

ARE YOU TRYING TO SELL CHURCH

OR ARE YOU

TRAINING DISCIPLES HOW TO SHARE
JESUS?

BY JOHN HENDEE

INTRODUCTION

How many ways can I say it? You are about to see.

This book is a compilation of articles I have written over the course of a couple years about the subject mentioned in the title. Because of that you will find quite a bit of repetition.

So pardon the repetition.

There are many on the front lines of Kingdom work who get it, who are doing it. God bless them. I pray that many more will get it and get with it.

I'm just sharing one man's experience, observations, and story. I want to help. I see a huge problem we have in the church, and it must be fixed. **Fewer than 1 percent of our churches have any ongoing training in effective personal evangelism/disciple making (it's the same thing).** That just astounds me. We have preachers, missionaries, leaders in local congregations, and Christian non-profits who have not been prepared in how to effectively share Jesus with others.

I don't have the gift of evangelism, but I've learned how to effectively share the Gospel with a lot of people by using the four "It's All About Relationship" presentations.

I have failed in many ways in seeking to carry out this mission, but I keep moving ahead. As I read recently, "Do you know why the rear view mirror is so small compared to our front windshield? So we will spend less time looking backwards and focus on what is ahead." We all fail. We must learn from that and move forward in what we have been called and commissioned by the King to do: make disciples.

After I became a Christian, I was introduced to "in your face" styles of personal evangelism. I didn't like them, but it was all I knew or was shown. Later, I learned a much better way to do it.

The way I have learned and seek to practice fulfills the words of Jesus to his disciples when he was sending out 70 of them to preach. He told them to be "crafty as a serpent and gentle as a dove." Matt 10:16

I have and am learning how to practice that. Being "crafty" is being smart and alert to the way we approach people for Jesus. We are told to be "Gentle" in the way we do it. That I can do. Some act as if Jesus told his disciples to be as "gentle as a serpent and as crafty as a dove." That's backwards.

The approach and lessons I have developed also help us practice what we are taught in I Peter 3:15. I'll address that in one of the writings. There are many benefits to this

approach, which I will list later in the book, too. I will also share how to plan and carry out training and how to use the IAAR presentations.

While I don't claim that these presentations are the only way, it is a good, effective way to share the Gospel with those interested in listening. It is a good way to make disciples and carry out an effective style of relational, personal evangelism.

If you have questions, want to communicate with me, and/or are interested in some form of the training, let me know.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
RUFFLING FEATHERS.....	7
ONE-TRACK MIND	8
RELATIONAL EVANGELISM	9
HOW NOT TRAINING OUR PEOPLE TO EFFECTIVELY SHARE THE GOSPEL IS DAMAGING THE CHURCH	10
HOW NOT DOING THIS IS HURTING THE WORLD	11
WRITING ONE	12
WHAT IS MOST REWARDING FOR YOU?.....	12
WRITING TWO.....	14
WRITING THREE.....	17
A DEEPER EXAMINATION WITH A QUESTIONNAIRE	17
ARE WE DOING THIS?	18
WRITING FIVE	21
ARE WE DISCIPLING THE WRONG PEOPLE?	21
WRITING SIX	28
WHATEVER BECAME OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRAINING?	28
WRITING SEVEN.....	34
CURSE OF THE FOUR WALL MENTALITY	34
WRITING EIGHT	38
WE LIVE IN A CONVERSION-CONSCIOUS WORLD	38
SOMETHING IS SERIOUSLY WRONG.....	42
WRITING TWELVE.....	45
THE QUESTION I SELDOM GET AN ANSWER TO FROM CHRISTIAN LEADERS.....	45
WRITING THIRTEEN	48
DO WE HAVE IT BACKWARDS?	48
A SIMPLE QUIZ	53
WRITING FIFTEEN	55
SELLING THE CHURCH	55
WRITING SIXTEEN.....	58

WRITING SEVENTEEN	64
HYENA EVANGELISM	64
WRITING EIGHTEEN.....	67
HOW TO GET OUT THERE	67
WRITING NINETEEN.....	74
TELEMARKETING CHURCH GROWTH.....	74
WRITING TWENTY	81
OUR SHRINKING WORLD.....	81
WRITING TWENTY ONE	87
0.5-PERCENT ISSUE: CHURCH GROWTH AND EVANGELISM MODELS	87
WRITING TWENTY TWO.....	90
IT HAS SO MUCH POTENTIAL: CAN YOU IMAGINE?	90
WRITING TWENTY THREE.....	93
I'M INTERESTED TO HEAR PREACHERS TALK ABOUT THE PEOPLE Who:.....	93
WRITING TWENTY FOUR.....	96
HAND-GRENADE EVANGELISM AND EVANGELISTIC RAIDS.....	96
WRITING TWENTY FIVE	99
BENEFITS OF THE IAAR	99
WRITING TWENTY SIX	101
HOW TO DRAMATICALLY INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE MAKING DECISIONS FOR JESUS.	101
WRITING TWENTY SEVEN.....	102
I WAS SKEPTICAL.....	102
WRITING TWENTY EIGHT	104
WRITING TWENTY NINE	108
COMMENTS OF SOME WHO HAVE BEEN USING THE IAAR FOR YEARS	108

