was then saved by his study of the Scriptures and developed his theological system around sola scriptura. "The just shall live by faith" became his motto, and the fight against the corruption of the pope and priest became his cause.

In 1517 when Tetzel began to sell indulgences, which according to Tetzel gave complete forgiveness of all sin, Luther condemned these abuses openly. By October, Luther set in motion the Protestant Reformation when he nailed his religious propositions to the door of Wittenberg Cathedral. In this famous

⁷Cairns, Christianity, 289.

document was Luther's challenge to debate anyone on the abuses of the indulgence system.⁸ Excommunicated by the pope, Luther made himself the chief reformer of the Roman Catholic Church and would debate with other Protestants where they differed from his beliefs.

Luther was extremely effective in his evangelistic preaching about the scriptural doctrine of grace. He was effective enough to spread his teachings throughout all of western Europe. His influence on the Lutheran denomination can be seen in its beliefs even today. Lutherans have adopted his doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, his belief in consubstantiation, the practices of infant baptism, and the development of a state church.⁹

The Roman Catholic church believes that the reformation is the result of the heresy of Martin Luther and that protestantism is a heretical schism. The Roman Catholic church has difficulty realizing that it had drifted far away from the New Testament and had become depraved in dogma and extremely self centered.

The Protestant Reformation had many reformers and causes. Martin Luther was certainly a major contributor in the process of religious reform. Among the many causes and reformers, Calvin, one of Luther's colleagues, influenced the reformation movement in France, Holland, Scotland, Hungary, and Switzerland. In Switzerland, Huldreich Zwingli, influenced by Lutheran beliefs, developed and debated numerous articles of faith. These articles included salvation by faith, authority of the Bible, and voluntary tithing. Knox, another reformer influenced by Luther and Calvin, spread the reformation into Scotland. The reformation was complex, necessary, and world changing.

The Awakenings

Evangelism may very well be all that saved England from the wrath of God. Revival fires broke out under the power of the Holy Spirit, and men of God arose to the occasion to preach the gospel and to make disciples of the saints. Among these Spirit-led men of God were two brothers, John and Charles Wesley. These

⁸Cairns, Christianity, 290.

⁹Ibid., 294-5.

two men may serve as examples of what God can do when men work with the Holy Spirit to make disciples for Jesus.

John Wesley, "the brand plucked from the burning" as he liked to put it, was the fifteenth of nineteen children. John was a leader of the "Holy Club" with his brother Charles. The "Holy Club" consisted of a group of students who were called Methodists by their classmates. The students involved in the "Holy Club" were nicknamed Methodists by their peers, because of their methodical prayer habits and Bible study. John was saved after hearing a reading from Luther's preface to his Commentary on Romans. Not only was John influenced by Luther, but he was also influenced by George Whitefield, who encouraged John to preach all over England. John supposedly preached about 42,000 sermons, wrote about 200 books, and is credited with organizing his followers into a society which became known as Methodist.¹⁰

After John separated himself from Whitefield, the Methodist church adopted an Arminian theology. John was also influenced by German Pietists and Moravian Brethren. He accepted James Arminius' views of predestination and rejected those of Calvin. Arminianism is still a part of the Methodist church.

John's preaching was that the gospel should impact society. John's preaching impacted England with a revival in which clergymen preached against liquor, slavery, and war. John's preaching had an influence on people, and he is given credit for the lack of insurgence on the part of the workers in France.

After John's death the Methodist church separated itself from the Anglican church but kept some of its episcopal polity and kneeling at the altar for communion. John was the leader of five hundred eleven preachers and over one hundred twenty thousand members in the Methodist societies. He is clearly considered the founder of the Methodist church (societies) movement. One could say this was the making of disciples in the magnitude of the apostle Paul. Charles Wesley was part of his brother John's and George Whitefield's open-air meetings. Charles wrote over six thousand

¹⁰Roland Q. Leavell, Evangelism: Christ's Imperative Commission (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), 84.

hymns for the meetings. Familiar titles include "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" and "Love Divine." He is noted for writing hymns which rhymed with Scripture passages, an uncommon practice in his day.

When John went to the mission field of Georgia with General Oglethorpe, Charles was by his side. Their work with the Indians proved unsuccessful as a missionary endeavor. As a revivalist John was the preacher, and Charles was the song leader. John and Charles influenced the world by making disciples for their Savior.

The American Awakening was another Holy Spirit led revival much like that which occurred in England. God's Holy Spirit sounded out in America another call to continue the work of discipleship. The work of making disciples by doing and going was ever fixed in the minds of men as revival fires swept across America. The nation and the methods used to make disciples would never be the same.

The revival of 1857-58 is an important period of Christian history. Millions of people reportedly were given the opportunity to receive the gospel. Mission doors were opened as never before. According to Cairns the revival of 1857-58 started with Jeremiah Lanphier's prayer meeting which began with six people. The location was Fulton Street, New York City. It was held at noon so businessmen could attend. Cairns calls it "a lay interdenominational prayer-based revival."¹¹

Prosperity preceded this revival, and for ten years before the revival, great events took place. With the discovery of gold in California, railroad expansion westward, industrial growth, cities grew, and sin abounded. Churches had lost the people to the world of sin. Churches seemed to have little or no prayer or power.

Late in October 1857, the world of finance collapsed. Wall Street hit bottom. The world panicked, and depression stopped all activity. The human condition was desperate, and the only thing anyone knew to do was to pray to God for help in this crisis hour. A group of New York businessmen started a prayer meeting which swept the nation. Everywhere one went prayer meetings were led

11Cairns, Christianity, 419.

by businessmen. In the first six months, ten thousand noonday prayer meetings were taking place in New York. Cairns states that there were "between 500,000 and 1,000,000 people added to the church, with the Methodists gaining most of the new members."¹²

God heard the prayers of His people all across America. Millions of people joined the churches. Missionary areas opened outside of the United States. Mission opportunities opened in Mexico when the Roman Church was overthrown by dictator Benito Juarez. Central America was opened to missionaries. Livingston began his tour of Africa with the gospel message. India was opened to missionaries when India was transferred to the British government. China, with its 400,000,000 people, was opened with the signing of the Treaty of Tientsin. One can see that when God's people obey Him, humble themselves, and pray, He will hear their prayer and answer by sending a great revival.

12 Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

THE POWER TO PERSUADE

The Holy Spirit

To understand the role of the Holy Spirit in conjunction with the power to persuade, one must first know Him with all the attributes of the third person in the Godhead. Present day literature concerning the Holy Spirit reveals that little attention has been paid to this important part of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is as much a part of the Godhead as is the Father and the Son. Much can be learned by a study of the Holy Spirit in terms of His personality. Insight can be gained by considering aspects of His personality, including His deity, attributes, actions, and the fruit of the Spirit. All of what is known concerning the Holy Spirit is derived from the Bible and is only present in the Christian faith.

We sometimes confuse personality with visibility. Personality is not an attribute of a body; it is the attribute of a spirit. You yourself have never been seen; you are not a body, but a spirit having a body.¹³

When one deals with the personality of the Holy Spirit, he will likely use "it" to describe Him. The King James Version uses "it" because the Greek term (pneuma) for Spirit is neuter. A person, however, requires a masculine pronoun, therefore, the title Holy Spirit, when replaced by a pronoun is generally masculine. The Holy Spirit is God the great "I AM"; therefore, because the Holy Spirit is a person, the more appropriate pronoun would be "He."

Some confusion surrounding the name of the Holy Spirit may be His lack of a name. He is only known at this time by His title "Holy Spirit." His personality and personal name have been diminished to allow the exaltation of the Son. This diminution in

¹³Mark G. Cambron, Bible Doctrine (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1954), 117.

no way decreases His role as God the Holy Spirit. According to Chafer, "This is because the Spirit does not now speak from Himself or of Himself; rather, He speaks whatsoever He hears . . . and He is said to come into the world to glorify Christ."¹⁴

The Holy Spirit is a gift of God to every believer. The unmerited indwelling of the Holy Spirit is just another exhibition of God's grace to man. Christians are set apart as the Holy Spirit touches their lives at salvation to begin their change to a new, Spirit-filled life. God has chosen to empower Christians with a life changing gift. What a treasured gift is the salvation experience and the indwelling Holy Spirit at the same instant one believes on God's Son as Savior.

The Holy Spirit is recognized as God. He is as much a part of God as is the Father and the Son. Peter quickly defined the deity of the Holy Spirit when he pointed out to Ananias that he lied to the Holy Spirit. Acts 5:4 states, "Thou hast not lied to men, but unto God." Many of the same attributes of God are contributed to the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the most significant attributes are those of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence.

The many attributes of the Holy Spirit are those which are exhibited by the other members of the Godhead. He possesses wisdom and knowledge which He shares with the saved. The wisdom and knowledge which He possesses exceed that of human comprehension. In addition to intelligence, He has a will which is to testify of Jesus (John 15:26). He certainly has power, since by His power many mighty signs and wonders took place at His bidding. Paul was extremely aware of the power of the Holy Spirit as He gave evidence of that power while he preached the gospel of Christ (Rom 15:13,19). The work of the Holy Spirit significantly proclaims Him as God, since no one except God is capable of the works performed by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible attests to the fact that the Spirit of God reveals knowledge. If one is to gain knowledge, even knowledge concerning the Holy Spirit, then one must receive that knowledge through knowing the Holy Spirit. "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might

¹⁴Lewis Sperry Chafer, Major Bible Themes (Grand Rapids: Academie, 1974), 87.

know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1 Cor 2.12). All that is known concerning the Holy Spirit has been revealed by Him. Further indication of His intelligence is given in Isa 11.2:

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, and the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

The personality of the Holy Spirit is described by such things as emblems and symbols in the Bible. Some of these symbols are the dove, water, oil, wind, and fire.

The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit as He is described in John 1.32. "John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him." The dove, which was sent from the ark by Noah, may be considered as evidence of the Holy Spirit according to Chafer (see Gen 8.8-11).¹⁵

Water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit and His indwelling of believers. John 7.37-39 describe how "living waters flow from within" the believer. In these verses Jesus spoke of this living water as He spoke of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Other uses of water are noted as cleansing and as being within the believer. Both uses of water speak of the work of the Holy Spirit (see Exod 29.4 and John 7.37-39). In the Gospel of John, Jesus indicates that living water is a representation of the Holy Spirit (see John 4.10).

Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit which represents His comforting, consecrating, healing, and illuminating. An example of the use of oil representing the Holy Spirit is seen in the cleansing of the leper (Lev 14.10-32). Many other uses of oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit can be cited. However, one of the very important uses of oil was in the setting aside for service of priests, prophets, and kings. Oil was used extensively in the Old Testament and numerous times in the New Testament to indicate that the Spirit was upon Christ (Isa 61.1; John 3.34; Col 1.19). In the Book of Leviticus, reference is given to the placement of the oil on the body for cleansing purposes. When one is touched by the oil of the Holy Spirit, that one is completely anointed and cleansed by the

¹⁵Lewis Sperry Chafer, Chafer Systematic Theology (Dallas: Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), 1:253.

power of God. The anointing of a priest with oil was performed in a definite order. First, his ear was anointed that he might hear God's Word. Second, his thumb was anointed that his actions might be for God's glory. Last, his big toe was anointed that he might walk with God.

Wind is also used to signify the filling of the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit or the breathing of God on the disciples took place at Pentecost. The disciples experienced a sound "as a rushing mighty wind," and all present were filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.2-4).

Fire is used in different ways throughout the Bible. When used in connection with the Holy Spirit, it is used to represent purification and sanctification. When a believer is being tried by fire, as indicated in 1 Pet 1.7, he is cleansed that he might appear before Jesus Christ filled with the Holy Spirit and purged of all sin.

Actions of the Holy Spirit describe His personality. Some of these actions are leading, teaching, reproofing, appointing, and ministering. Actions of the Holy Spirit, when observed by early believers, demonstrated the reality and presence of the Spirit of God.

Numerous New Testament Scriptures indicate that the Spirit leads. Gal 5.18 declares "led of the Spirit" as does Acts 8.29 which specifically declares, "Then the Spirit said." Rom 8.14 explains how this leading of the Spirit can be possible: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

In John 14.26 Jesus explained that the Comforter will "teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." 1 John 2.27 describes the teaching of the Holy Spirit as an anointing which one receives from the Holy Spirit: "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you and. . .the same anointing teacheth you of all things."

The Bible is quite clear on the Holy Spirit's action to reprove the world. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16.8). Sin requires reproof, and the Holy Spirit will perform His duties to bring to light the need to reprove sin. Righteousness is lacking in the world today, and judgment at the hands of the Holy Spirit of God is inevitable.

The appointments of the Holy Spirit seem to be to carry out specific tasks of ministry. A good example of the Holy Spirit as He appoints men to serve God is "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them" (Acts 13.2). Appointments of the Holy Spirit continue to be evidenced in the work of calling men and women to God's service.

Of the many ways which the Holy Spirit ministers, some are that He baptizes, fills, regenerates, and seals the believer to the end. New life in Christ is fulfilled as the Holy Spirit ministers to new believers. Some occurrences of the ministry of the Holy Spirit can be noted in Eph 4.30, 5.18, John 3.6, and 1 Cor 12.13.

Names also express His personality. The Bible mentions two names in particular to describe the personality of the Holy Spirit. They are Comforter and Spirit. These two names are explicit in the literal meaning of that which is performed by the Holy Spirit.

Before Jesus departed from earth, He explained that He would not leave believers without a "Comforter." He also once again pointed out that this Spirit will be "within" the believer providing him with truth. The gift of the Holy Spirit as a comforter cannot be overlooked in its importance. God in Christ Jesus determined or decreed that repentant man would have the Holy Spirit in the capacity of a comforter according to John 14.16-17,

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give ye another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world can not receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

The Holy Spirit, being God, is also spirit. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (John 4.34). How interesting that the Holy Spirit is available to Christians to assist them in the worship of God in the spirit as required in the Scriptures.

The fruit of the Spirit is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness temperance: against such

there is no law" (Gal 5.22-23). If as a Christian, one can live as God would have him to live, that Christian would be able to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit as a product of His filling. The fruit of the Spirit is given as gifts which appear to be a result of a Christian life, not an action which any Christian could purposefully set out to accomplish through himself. The Amplified Bible translation of this text reads as follows:

But the fruit of the (Holy) Spirit, [the work which His presence within accomplishes]--is love, joy (gladness), peace, patience (an even temper, forbearance), kindness, goodness (benevolence), faithfulness; (meekness, humility) gentleness, self-control (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law [that can bring a charge](Gal 5.22-23).