RUFFLING FEATHERS

I have realized lately that I am ruffling the feathers of many as I address this issue.

Hey, first I don't know it all. I don't do it all right. I'm not perfect. I'm still learning. But I do believe much of what I'm saying is right on and needs to be addressed. Take the good from what I say and leave the rest.

But I am ruffling feathers. I came up with this saying: "It is better to have ruffled feathers than to have never touched the bird (issue)." The goal is not ruffling but to get the "bird" out of the nest and flying as it was created to!

And I'm conscious of the fact that I don't want to "ruffle" because of my manner or way of addressing the subject. I don't want to call attention to myself but to the problem and solutions. That would be a distraction from the topic. If the message RUFFLES then that will be good. And hopefully the ruffling will result in positive changes. So with good ruffling intentions, I'll move ahead.

Personal evangelism training is dead in most churches today.

Preachers, leaders, missionaries, etc., I have ONE key question for you. And I'm going to address it many times, in many ways.

How many disciples do you train a year how to effectively share the Gospel with those they know?

I can't say I'm not interested in some of these other issues, but for the sake of emphasis, I am not going to ask you: How many you baptized last year. How many were added to your congregation. What your "growth" rate is. About your new facility, staff, programs, etc.

Some of those things can really cover up the reality of WHAT WE AREN'T DOING.

Here is the one subject I'm focusing on for the rest of my life.

How many disciples did you train last year in how to effectively share the Gospel with those they know? What is your goal for this year? How are you going to do it?

If you are doing this kind of training, is it a one-time class, sermon, seminar or is it an ongoing, continuous effort?

I am going to hit this over and over and over in these writings. It is like beating a drum with a repetitive rhythm over and over. I guess I will till the message is heard.

ONE-TRACK MIND

I hope you can understand what I'm trying to do. I had one purpose in writing all these articles. I am not against preachers or Christian leaders. I am for them. Someone could misread what I've written to mean that I am against building facilities, hiring staffs, and building programs for local congregations, or mega churches. That is not the case, and it is not my point.

I have a ONE-TRACK MIND on this subject, and I'm trying to address it. I feel we are way off track and we are losing ground for it. We have stopped training, preparing, or equipping Christians how to effectively share the Good News with those they know and meet along life's journey. We are doing everything but that. So if the shoe fits, wear it.

If you are the kind of person who is afraid to go to the doctor's office for a checkup for fear he is going to poke around and hit some spots that hurt, then don't read this. If you go to the doctor anyway knowing that there might be something wrong that you'd rather not know about, but you know it could save your life to know about it and try and fix it, then read on. I'm poking around. And some of it might be hard to take. Some of it might be painful as in OUCH!

We have a challenge to face and at times don't even see it, much less take any steps to fix, correct, or heal it.

Hoping to see progress for the Kingdom

John Hendee

RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

Following is an amazing testimony of Nabeel, a Muslim who became a Christian. I recommend you read the book, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*. It is very interesting. Here he shares his observation of “street evangelism” or “in your face” evangelism on the spot with a stranger with whom you have no history.

*Unfortunately, I have found that many Christians think of evangelism the same way, **foisting Christian beliefs on strangers in chance encounters**. The problem with this approach is that the gospel requires a radical life change, and not many people are about to listen to strangers telling them to change the way they live. What do they know about others' lives? On the other hand if a true friend shares the exact same message with heartfelt sincerity, speaking to specific circumstances and struggles then the message is heard loud and clear.*

Effective evangelism requires relationships. *There are very few exceptions. In my case, I knew of no Christian who truly cared about me, no one who had been a part of my life through thick and thin. I had plenty of Christian acquaintances, and I'm sure they would have been my friends if I had become a Christian, but that kind of friendship is conditional. There were none that I knew who cared about me unconditionally.*

Since no Christian cared about me, I did not care about their message.

While I don't have to be a long-time friend with someone to offer to share the four lessons about Jesus I use and train others in how to use, earning the right to be heard is vital. That can be accomplished in 30 minutes with someone just met or it might take 10 years before they are interested in listening to the Good News presented in the four IAAR presentations. In the 8 week course I teach online, I train Christians how to offer and then present the four lessons over a four-week period. They are low-key, respectful, and powerful lessons. If you are interested in knowing about this training, write me at:

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And I'll send you the information.

HOW NOT TRAINING OUR PEOPLE TO EFFECTIVELY SHARE THE GOSPEL IS DAMAGING THE CHURCH

In many ways the church has lost its focus. It has lost its direction. It is distracted from its mission.

It is too often focused on itself while it thinks it is being evangelistic.

It is investing a lot of time and energy and money on non-essentials. We are very BUSY but ignoring one of our highest priorities.

We are not carrying out the great commission as effectively as we could be.

Generally speaking, personal evangelism training is not being done in our Christian colleges, churches, by mission agencies, or other ministries.

There is a lot of talk about discipleship, but 98 percent of what is being done under that name or banner is what we are doing with those who are already disciples.

There are some who teach the following in their classes on evangelism. "Here are three or four different ways you can do personal evangelism. Pick out the one you like, that fits you and learn how to use it." That is usually very ineffective. Most of the students don't learn any of the methods recommended on their own.

So we have preachers, leaders, missionaries, and everyday Christians who know how to:

Serve in ministries in a local congregation

Help plant new churches

Help grow congregations

And go on the mission field

Go and do nice things for people around the world

but for the most part, they still don't know how to effectively share the Good News one-on-one with the people they know and meet in their life journey. And this does great damage to the church and what Jesus wants it to be doing.

HOW NOT DOING THIS IS HURTING THE WORLD

Well it is rather obvious. Most of the lost who need to hear about Jesus don't hear about Jesus. While the church is waiting for them to "go to church" so they can hear about Jesus, most of them will be found **waiting for the church to go to them** to tell them about Jesus in a more agreeable way than the old "attack and condemn" methods.

Most of the world rejects Jesus because they don't like church or aren't interested in it and will never show up at church activities. So they throw out Jesus, too. They throw out the baby with the bathwater even though they never really hear and understand what the "baby" is all about.

The waters have been muddied. Many have been turned off to Jesus because of the church. The world watches some of the weird TV preachers, they watch Church leaders "fall" in sin, they see Christian friends who aren't living the life, they watch the infighting of churches, they hear about all the cults and religions and are so confused they dump it all.

They see or hear of manmade rituals, routines, rules, and regulations that some churches and preachers teach and preach in the name of Christianity that have nothing to do with Jesus. And they turn away. The waters have been muddied, and they aren't interested in "swimming" in those muddied waters.

Rather than receive the Good News from Christians, they more often feel their judgments, condemnations, and criticisms for their lifestyles or thinking. They turn and walk away.

In the end they don't hear the message. And that is so tragic. And the Christians they do know don't know how to sit down with them and share a well-thought-out presentation of what the Christian faith is all about, much less how to bring it up in the first place. They aren't prepared to do so.

WRITING ONE

WHAT IS MOST REWARDING FOR YOU?

Check off on the list below the **five most rewarding experiences you have in your Christian** life or walk. You can add ANYTHING ELSE you would include in the top five not found on the list, in the OTHER blanks down below.

- Attending a worship experience/service
- Attending Christian events
- Attending Christian concerts
- Going to a camp or retreat
- Going on a short-term mission trip
- Helping in a community service project
- Praying
- Giving in the offering
- Working with children, youth, etc.
- Fasting
- Reading the Bible
- Being part of a worship team, music group
- Giving advice or counsel to someone
- Participating in S.S. or a home group
- Other _____
- Other _____
- Other _____

OK, I confess. It is a trick check list.

I intentionally left “sharing the Gospel or Good News with another person” off. Why? Because if you have done it or are doing it, it is one of the most rewarding and exciting things going on in your Christian life and you will add it to the OTHER.

If you aren't, you likely won't even think of it. If you aren't and it is seen on the list many would check it thinking it should be a top five even though for them it isn't.

So it is sort of a trick. But what does it maybe show? That many are missing out on one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences in the Christian life, to say nothing of what they have been commanded to do. They are seeking to be spiritual and faithful to Jesus in many different ways. They are seeking spiritual experiences and are maybe very busy in the church, but they are still missing one of the highlights of their life. They are not helping carry out the Great Commission and the calling God has given us to make disciples from the pool of unbelievers around us.