This amplified version points out that the fruit is "of the Holy Spirit," and any work accomplished is due to "the work which His presence within accomplishes." Of all the descriptions listed as representations of the personality of the Holy Spirit, these two verses seem to add much to what may have been lacking in the other references.

The Leading of the Holy Spirit

Attempting to witness in one's own power is futile. One must be completely reliant upon the power and leadership of the Holy Spirit if one desires to see souls saved. The importance of being anointed by the Holy Spirit in soul-winning should be recognized by reading Luke 4.18. If Jesus felt it necessary to have the Spirit of the Lord upon Him, a Christian surely must need that same Spirit even more. As a Christian one can use all the means available to bring people to Jesus, but the Holy Spirit will do the bidding and make the change in each life as He sees fit.

The wonderful reality of the Holy Spirit is that He is present everywhere. He is present in each circumstance where He is allowed to bring salvation. The Bible says that the Comforter "shall testify of me," and Christians are to be witnesses also (John

15.26,27). With the assurance of the Holy Spirit's presence and leadership, one should be able to witness. Knowing that believers have a Comforter, or Paraclete--One Who is beside them, they can do all things through Christ Who will strengthen them with the power of the Holy Spirit. A part of each individuals' witnessing plan should be to become totally dependent on the power provided by the Holy Spirit to accomplish the task of witnessing.

The believer should know that the more one exercises faith in the power of God, the greater one's faith becomes. When one accepts this power of the Holy Spirit and develops it to witness, faith is increased as soul winners see the demonstration of power in souls saved.

A soul winner in witnessing can merely present the truths of the Scriptures. After the presentation the soul winner must then depend on the illuminating and convicting power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will reveal to the unsaved that which must be known to find Jesus Christ as Lord. According to John 16.7-8 the Holy Spirit also uses the Word of God to speak to the soul and the spirit of the lost individual. The Holy Spirit will do the convicting of the lost person. The Holy Spirit will show each lost person his sins and will call for a decision of repentance. Unless the lost person exhibits a spirit of repentance, his unbelief separates his soul from God. The Holy Spirit's desire is to break down the barrier of separation between the lost and the Savior Jesus Christ.

Conviction of a judgment someday is part of the power which the Holy Spirit uses as one attempts to share the gospel with the lost. People must be made aware that they will die someday, and after death is the judgment. The Holy Spirit will speak these truths about death to those lost souls who will listen.

The Holy Spirit uses His power to draw people to Christ. John 6.44 says that unless the Spirit draws them, they cannot come to Jesus. The Holy Spirit can take a life of sin and death and transform it into a regenerated spirit. Soul winners need only obey the Holy Spirit by taking the Word of God to the lost, and the Holy Spirit will do the rest. Witnessing wins the lost for Christ.

Successful Discipleship

Successful discipleship must start with a successful disciple. Discipleship, or the making of disciples, can be accomplished by someone with a keen desire to make disciples for Christ. Successful discipleship begins with a heart's desire that people may be saved. The apostle Paul had that same desire for Israel. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Rom 10.1). Desire is not enough; one must make an attempt to win someone to Christ. A Christian with the desire and drive to see souls saved should be willing to risk embarrassment and even defeat for the cause of Christ. A heart's desire, coupled with action, will see people saved.

The right attitude is a beginning for a successful soul winner. People interact daily, and many never think to say a word for the Savior. Some have been convicted by the Holy Spirit for being remiss in witnessing and have at later opportunities made their faith known. A person is what he thinks. "For as a man thinketh within himself, so is he" (Prov 23.7). If one thinks he is unable to witness, he will probably not be a witness. However, one who thinks about witnessing may be a witness as a result of his attitude.

A successful disciple must conquer fear. Whether or not fear is admitted as a deterrent to making disciples is not a question. Fear in many forms is present in the making of disciples. Some forms may not be recognized as fear, but they are fear nonetheless. One may not know or understand sufficiently the process of leading someone to Christ; therefore, he is not bold with his witness. The fear of not knowing how to witness or the belief that one lacks the ability to witness will cause one to make little effort to bring a lost soul to Jesus. Fear of failure may be high on the list of fears. One may be more concerned with how he will appear in the other person's eyes if he is unsuccessful in causing a turn from sin to the Savior. A great fear may be that as a Christian, one is not living an effective Christian lifestyle. Inconsistency in Christian living makes it difficult to share with friends or loved ones, let alone strangers, the need for repentance and holy living.

A successful disciple must have a plan for presenting the

gospel to the lost. The beginning of such a plan may be the claiming of God's promise of a harvest where disciples sow the seeds of the Savior. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Ps 126.6). Knowing that the plan begins with God's providing souls for the laborer, one should speak with conviction concerning the damnation of the lost and the power of God to save. One does not need to be a Scripture-quoting, seasoned soul winner to save souls. One only needs to be willing to suffer if necessary to see souls saved. Personal testimony spoken from the heart and given with conviction in many cases is sufficient to make others with similar circumstances in life turn to the Savior. To be a successful disciple one must have prayer, purpose, and power. Prayer should not be an afterthought to soul winning. Prayer must be the first thought. Many successful soul winners use prayer as a means to soften the spirit of those who need to be saved. Praying for an acquaintance to be saved is allowing the Holy Spirit of God to work in the life of that lost person prior to receiving a witness.

The purpose of winning people to Christ is not to say that one is an accomplished soul winner. The purpose is to rescue the perishing and to care for the dying. The devil will drag mankind to hell while Christians stand around and discuss the needs of mankind that can only be met by Christ. The purpose of successful discipleship is to go after the lost as if one is literally attacking the gates of hell.

To fight the devil one needs power. The same power that allows the Christian to ward off the attacks of Satan in his daily life is the same power available to the Christian to snatch souls from the devil. No greater power exists than the Holy Spirit of God using the Word to defeat the devil and his angels.

A successful disciple uses the Bible, letting Jesus reveal Himself through the disciple-maker. The Bible is God's Word and sharper than any two-edged sword. A Christian needs only a cursory knowledge of God's Word to be a successful soul winner. Having sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures which are designed to present God's plan of salvation to the lost is enough. In fact, John 3.16 is enough Scripture to bring perishing men to conviction

that they need a Savior. If John 3.16 does not provide one with sufficient security in witnessing, a few well-chosen verses from the Book of Romans, such as Rom 3.23, will be more than adequate when guided by the Holy Spirit. In addition to the verse in Romans, one can consider Mark 1.15 where Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." By putting these three verses together, one gets a simple plan of salvation. First, Jesus died that man might not perish (John 3.16). Second, all men have sinned and will perish unless they believe in God's Son (Rom 3.23). Finally, Jesus said repent and believe (Mark 1.15).

A successful disciple overcomes the difficulties encountered in witnessing--worldliness, varied personalities, excuses, and much more. To overcome worldliness one must recognize it in one's own life. The world is clearly making inroads to the Christian community. Worldliness within individuals may be one of the difficulties encountered by a disciple. Many people truly love the world more than anything else in life. Sin and worldly pleasure will have to be replaced with holy living and righteous indignation at sin. People can be living too deep in the world to want to replace it with righteousness. Worldly living is all some people know. Placing one's trust in God is more than some people are ready to do. A good Christian witness may be effective in this case, since many soul winners were once sinners much like those to whom they witness.

Personalities vary and each type may require different approaches to sharing the gospel. Regardless of personality type, one will be given what is needed by the Holy Spirit to deal with lost souls. Behind many personalities is often a hurting soul in need of a Savior. One must look past the individual's personality and see the soul of a sinner who can be saved by grace. Recognizing that people perish when one fails to witness, Christians need to extend the opportunity to be saved to the lost.

Excuses may be a polite form of saying no to salvation and the Savior. The rich young ruler who approached Jesus had an excuse for not taking up his cross and following Jesus. The rich young ruler's excuse was that he was very rich and unwilling to give up his wealth. Most excuses center around the axiom that one

is unwilling to give up whatever he has in order to follow Jesus. He must give up his sin and repent and follow Jesus. Many people are simply not ready to change their lifestyles or habits. Many wait too long to take up their cross and follow Jesus; consequently, they perish in sin and degradation.

One may encounter resistance from the lost as one witnesses. Resistance occurs more often when one attempts to witness than it does when one does not attempt to witness. Pre-judging individuals and the readiness of lost souls to receive Christ may send some unbelievers to hell based on the disciple maker's opinion concerning the lost person's predisposition to the gospel. Soul winners have no responsibility to overcome difficulties in witnessing. The job of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin; the job of the disciple is merely to present the gospel and let God do the rest. The reality of the gospel is that the Spirit of God is working with the lost to bring salvation.

A successful disciple watches and waits for every opportunity to share Christ with a lost person. Opportunity knocks more times than one would believe. The reluctance to make disciples is not found in lack of opportunities to witness but in the lack of believers willing to share Christ with the lost. Soul winning seminars, in which people have been approached by total strangers, have resulted in many people being saved. Watching and waiting and, of course, praying for the leadership of the Holy Spirit will change one's viewpoint concerning who is approachable with the gospel and who is unapproachable. Having only one desire, that of witnessing and letting God do the rest, will result in seeing people who will be receptive to God's salvation plan. God has chosen repentant sinners to approach sinners in need of repentance with the good news that Jesus saves.

A successful disciple is aware that the way one lives is a witness to discipleship. Christians may witness as a disciple of Christ, or they may witness with lifestyles of which only the devil could be proud. One's lifestyle does make a difference to the world. The world is watching to determine if believers are living a godly life. A life that has been completely turned over to Christ will reflect Christ. A Christian who does not allow the Holy Spirit to assist him in the way he lives may find himself not only an

ineffectual witness but also an ineffective Christian. Living for Jesus is not just a phrase or song title; it is a way of life. If one ever expects to influence even his children, he must live a life in Christ for everyone to see. How tragic that today some Christian parents live like the devil in front of their children, and in later years expect their children to become Christians. If one ever expects to influence friends, he must live an appropriate Christian lifestyle in front of them. Going to church faithfully and giving one's best to the Master is noted by all those one encounters on life's road. The statement "I would see Jesus," is ultimately more than a statement; it is a way of life.

CHAPTER 4

THE DISCIPLINE TO BE A DISCIPLE

The Call of a Disciple

Failing to witness for God is surely a real sin. Jesus gave each believer a requirement to make disciples, and each believer needs to be doing what is required of him. With so many different opportunities to share Jesus with the world, Christians should be actively evangelizing their communities, counties, and countries.

One could use several methods of reaching the lost if one truly desired to do the Lord's will. No restriction has been placed on who can be saved. No restriction exists on how many, or where, or when the lost may be saved. The Christian needs to believe that failure to witness is a sin.

Disobedience is a grave problem for the believer. When one is told to witness and does not do so, he is directly disobeying God. God commanded all believers to make disciples. He commanded them to be witnesses of Him in their Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world.

Christians have many ways at their disposal for reaching lost people for Christ. Witnessing can be accomplished within the mass media structure. Witnessing can be done personally or as a responsibility within a church setting. Television and radio, new methods like the utilization of the information highway can be used to share the gospel. Printed materials invade homes all the time. Perhaps the Christian community should recognize the importance of using printed materials for sharing Christ's love with people. Billy Graham and his mass evangelism are wonderful, but people can also be won to Jesus one at a time. Some evangelistic opportunities are in hospitals, nursing homes, jails, and even at ball games. Bible studies in the home or in non-religious locations may eliminate barriers to the hearing of the gospel for some people.

The church member should be aware that he is, by the grace of God, a believer because someone shared Christ with him. The sharing of the gospel is a perpetual responsibility. Christians are to share Jesus with everyone and to witness continuously to a

lost and dying world. The preacher's job is not to be the only evangelist in the church. According to 2 Timothy believers are called to do the work of an evangelist. The moment one is saved, the new believer is qualified to tell someone else about Jesus. Jesus witnessed to individuals, and His saints should do likewise.

Even if one points someone to a saving knowledge of Jesus, one could fail in the rest of God's plan in that new believers are to be made disciples. Many people who are already disciples have gained a wealth of knowledge concerning Jesus from the Holy Spirit Who assists them in daily living. Perhaps, Christians are amiss by not realizing they can sin when they fail to tell others that Jesus is the answer to the needs of humanity. Christians can sin because as believers they can become complacent after salvation. Individuals can sin because of failure to fulfill the Lord's command to make disciples wherever they go. When Christians are not seeking the leadership of the Holy Spirit for direction to lost souls with whom the gospel might be shared, these Christians are sinning the sin of disobedience. When Christians fail to tell others about their Savior, they are saying much more by their silence.

The Instruction of a Disciple

Jesus provided His disciples with many methods of training which can be used for lay evangelistic witnessing. The Bible records the calling of the apostles and their training in the art of discipleship. After they were trained, they were sent out to use their training. The success of the apostles in making disciples can be found in additional disciples being sent out by Jesus. After the success of Jesus' first disciples, He sent out an additional seventy disciples to witness and make disciples.

The training of disciples for lay evangelistic witnessing was commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ in the Great Commission. What most people fail to see is that the Great Commission tells everyone to make disciples. The majority of believers somehow believe that making disciples is only for the pastor, or only for those individuals whom God has gifted with evangelical

witnessing abilities. All members of the church today must realize that they are the witnesses whom Jesus has called to the harvest fields.

No matter how one feels about witnessing, the selection of lay witnesses should be conducted with the utmost care. Trained or not, people should be willing to be used of God to show Jesus' light, and they should be encouraged to spread the good news. The Lord selected those individuals whom He could use to His glory. Today, a similar selection or enlistment should be conducted. The selection of lay witnesses could begin with the deacons, Sunday School teachers, and other lay leaders in the church.

Training is important in anything which one expects to do well. Lay witness training is equally important and can start within the church programs of Sunday School and Discipleship Training. All training should be practical where possible. The purpose of lay witness training should be to put a soul winner into the field for the harvest of souls as quickly as possible. Soul winning is usually not accomplished if in the training of disciples all of the time is devoted to training with little or no hands-on experience.

Every Christian has been called to do lay witnessing; therefore, people need to have some training in the area of witnessing opportunities. The training should include some actual witnessing, as well as book training and classroom experience. The total experience of an evangelistic witnessing is to allow the lay person the actual experience of leading someone to Jesus.