WRITING TWO

PLEASE STOP TELLING YOUR PEOPLE TO WITNESS,

IF

YOU AREN'T GOING TO TRAIN THEM

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY DO IT

Soldiers are often commanded to GO AND FIGHT, but first they are trained and equipped or outfitted to do so.

Teams are sent to the field or court to GO AND PLAY, but first they are trained and equipped or outfitted to do so.

Sales forces for all kinds of companies are sent out and told to GO AND SELL, but first they are trained and equipped or outfitted to do so.

Police and paramedics are SENT OUT to protect and rescue people but first they are trained and equipped to do so.

Christians are to be sent out to GO, AND MAKE DISCIPLES, **but seldom are they trained and equipped, much less outfitted to do so.**

That must change.

Preachers often tell Christians to Go WITNESS.

And what are the people told that means?

“Walk across the room. Get to know people.”

“Be friendly and loving. Do nice things for them.”

“Share your story as to how Jesus has changed your life.”

“Invite them to our activities, programs or special events” so the general, owner, coach or leader can tell them about what we are offering or selling. Jesus.

You wouldn't send an army out that didn't know how to do what they were commanded to do.

You wouldn't send a team out that didn't know how to play the game they were going to play.

You wouldn't send a sales force out to sell your product or service if they didn't know how to find prospects, make a good connection, see if they have a need for your product, and if they are interested in it and then effectively present your product and try and close the deal, or make the sale.

BUT WE TELL CHRISTIANS TO GO without having been trained, equipped, and prepared for what lies ahead. So they don't GO. They aren't prepared. Oh, I think it is fair to say most of them know and love Jesus, but most are totally unprepared to carry out the task their leaders tell them to do. Many of those leaders aren't even doing it themselves outside of the congregational setting.

Following is part of an email from a Christian woman to another Christian woman. The other lady had asked what she could be praying about for the other. This is part of her answer. I think she speaks for LOTS of Christians.

We all need prayer and thank you so much for asking. My request to you is that I know how to tell others about Jesus.

I'm so backward about that and

I hate myself for not doing my job.

I love Jesus so much and am thrilled having him in my life and he always helps me when I ask and yet I don't give him to others.

*I know we can tell others by setting a good example but it **still isn't enough** and of course I am not always good at setting the example.*

*I interject God into some conversations or emails but **it's not enough**. I pray about it sometimes but I don't think of it every day.*

So please pray that I know how to tell others about Jesus and any suggestions are welcome. We started "community groups" at church last year and I attend the one in my area every Saturday evening and I mentioned this and some felt the same, which kinda relieved me, that I'm not the only one in the world who feels this way.

But I still need to do something about it.

SO, my point is, please stop telling your people to go and do something you aren't willing to do yourself and that you aren't willing to start an ongoing, continuous program

of training for them in how to do it and do it well. They need to be trained in an effective way to go, to share, and to close the deal.

WRITING THREE

A DEEPER EXAMINATION WITH A QUESTIONNAIRE

Take your time and fill this out. Be honest, you have nothing to lose.

LEADERS PERSONAL EVANGELISM QUESTIONNAIRE

- Do you believe it is the responsibility and an extremely high priority for every Christian to help make disciples?
- How does a Christian do that?
- What does witnessing mean to you?
- What role does a congregation play in all of this?
- Do you feel you are prepared to share the Gospel effectively with other people one-on-one?
- How often do you do that with people outside of the church who have never attended something at your church?
- How many people have you led to the Lord in the last five years as a result of your sharing the Gospel with them one-on-one? I'm not talking about how many responded to a public invitation to preaching, a movie, concert, etc.
- Do you believe it is the responsibility of Christian leaders to train or prepare Christians how to effectively share the Gospel with others?
- How does your congregation/organization do that?
- How many have been trained in that in the last five years.
- Are they in turn involved in training others?
- Does your church send people on short term mission trips around the world?
- Do those people know how to effectively share the Gospel with others?
- Do they do it at home with the people they know?
- What are your biggest challenges and fears in sharing the Gospel with others?
- Is the staff at your congregation, ministry, college, non-profit, or mission involved in winning people to Christ?

- Have they been trained? How?
- Are they involved in training others how to share the Gospel one-on-one?
- What about other leaders in your church or ministry? Elders, deacons, teachers, etc. Are they winning people to Jesus, making disciples?
- Are they helping train others how to share the Good News?
- Does your congregation set a goal annually of how many people they want to train to share the Good News one-on-one?
- What conclusions do you have as a result of answering these questions?

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WRITING FOUR

ARE WE DOING THIS?