Once a lay evangelistic witness is successful in leading someone to the Savior, he may continue to be hesitant about the process, but generally, he will be ready for another soul winning opportunity. In training, believers must see they live in an evangelistic witnessing opportunity environment at all times. Holy Spirit-led evangelistic witnessing opportunities occur every day. If one is to make disciples, he must seize every opportunity to witness for the Master.

When one witnesses for the Master, he can expect to encounter excuses given by the unsaved. When an individual is approached by someone, even a close relative, concerning his personal relationship with Jesus Christ, he will be uncomfortable if he has not been properly prepared by the Holy Spirit to receive a

witness. An encounter of this nature will probably result in a multitude of excuses which will attempt to evade the probe concerning the individual's spiritual condition before God. Christians should be aware that excuses are given by certain types of people. In Evangelism: Christ's Imperative Commission, Leavell lists several types of people for whom he states scriptural answers to their spiritual problems.¹⁶ Leavell lists the types, then he provides the Scriptures which he finds applicable. Some are stubborn, skeptical, procrastinators, half-interested, un-surrendered, worldly, wicked, and atheistic. These types, according to Leavell also have "timeworn, hackneyed" and "foolish" excuses which they subject Christians to each time they are approached for a salvation decision.

The list of excuses which the unsaved use on soul winners is topped with "they don't want to be a hypocrite like those down at the church." Any of the excuses can be answered by Scripture. In fact, Leavell's opinion is that they are only answered by Scripture. Over the years he has found that the excuses given are "oft-repeated." If the soul winner will use the Scriptures to show the excuses for what they really are, he could be successful in eliminating the excuse.

Leavell believes that excuses are just "camouflage for sin." They are excuses for not giving up prejudices, erroneous religious views, or their doubts. When confronted with the reality of God, perhaps the lost person depends on any excuse which will hide him from his sin. The prejudices may be against "Bible thumpers." The excuse givers may well have determined that their religious views are sufficient for them to believe and that they have no pre-disposition to change their religious views for those of another. The excuse may be even deeper than either of the two problems mentioned. The problem may be doubt. Doubts can range from doubts about God to doubts about self. Doubts can include not knowing if the individual is ready to make the complete self-sacrifice which he feels is necessary to be a Christian. Doubt may enter into the thinking as to whether the individual will be accepted

¹⁶Roland Q. Leavell, Evangelism: Christ's Imperative Commission (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1979), 255.

by other Christians at the local church. After all, other believers may know the sins of the lost. Some of the doubts may be turned into legitimate excuses for self-protection in an area which causes a great deal of discomfort.

Other individuals may lack knowledge of Christian expectations and requirements. One of the excuses that is near the top with "not wanting to be a hypocrite" is the excuse that "I am just as good as the next guy." Those who would use this excuse need a look at Rom 3.10-23. Unsaved individuals go to hell; saved individuals have eternal life. One's goodness is not in question; God's goodness and grace are sufficient to forgive a sinner.

The "someday" excuse has probably been one of Satan's lies by which he deceives the unsaved. "Someday I will say yes to Jesus." What the unsaved do not realize is that today they have said no to Jesus. By that action, according to John 3.18, they are condemned already. For them, "someday" was today. Today is the day of salvation (2 Cor 6.2). One of the best defenses a soul winner may have is simply to say, "Putting all excuses aside, what will you do with Jesus today?"

Self Discipline of Disciples

Self-discipline for soul winners, according to Leavell, begins "within their own will, directing them in personal efforts to win souls." He believes that to become a soul winner "one must engage in rigid self-discipline."¹⁷ This self-discipline involves four major areas.

The first area is a genuine concern for people. Christians who are sincerely desiring to be soul winners will be constantly looking for opportunities to share the gospel. They will have a compassion for the lost world and will attempt to share Him with everyone they meet who does not know Him as Lord and Savior. They will be filled with the gift of compassion for others as given by the Holy Spirit and will use that compassion to be concerned for the lost. This compassion will become a passion. Soul winners will seek to imitate Christ in reaching lost people. They will take

17Leavell, Evangelism, 184.

the Great Commission seriously and will develop a heart's desire to see people saved. Further, the successful soul winner will also be one who believes in intercessory prayer and who makes it a daily habit to seek the will of the Lord in prayer for lost souls. Using the method of prayer as a foundation, the soul winner must develop a prayer list of lost souls. He must begin a strong visitation program which will become a habit, and he should attempt to have a partner in the soul winning endeavor. Persistency in visitation will pay off in souls for the Savior.

The second area of self discipline is that of recognizing one's own personal problems. In addition to the rigid self-discipline and Spirit-filled approach mentioned above, one must recognize that a number of personal problems may hinder believers from being soul winners. Fear may be a real enemy and should be acknowledged. Acknowledged fear makes the believer dependent on the power of God. One may realize that he will not win everyone and that some will scoff, but some will be saved. Fear of failure will be overcome by trying to remember that the Lord says, "Fear not, for I am with thee" (Isa 41.10; see also Exod 20.20). Just attempting a witness will help eliminate some fear. Believing one's self to be unable to answer questions or just not being willing to be sent of the Holy Spirit must be overcome. Becoming consistent in one's personal life will aid in development of a soul-winning strategy. Continued witnessing increases a soul winner's confidence. Approaching all situations with tact is paramount. A soul winner does not want to drive people further away from the gospel. The gospel will do its job of convicting if one is faithful to deliver the message.

The third area of self discipline to overcome relates to one's lifestyle. One's problems left-over from days of sin can hinder one's witness. Change in one's lifestyle will occur when he practices self discipline. Putting the unsaved lifestyle aside and loving people, as Jesus loved, enhances one's outreach to people. Trusting in the Lord will make the soul winner what he needs to become. Continuing in prayer and involving one's self in soul winning, coupled with an openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit, will provide one with the strength to overcome his personal problems and to become an effective soul winner.

The fourth and last area of self discipline, though related to the first three, includes the price which a soul winner must pay. If one desires to be a soul winner, he must not overlook the personal sacrifice required in the process. He will need a lifestyle consistent with Christian living. He will need to make soul-winning a priority in his life. Prayer will need to become a lifestyle, and faithfulness to a local church for personal growth and development must be a matter of service to one's Savior and Lord.

No particular order exists for incorporating these four areas of self discipline into one's lifestyle. Any of these areas which is made a part of one's life will change the soul winner forever. These activities of self discipline, if followed, will change one sufficiently that he may become a soul winner and hear "well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matt 25.21).

CHAPTER 5

A DISCIPLESHIP PLAN

A Planned Program of Discipling

To have a full program of evangelism in a local church, all departments within the church organization need to be alert to thinking and doing evangelism. The Sunday School, Discipleship Training, Music Ministry, Women's Missionary Union (WMU), and Brotherhood all have a part to perform in reaching the lost people through their specific activities. The leaders of these organizations should be constantly motivated to think in terms of reaching the lost for the Lord and Savior. The Great Commission should be a major part of each department's mission, if not its primary mission. Below is a monthly evangelistic calendar which combines a number of departments with evangelism activities each month.

January

The new year is probably a good time to increase the evangelism of inactive church members. This may be a ministry time since some may have fallen away by neglect. Beginning the new year with evangelistic activities could develop into a continued program of outreach for the year.

February

This is a good month for evangelistic training for soul winning using Discipleship Training people. Trainers must remember this emphasis is on going out soul winning. They should provide instruction in soul winning during different times of the day so all age groups who have an interest can witness.

March

WMU, Brotherhood, Music Ministry, Sunday School, and

Discipleship Training departments should do special promotions with strong encouragement on outreach to the lost community. Going out is the key in each of these groups.

April

A new church orientation program to familiarize new converts with the need to seek lost people for Christ may be timely and may provide a need for continued church orientation or soul winning instruction for new converts.

May

In southern states this may be a good month for an evangelical crusade, revival, or soul winning campaign.

June

Summer is a good time for a neighborhood survey to determine religious affiliation, encourage wayward members, evangelize the lost, and minister to the community.

July

The holiday for independence is a good time for outreach to the community through a special Independence Day celebration. This celebration may combine the themes of freedom with that of Christ's setting men free from sin.

August

Before school gets started again, a Vacation Bible School should be effectively utilized to bring children to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The pastor will arrange baptisms with parents of the children who made decisions, as soon as the calendar will allow.

September

September is a good time for Discipleship Training leaders to contact people who attend Sunday School but do not attend Discipleship Training. The purpose of the contact is to determine what programs of evangelistic training are of interest to them. The contact may encourage the Sunday School attenders to attend Discipleship Training.

October

October or the first month after promotion would be a good time for the Sunday School teachers and officers to compare their classroom attendance with that of the total church in each class age group. New prospects for Sunday School evangelism are found with this method.

November

This would be a good time for the youth of the church to have a youth-led revival. The time just before the holidays can be used to renew youths' hearts for the lost. Active participation by the youth in preparation and planning for reaching lost youth is essential.

December

This month is especially important for reemphasizing why one celebrates Christmas at all. Sharing the gospel with the lost at Christmas time could be the greatest gift a church could give to a person.

The Evangelistic Revival

In addition to a monthly evangelistic calendar which combines a number of departments with evangelism activities, the church should consider an evangelistic revival effort. This evangelistic revival effort may be achieved by following the format which follows.

Revival preparation requires a considerable amount of hard work and must be accomplished with deep concern for the spiritual welfare of people. A recognition that a revival is just a revival without the leading of the Holy Spirit will help one to understand that Christians are working to bring souls into the kingdom of God and that reliance on the leadership of the Holy Spirit is imperative.

Leavell breaks revival preparation into six parts. These parts he calls "organize," "visualize," "agonize," "evangelize," "utilize," and "criticize." Under each of these parts are sub-parts. Most of what is needed for revival is found in the first part called "organize."¹⁸

The first step in any revival must be prayer. Prayer for an annual revival or prayer for a revival that is planned for the near future will be the most important part of the planning process for holding a revival. Prayer can not be over stated. Every means, time, and energy should be devoted to this cause if a revival is to take place. Without prayer little or no revival will occur.

The first thing after prayer is to allow the pastor the privilege or responsibility to select the revival preacher and the song leader. Ideally, the church pastor would personally know the selected revival team. In any case, selection of the team must be made on the basis of prior successful revivals and the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

After prayer the church is to determine an appropriate time in the calendar to schedule the revival. Finding time in everyone's schedules to be "revived" may be one of the difficulties of holding a revival.

The third item which needs attention is how to strike a match to get the revival fires burning. The pastor needs to endorse the event at every opportunity. The people need to share with the community the vision they have for this special event.

The last aspect to consider in revival is to enlist as many committee leaders as possible. The more individuals are directly involved in preparing for the revival, the greater the opportunity for success. The committee leaders should enlist as many workers as necessary to make their committee function. Committees may

18Leavell, Evangelism, 146-53.

be needed for prayer, ushers, counselors, music, food, and outreach. Other committees and their leaders can be added as they are needed.

Along with prayer as a key element must come the deep realization of human need. The vision of a lost world which is to be reached for Christ should cause a reflection on how one would reach so many. Setting goals which are attainable and which can be recognized when accomplished is a good approach to this part of revival preparation. Those involved in the preparation should get a vision and a goal.

Self-preparation is important. Those individuals who would see a revival in their church must catch the vision, and their hearts must be revived long before the days of the revival. Lost persons should be cultivated for Christ long before the revival preacher arrives.

After the revival, every effort should be made by all departments and people in the church to assimilate the new converts. Making disciples is the key to church growth after a revival, not returning to the same old ways.

Last, evaluation of the planning, preparation, and preaching must occur to determine if the revival was successful in reaching the vision of the people. Hard questions should not be avoided, and answers should be sought. One question should be, "Was there a revival or were they just meetings?"

Communication

Communication about Christ to a lost friend or loved one is the key to bringing people to Jesus. The usual method of communication is the interview. A good beginning for the communication or interview process is to have an evangelistic preparation format or outline. An evangelistic preparation format, or "how to get started with the soul-winning interview," begins with relationship building and a demonstration of a soul winner's lifestyle. One of the most important approaches to beginning an interview is for one to remember to be himself. Common sense and empathy are essential in the soul winning experience.

The need for prayer on behalf of the lost friend cannot be

overlooked. Prior to the interview between a soul winner and a lost friend, a prayer asking for the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit is essential. The soul winner may wish to enlist a companion who is a confident prayer warrior to assist with the visit. Identification at the home is important. Today people are especially careful whom they allow into their homes. Soul winners simply must tell the family who they are and that they are visiting from a particular church which they identify for the family. Soul winners must ask permission to come in to see the individual they desire to lead to the Lord. While in the home, the visiting soul winners should pay close attention to any courtesies which they may extend in order to be gracious guests.

If the soul winner is asked to wait for the lost friend, this time would provide an opportunity to get acquainted with others present. When asked to sit down, the major soul winner should attempt to place himself in an eye-to-eye relationship to obtain proper responses. Demonstrating concern for the lost friend for whom one has been praying is a good step to take toward presenting Jesus. When presenting the message, one should make every attempt to ensure that the message is the only thing which is heard. The soul winner should request that any extraneous noises be eliminated before beginning the announcement of why he is there. This would include turning off the television or quieting other distractions.

The best approach is probably to use a reserved demeanor. The soul winner should ask questions which the individual can answer without much difficulty. The soul winner should come directly to the point of his visit. One should not sidetrack the soul winning attempt for the sake of conversation.

Some beginning soul winners are fearful because they believe they do not know what to say to the lost person. Some tips for getting past this stumbling block are suggested. First, one must assume the best of all people. Asking a question concerning previous church membership or a conversion experience may cause the individual to discuss his lack of church affiliation or lack of soul winning knowledge. One should seek rather to elicit a response which can be used to continue the questioning. The individual should be encouraged to tell about his relationship with

Jesus. If the individual is not sure he has a personal relationship with Jesus, he will say so. This interview is simply conversation, an exchanging of information among two friends. Debate is never soul winning.

If a previous church background exists, then the soul winner should pursue present church involvement, or the lack thereof. If no previous church involvement exists, the soul winner could introduce the soul winning discussion by asking if the individual would be interested in hearing what church involvement entails. Often a person will express an interest in knowing more about the church in an attempt to learn more about Jesus. Church membership questions can be answered by stipulating the first requirement of church membership is to be born again. The answer given concerning being born again will be the basis for continued communication. Being born again is the sole purpose of the visit.