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

It all starts here. If I am in love with Jesus, if I understand and appreciate what he has done for me and I am willing to obey his commands, then I need to follow through with what follows in this verse.

If he is NOT first in my life, I won't be doing the following with a good heart and spirit.

I know of no better book (other than the Bible obviously) that better covers this personal relationship with Jesus, reverencing him in our hearts than *Go and Sin No More* by Dr. Michael Brown. It is an excellent book on living in Jesus, pleasing God, fleeing sin. I recommend that you read it.

Always be prepared

The question is "Are you PREPARED to do the following? Is your church staff prepared? Are your leaders prepared? Are those who participate in your congregation prepared to do the following? ARE YOU HELPING PREPARE THEM FOR THIS?"

To give an answer to everyone

Are your people prepared to share the Gospel message in an effective way with those they know outside of church? Or are they just being told to “share your story (testimony) and then invite the others to a service, group, event or program”? What can you point to in your ministry that is directed to PREPARING your people how to effectively share the Gospel with their friends, relatives, and acquaintances? And I’m not talking about another program at the church or sponsored by the church to invite people to.

Who asks you

This suggests that people are interested. We don’t have to force the Gospel on anyone. That doesn’t work. BUT there are ways we can help create interest. The old saying that you CAN LEAD A HORSE TO WATER BUT YOU CAN’T FORCE HIM TO DRINK is true. But years ago I heard of an addition, BUT NO ONE SAID YOU CAN’T SALT HIS OATS. There are ways you can create a thirst or interest in hearing the message. In the training for using “It’s All About Relationship,” we will show you how to do this. If you are interested in this online course, contact me. John.hendee@cox.net **To give the reason for the hope that you have.**

We aren’t told here to prepare ourselves to attack and try and destroy what others believe. While it doesn’t hurt to understand something about another’s beliefs, the teaching here is TO KNOW WHAT WE BELIEVE WELL ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO SIT DOWN IN A CALM, PATIENT WAY AND SHARE IT if the opportunity presents itself. I have read of studies that more than 90 percent of Christians never share the Gospel with another person throughout their whole life.

But do this with gentleness and respect,

Ah, yes. With gentleness and respect. That means with the other person’s permission. That means no heavy-handed, pressuring techniques here. Those are very ineffective. BUT there is a way you can share the Gospel gently and respectfully. We will show you how to be trained to do so in the online course I teach.

SO WHAT IS THE POINT OF ALL OF THIS?

While we are not saying it is the ONLY way, learning how to use the “It’s All About Relationship” presentations will help accomplish what is asked for in this passage.

1. You will be prepared. Preparation takes time and effort.
2. To give an answer to everyone (relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc.).

3. Who asks you? That is anyone who is interested in hearing what Christianity is truly all about.
4. You will be prepared to share the four presentations that clearly show why you have hope in Jesus and why others need Him.
5. You will be doing it all with gentleness and respect. And people like that.

To use the IAAR presentations effectively you:

1. Don't have to memorize it. It is printed out for you and the other people.
2. You don't have to be a Bible scholar
3. You don't have to be an expert on every subject under the sun.
4. You don't have to have a dynamic personality.
5. You don't have to force it on anyone. If they aren't interested, you don't do it.

But you do need to be prepared.

WRITING FIVE

ARE WE DISCIPLING THE WRONG PEOPLE?

I don't know if it is because I'm getting old or because I'm getting old.

That is, I don't know if it is because I'm getting old and my brain is just wearing out and thinking weird thoughts, or I don't know if it is because I'm getting old and the accumulation of thinking over the years is just producing clearer thoughts from ideas fermenting in my mind.

Whether it is thinking that has fermented into bad juice or fine wine will be determined by others.

But here is my question again. Are we discipling the wrong people? Where is the phrase "disciple making" applied in the New Testament to what we spend our time doing with Christians, that is, those who are already disciples?

I think this is more than a semantic issue.

I think we have undergone major strategy shifts in our thinking in the church that are doing more harm than good.

I can't find an example or verse that answers the question I raised.

Let me ask it again. Do you understand what I'm asking? Be patient with me here just a bit.

Where is the phrase "disciple making" applied to what we spend our time doing with Christians or those who are already disciples?

I can't find it.

I've used the concordance. I've asked others. I've searched it out.

I can't find it.

No one else has been able to show me.

I think the problem is that it isn't there. Now I know we can bend the words "disciple making" and apply them to what we do with those who are already disciples, but I think to do so does serious damage to the mission of the church. It can give us the illusion that we are doing what we have been commanded to do while we really aren't doing it.