A personal testimony is one method of witnessing. A Christian's testimony and experience may enable the listener to determine whether or not he has had a similar experience. Hopefully, the individual will desire to have such an experience. One must relax, for God's love speaks for itself.

During the interview, one should attempt to ask questions which will lead the lost friend in saying yes to Jesus. Eliminating all extraneous variables, avoiding discussions about theology, doctrine, or questions that begin with "what if," and avoiding debates on any personal opinions keep the interview focused on the task of sharing Christ with the individual. Most excuses can be overcome, but the interviewer must be prepared to end the interview should the person appear to be unwilling to cooperate. Soul winners should strive for the decision after presenting Christ. One should, however, allow the Holy Spirit to do His work on all persons present. Soul winners present the gospel, the Holy Spirit convicts the lost person, and Christ redeems the lost soul. Interviewers are just the messengers crying in the wilderness.

A sincere appeal is necessary, and however one gives it, it must be from the heart and never from the head. A heart-felt appeal goes much farther than a memorized, head knowledge, recited outline.

The interviewer should ask permission to pray after a decision is made and before leaving the home. Scheduling a follow-up meeting for discipling and for gathering information is encouraged. A return visit could result in more than the initial soul being saved for the individual; he may influence his whole family and many friends.

In the final analysis of an evangelistic visit or interview, the desire to see one saved is accomplished with properly communicating the need of the lost. Communicating a feeling may be the best approach to the interview. In this approach one just relates his own life changing experience. Sharing what the Scriptures say in one's own words is used by some soul winners. If the individual wants to see the actual words, the interviewer may locate the reference and let the lost friend read it for himself. Holding God's Word has convicting power! To communicate Christ to a lost soul one may use the following plan.

First, the individual should be made aware of the reason why one would discuss something so personal with him. The soul winner needs to impart to the individual that he cares where the lost person will spend eternity. The Bible says everyone sins and that without forgiveness, the penalty for sin is death (Rom 3.23; Rom 6.23). Next, Jesus paid the penalty for sin with His death, burial, and resurrection (John 3.16). One can be saved by accepting this gift of eternal life because Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice (Eph 2.8). In addition, one must believe in his heart that Jesus died for his sins that he might have eternal life (John 3.18). The individual who repents of his sin can be saved (Luke 13.3). Then, the soul winner should call for a verbal statement of repentance and turning to God through Jesus Christ (Rom 10.9-10). Last, if the individual trusts Christ, the soul winner should follow-up this interview with an explanation of commitment and church membership (Rom 12.1-2). The discipling process begins here.

Assimilation

New converts can be taught the essentials of how to live the Christian life. These essentials should include the development of

a prayer life, how to study the Bible, sharing their faith, and finding their gifts to aid in their places of ministry. This time of training has been described as providing care and nurture to a new born child. New born Christians need to be given the appropriate encouragement if they are to mature and grow in their Christian life. This growth is a life-long process and needs a solid foundation.

Most new Christians grow and mature because someone took an interest in them. They had developed a relationship with another Christian who showed care and understanding for them as a person who needed Jesus. Converts need a continuing relationship with someone who can provide a caring atmosphere for the development of their Christian life.

Some of the ways that this relationship is developed have to do with the willingness of the church to fulfill its role in the discipling process. The starting place for any church-related, Christian-life development must begin with the pastor. When the pastor is responsible for finding and building relationships between people, then discipling begins as a priority of the church.

The pastor has several ways of accomplishing his role. One way is to visit with each new member as quickly as he can after the individual joins the church. The pastor may follow this visit with a letter which could contain literature concerning the church, or even the baptismal certificate. He can be the one who delivers a book which is bought by the church for each new member. Another way would be to have a monthly meeting for new members. This could be a reception in which new church members will have time to meet other members on an informal basis. The pastor needs to take the time to discuss the essentials of the Christian life with the new member. A little instruction from the pastor in how to live a Christian life will begin the assimilation process of the new member.

Other leaders within the church can show an interest in the new member's Christian-life development. The deacons need to seize this opportunity to meet with this individual. It may be that in some churches this is accomplished by a formal plan. A formal plan could be the assignment of a deacon to minister to the new member until the new member is able to minister to others. An

informal plan could be a contact from a fellow church member to show he is pleased with the new member's decision to follow Christ.

The Sunday School is a strong part of many churches. Contact by a Sunday School teacher to every member of the new member's family would show a concern for the entire family and would emphasize Bible study. This works well when a personal visit is scheduled. Also, this allows for a question and answer period prior to attending Sunday School.

Assigning an individual or family to be a friend or an associate to the new member and family is a good way to handle the teaching of a new convert. These people will provide answers to questions, some unasked, and can be guides through what everyone seems to know and understand except the new member.

Formal orientation and acclimation into the new church should be started as quickly as possible after conversion. This orientation can cover all the necessary items of prayer life, studying the Bible, sharing one's faith, and finding a place to serve in ministry.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Great men of God have been actively seeking to make disciples for centuries throughout the world. For them making disciples was a basic requirement, a requirement to follow the Master's example. The basic requirement was considered a responsibility to heed the Lord's command which states, "As you are going, make disciples." This paraphrase of the Great Commission is derived from the translation of the Greek word for "go" which actually translates "as you go" or "since you are going."¹⁹ As one lives, making disciples or intentional evangelism becomes what a person is, is becoming, and will be. Effective making of disciples is not accomplished by accident, but by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit's indwelling of saints taking up their crosses and following Jesus.

The making of disciples can be accomplished when one accepts the responsibility for the unreached. The responsibility to reach the unreached is clear when one's focus is placed on people first. Recognizing the plight of the unsaved and making a total commitment is necessary. To make disciples one must adopt a philosophy which entails the making of disciples. One must commit to the responsibility to reach the lost with a spirit of joy and enthusiasm and trust God for a clear vision of the plight of the unsaved. Reaching the unreached can be done.

The making of disciples has often been compared to fishing. Fishing has become complicated since Christ first commanded men to follow Him and become fishers of men. Fishermen seem to spend an inordinate amount of time in checking equipment and learning new methods of improving the catch. Men have focused on the fishing aspect of Jesus' command to be fishers of men and have totally disregarded His command to follow Him. Jesus' method of making disciples was to continue to call other men to become fishers of men for His sake. A disciple maker needs to quit preparing to fish and to start catching souls for the

¹⁹Gene Mims, Kingdom Principles for Church Growth (Nashville: Convention Press, 1994), 22.

Savior. When one follows Jesus as a fisher of men, the Holy Spirit of God tells him where to put down the nets for lost souls. The time has come for fishermen to be where the fish are, and this can only be accomplished by following Jesus, not by fishing.

The harvest is truly the best analogy for making disciples, because the skill required to harvest is not at a level of fishing. Christ said the fields are already white unto harvest. What Christ wants is for workers to harvest the crop of new Christians ready for eternal life. Christ is asking for harvesters. Christians can be used of the Master to make disciples, but they must be thrust out as laborers into the fields white unto harvest. Men have become too busy fishing! When one goes fishing, one may or may not catch anything. Generally more energy is expended in preparation for fishing than the actual catching of a single fish. Harvesting is different, for one can reap what one sows or what others have sown. Whether one elects to fish or to reap, the key to making disciples is in "follow me," not in "fishers of men." Following Jesus leaves no room for confusion.