We have built entire ministries in the churches around disciple making, referring to a plan, strategy, and program as to how to do “disciple making,” or how to make those who are disciples, MORE disciplined, or DEEPER disciples/Christians.

I fear it is a huge distraction and miss-application.

Major books, programs, and seminars are available on disciple making in which the creators of such have laid out elaborate plans about disciple making but 95 percent+ of what they talk about is focused on developing Christians/disciples.

I’m all for developing followers of Jesus, disciples. But I think that to say that doing so is disciple making is to miss the point of the command to “go and make disciples.” I think this has contributed to a major failure, distraction, and detour away from doing true disciple making, dropping training in personal evangelism, and focusing more of our time, energy, and efforts on US to the neglect of what we are to be doing with the rest of the world.

Hear me out. Please.

The best I can tell, we are to MAKE DISCIPLES out of those who aren’t disciples.
Matthew 28:18

Once one is a disciple they ARE a disciple, a MADE disciple!

We are then called to:

1. Teach them all Jesus has commanded. Matthew 28:18-20
2. Labor or work to present everyone fully mature in Christ. Colossians 1:28-29 *He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*
3. Grow and be transformed to do the perfect will of God. Romans 12:2 *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
4. Make sure there aren’t divisions among us. 1 Corinthians 1:10 *I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.*
5. Purify ourselves, perfecting holiness, becoming more like Jesus. 2 Corinthians 7:1 *Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify*

ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

My point is this: We don't keep disciple making with those who are already disciples. Again, I think to speak of it in those terms is to distract us from what true disciple making is.

It is safer and easier to spend all our time with other Christians and do disciple making with them than it is to go out and interact, befriend, and earn the right to be heard and try and MAKE DISCIPLES OF:

Atheists

Homosexuals

Hard hearted

Playboys

Immoral

Intellectuals

Those of other religions

Those in the cults

Those of the modern-day current philosophies most of which are just re-inventions of century-old philosophies

But that is what we are commanded to do. We make disciples out of those WHO AREN'T PRESENTLY DISCIPLES. That seems rather obvious.

Why have we done this? I think part of it is because we don't know how to evangelize the rest, the non-disciples, one-on-one.

Unless they walk through our front door, most Christians and way too many leaders don't know where to start.

Some do "hit and run" evangelism, trying to witness and maybe even convert some unsuspecting stranger on the street, at the airport, or wherever.

We must correct this error in our thinking and stop calling disciple making what we do with those who are already disciples, which results in holes or gaps in our plans and strategies, and the church not doing what it has been commanded to do in making NEW disciples.

Once you make a Ford, you don't take it and keep making it a Ford. You service it, you repair it, you might improve some things on it, but it is a Ford. Please excuse the comparison here with a car.

But hear me out. I'm not comparing us humans with a car. Substitute anything you want in place of Ford. OK, let's put in Republican, Democrat, Communist, Rotarian, engineer, cab driver, or whatever.

Once I become a doctor, I am a doctor. Neither you nor I need to keep making me a doctor. I am a doctor. Now, I need to learn more, study more, improve my skills etc. But I am a doctor.

So what are we told that God is doing with those who have become disciples of Jesus in the New Testament? This follows the line of thought that is found above in this writing.

The following is not an all-inclusive list but I think it hits the general categories.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Let God finish His good work in us. Become like Jesus.

2 Corinthians 7:1 Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Purify ourselves of all contamination of the darkness, being perfected out of love and reverence for God.

Matthew 28:18-20 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Make new disciples. That applies to those who aren't disciples.

Then we are to teach the new disciples to obey all Jesus has commanded in the New Covenant.

Ephesians 4:13, 4:15 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Be united, mature, attaining fullness in Christ. Grow, mature.

Colossians 1:28, 4:12 28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.

Proclaim, admonish, and teach. Present all fully mature in Christ. Stand firm in all the will of God. Mature. Fully assured.

James 1:4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Let God finish his work, be mature and complete.

Hebrews 5:12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food!

Ephesians 4:11-16 11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.....14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Equip His people for works of service, and that most certainly includes equipping them to go and make new disciples.

We are to start eating solid food, adult food at some point. We must get beyond baby food. Babies don't make disciples. They are focused on themselves and their personal needs.

What are we told we are to do with disciples? That spells it out.

We are to work and grow toward maturity and Christ likeness.

I am not questioning any effective methods or efforts to carry this out.

Call it what you will, but I think it is an error to keep calling what we are doing with each other who are already disciples disciple making.

Making disciples out of those who aren't is what Paul talked about in *II Cor. 5:18-20*.