Confusion abounds today on the growing of churches. Confusion need not exist. Christ is growing His Church on a relationship with Him. He is building His church to be one body in Christ. Christ is building relationships with Himself and between other believers. A relationship is founded on people, not places. Jesus' ministry focused on people and their need for repentance. Disciple makers need not focus on the building up of numbers in churches but in the building up of the body in Christ. The Holy Spirit in the early church implemented the plan of souls saved and added to the church daily. The church to which souls were added was the church in Christ.

Christians need to grasp the urgency of building relationships. Christians can make disciples by establishing relationships with those they do not know. A relationship begins with a demonstration of a caring attitude and continues by cultivating friendships where others' needs and concerns are shared. Jesus always met the needs of those around Him. He always attempted to establish a relationship with them, and He extended to them the option to stay as He found them or to become what He would make them.

The maker of disciples needs to focus on people. He needs to model the behavior of soul winning for others to see. Soul winners need to treat people with respect. When focusing on people for the purpose of making disciples, several steps should be considered. The first step is to recognize the importance of being a disciple. The call to be a disciple is only extended to a child of God. The privilege to make disciples and to be powered by the Holy Spirit of God should make one rejoice.

The next step to focusing on people is to make a commitment to be a disciple. Soul winners must stop teaching and learning and start going and doing. If one is going to make disciples, he can no longer do business as usual; he must do unusual business. A disciple must demonstrate his commitment. Words without actions go unheard. Commitment to making disciples is reflected in souls saved for the Savior. One may need to set attainable goals that reflect his commitment. Perhaps a small goal for being a maker of disciples would be one lost person led to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ in one year. That goal is achievable by one who is committed to being a disciple and who desires to make disciples.

The last step, which can produce more than one soul a year becoming a disciple, is to cultivate a reputation for being a disciple. That means one must work at being a disciple. A title is not necessarily indicative of one's actions. All believers are called Christians, but not all Christians are Christ-like. All Christians do not follow or emulate their Master's behavior by making disciples. Everywhere Jesus went He made disciples.

The Bible says "where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov 29.19). Perhaps what is needed is an examination of a vision which should be an expectation of a completed action. A Christian's vision is to make disciples and to see souls saved. To accomplish the vision of making disciples, one must seize the opportunities to share Christ with the lost world. Only by participation in making the vision a reality will one discover that visions do come true. Better yet, one will discover a new joy, or euphoria, the opposite of perishing.

Having an influence on individuals who need Christ is a meaningful experience. One can have a negative influence, or one

can have an influence which is filled with enthusiasm. A positive attitude which exhibits enthusiasm and excitement should be connected with being a disciple for Christ. If one has been made a disciple of Christ, then he has been salvaged from hell, or has been given a heavenly home. He has been provided with the power of God through the Holy Spirit of God and has been created a new creature in Christ Jesus. That should make him enthusiastic enough to influence a lost soul for the Savior, or the disciple needs to have a thorough examination of his own salvation. When one is given all the gifts of salvation, he becomes extremely difficult to stop from telling others about Christ.

Evidence of one's Christianity is productivity in the harvest of souls. One should be aggressive with the demonstrations of God's power to make disciples. The Christian should have a persistent desire to focus on people and influence lives for Christ. A believer should systematically attempt making disciples at every opportunity. The accomplishment of making just one disciple should be so wonderful that one can think of doing nothing less than making disciples.

The soul winner should devise a plan of action for making disciples. One should not form a committee or group but should be a committee or group of one. He must concentrate on the basics, have a willingness to stand alone, and be confident enough in his vision to challenge tradition. The soul winner will start meeting spiritual needs. He will demonstrate an unwavering commitment to seeing souls saved as he develops a vision which includes a passion to obey the will of God. The soul winner will make his vision a reality by having the courage to perform as he dreams. Too often Christians devise ministry action plans just to see numbers grow in the church. The right ministry action plan should be devised to see people grow. A plan which includes increased ministry, increased evangelism, increased relationships will result in increases in personal soul winning and the making of disciples.

The Holy Spirit enables man to know God. Man can know God by being guided by the Holy Spirit of God into all truth. The Bible states, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things of

God; freely given to us of God" (1 Cor 2.12). The personality of the Holy Spirit is as complex as God. The Holy Spirit's personality is exhibited by the acts which He performs--regeneration, bearing witness of Jesus, and the convicting of lost people of their sin (see John 3.5; John 15.26; and John 16.8-11). The work of the Holy Spirit in the affairs of non-believers is to accomplish His purpose in them. His work is to convict the world of sin and to bring people to the need of salvation. The Holy Spirit is active in the life of the believer to fill, to guide, to empower, and to teach. In filling the believer the Holy Spirit provides spiritual growth and maturation. He guides Christians to walk in and be led by the Spirit. His empowerment of the believer is provided to overcome the flesh and to live in the Spirit: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zeph 4.6). The Holy Spirit leads the believer in all truth and cautions him not to resist by disobedience (Acts 7.51). Believers are to be obedient to the Spirit Who speaks only of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit goes before soul winners and guides them to speak of Jesus Christ to lost persons and to share the Spirit's truth of salvation.

Disciples are people who commit their lives to Christ and follow Him and serve Him in the task of making other disciples who will do likewise. A disciple is one who prays, serves, and witnesses. He is one who seeks a biblical basis for living and develops a lifestyle which will be pleasing to God. This person practices Christian witnessing in both physical and spiritual activities. The true disciple of Christ is ever seeking to apply the power of the Holy Spirit in leading souls to Christ and making disciples.

A disciple who makes disciples will not suffer defeat through a negative mind set. Always searching with attention and confidence for sinners, a disciple expects and receives God's blessings. This individual has broken free of the beliefs that one must be familiar with the technical and theoretical aspects of soul winning. He actually lives for the real, practical, and vital dynamics of living in a spiritual realm where man finds God. He is willing to allow the hearers of the Word to make an immediate renunciation of sin and to come to a full acceptance of Jesus as Savior and Lord.

The apostle Paul believed that Christians should be ready to contend earnestly for the faith. The action was to be an experience of joy in sacrifice and service to the Lord. Disciples were called to be good witnesses for the Lord in every place and at every opportunity. All disciples vary in their zeal in the work of soul winning. They vary even to time of the year or time of their life. Given this variance of zeal for the work of soul winning, Christians often need a fresh and earnest reminder that the fields are always ripe unto harvest and that God is always calling for laborers to His fields.

The early church without buildings did not make disciples of new converts by inviting them to church. In fact, the work of the church is not to do church work but to do people work. The need in churches today is not to keep the church going, but to keep the people going after the lost. The church has to be of God because it goes on in spite of the many enemies and in spite of the many inconsistent representatives within. Because one is a representative of Jesus Christ with the power of the Holy Spirit to guide lost souls to saving grace, the Christian's prayer, intentions, and actions are focused on his becoming an extraordinary soul winner by making disciples. The soul winner must give up fishing and start harvesting. The fields are ripe for the reaping; therefore, the soul winner will follow the Spirit of God into the harvest of souls.

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Sermons for Sundays.

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