So while we are focusing so much attention on ourselves (making disciples as many call it), my observation is this:

Whatever you are doing in the name of disciple making with Christians, IF YOU ARE NOT EQUIPPING THEM TO GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OUT OF NON-DISCIPLES, YOUR PLAN, SYSTEM, STRATEGY, OR WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL IT HAS HUGE, GAPING HOLES IN IT.

So I have to ask, again, how many disciples have you trained or equipped in the past five years to GO and effectively share the Good News with their family, friends, work associates, neighbors, and acquaintances in an effort to MAKE DISCIPLES OUT OF NON-DISCIPLES?

How many do you plan on training and equipping in the next five years to GO and effectively share the Good News with their family, friends, work associates, neighbors, acquaintances, etc.?

Without that your making, maturing, perfecting disciples is INCOMPLETE. And you don't have to wait for someone to be a disciple for 10 years before you start preparing them to be able to share the Good News. That would be a huge mistake.

I did my internship for ministry with a preacher, Gene Rogers. He told me something I've never forgotten. Here is what he said. **“John, what we do with new Christians/ disciples is what they will spend the rest of their life doing.”**

What do we generally do with new disciples? We teach them to SIT AND LISTEN. “Sit and listen to me preach. Sit and listen to me teach, in my group, class, seminar, retreat or conference. Come with me and do nice things for people in the community or overseas. Help me plan spectacular events so people will want to come to our church, so they can sit and listen to me.”

And they learn well. Most of them will SIT and listen for the rest of their life in Christ.

I have often failed in applying this myself over the years. I want to call us all to get on track with it.

I'm nearing the end of “running the race.” I'm feeling good. I have no serious health issues that I know of. As of this writing, I am still able to do pretty much what I want. I

have been a Christian for almost 50 years. I'm at least in the last quarter of the "game." I could be in the two-minute count down. I don't know, and I don't need to know.

But this I do know: Till the clock runs out and the whistle blows, I'll be hammering away on this subject. Some will be annoyed, offended, or irritated by it. But I pray some will get it and start making the equipping of the Saints, training them, preparing them to share the Good News one of their highest priorities.

WRITING SIX

WHATEVER BECAME OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM TRAINING?

I wrote this in about 2006 after returning to the U.S. from living in Chile.

After 12 years of mission work in Chile, Carla and I returned to the States in late 2004. Back home, I went to work raising support for an exciting new project in Peru. This took me to churches all over the West. I heard fine sermons, met with mission committees, read a myriad of bulletins and newsletters, and perused exciting church websites. One day, while reflecting on my travels and encounters with our brethren, it was as if a bolt of lightning struck me. “Whatever became of personal evangelism training?” I sifted through the experiences I’d had with churches. It was something of a shock to reach this conclusion: We aren’t offering evangelism training. There are plenty of 101 classes offered to those who will visit our church facilities, but personal “soul winning” was off of the table. I called two friends who have the gift of evangelism to get their take on the matter. They agreed with my conclusion. One said that perhaps my time away from the States had given me a chance to see the church landscape with what he called fresh eyes. A call to the president of a Christian publishing house further nailed down the sad reality. This all left me stunned and sad.

That was three years ago. Since then I’ve been to even more churches. Friends, we have a problem. Our brotherhood has slipped away from personal evangelism. In its place I notice plenty of churches offering an offshoot of Saddleback’s 101, 201, and other fine classes. They certainly have a place in the church. But they don’t teach one-on-one evangelism that I am aware of. Who wouldn’t see the need for a seekers’ class or a program to integrate newcomers into the local church? But the commission we have been given by Jesus exhorts us all to be disciple makers. It is NOT just the job of hired staff members. So church members are encouraged to bring guests to the church where they can hear the sermons and be put through a series of classes.

What conclusion can we draw but this: We are failing in a most essential aspect of evangelism, personal evangelism training. A couple of decades ago, the main method for some groups was Bill Bright’s Four Spiritual Laws and Kennedy’s program called Evangelism Explosion. We seemed to shake off these too-brief and too-confrontational methods. But we haven’t picked up and used an effective tool of our own for introducing people to God. What we are left with is group sessions or the expectation that the preacher will handle the conversion piece in sermons. As I’ve noted, this helps if we can convince folk to make the move to come to the church. For most of the lost souls out there that’s not going to happen.

I've noted at least 10 efforts that our churches employ to make a dent in the darkness. Forgive me if I seem cynical. I'd rather see my observations as just that - observations. This is brief. You could easily write a full page or chapter on each of these, but I don't think that is necessary here. And the point is NOT to say that all on the list is bad. The point is to say that we must not rely on these methods WITHOUT renewing our efforts on personal evangelism training.

Before I start down the list I want to look at *1 Peter 3:15*. I addressed this in an earlier writing, but here is a synopsis of it again. It fits here, too.

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."

There are some obvious guides or instructions here regarding sharing out faith in personal evangelism.

1. *In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord.* If we aren't committed to Jesus and his cause here on earth we won't be involved in personal evangelism. If Christ isn't our Lord, we will be involved in churchy stuff but we won't be living with passion, that is the overflow of a personal relationship with Jesus. Personal evangelism is an overflow of personal relationship with the Lord.
2. *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason or the hope that you have.* The instruction is to always be prepared. So we must be preparing Christians to share their faith in their homes, in others' homes, or wherever. We are to be prepared to give a reason for our faith and hope. FEW Christians are prepared. FEW churches are committed to prepare their people in this. Just listening to sermons or lessons is not adequate preparation.

Another part is *"give an answer."* To me that suggests something person to person, PERSONAL contact, communication, etc.

3. *Do this with gentleness and respect.* Some forms of personal evangelism can't be described as gentle and respectful. In-your-face, confrontational styles don't fit that. Some people in their eagerness to share skip over gentle and respectful and try to share and convert someone whether they are interested or not.

GATORADE EVANGELISM (GE). You've seen the two beefy football players who sneak up on their coach and dump Gatorade on him in celebration of a victory. G.E. is something like that. This strategy is to sneak up on people, catch them off guard, dump the Gospel on them, and exit. I call it "shock and awe" evangelism. I'm happy to see that

it isn't used so much today. I'm talking about approaching a stranger somewhere and trying to share the Gospel and win him to Jesus in five minutes. It was never very effective but could give a personal worker the feeling that he had taken his stand for Jesus in a bold way. Furthermore, it isn't the way you'd approach a friend or acquaintance. It is usually done on the street, park, door to door, on a beach, or some other public arena with strangers.

HAND GRENADE EVANGELISM. This is mostly an impersonal method of getting our message out. Leave a tract or Bible. Produce a TV spot or a radio program. Unless done exceedingly well, these techniques have little impact on reaching our culture.

They are impersonal ways to introduce people to a personal God.

- **DEVELOPING SEEKER SERVICES.** This stems from the thinking that if they won't come to our services as they are, then we need to create a service that is non-offensive and makes everyone feel comfortable. Of course I'm not opposed to the basic idea here. But once again, it isn't getting to the matter of helping our people share their faith with those who aren't interested in coming to our services.

BAIT-AND-SWITCH METHODS (programs, events, and activities). Some of these are designed to bring a non-believer one step closer to church life. Why not invest a lot more of our time and dollars equipping our people to reach out and capitalize on opportunities to share their faith one-on-one with those who don't or won't come to our events, services, or programs?

David Gregory writes in his book, *Dinner With A Perfect Stranger*, how many outsiders look at church efforts to reach out to them:

At first I thought the church down the street was having another one of their 'outreaches'. We had been 'outreached' on more than one occasion. Their mailbox flier awaited us virtually the minute my wife, Matti, and I moved here from Chicago three years ago. An endless stream of what some church worker considered promotional material followed. I actually started looking forward to them, just for the amusement the sermon titles provided:

The Ten Commandments, Not the Ten Suggestions

If God Seems Far Away, Guess Who Moved?

Spiritual Aerobics for the Marathon of Heaven

Did they mean to attract anyone with those or just make the neighborhood disdain them?

Then came the event; the church bowling league invitation, the spaghetti cook-off, the marriage retreat weekend, the golf scramble invitation...they were persistent but not particularly resourceful.

Jesus said, "The people of this world are shrewder in dealing with their own kind than are the people of light". (Luke 16:8) Boy, he nailed that one on the head. We seem to have lost touch with how outsiders look at us.

Outsiders know what a church is up to when they invite them to anything! Special events or programs might allow some to take their first step in our direction. Fine. But still, most of the people we need to reach won't darken our doorways. Most of the time our message is "Come to our event, service, or class if you want to know about Jesus." The mandate from Jesus is to "Go." While we understand seed planting, most of our planting goes on inside the barn rather than out in the field.

101CLASSES FOR NEWCOMERS It's more of the same "come to us." Usually the preacher is the teacher. "Learn more about our church, how to become a member, what it means to be a Christian and how to get plugged in." Some will come. It surely meets some needs. But doesn't it propagate the idea that professionals are the ones to usher others into the Kingdom? So a guy sits in church thinking, "Yup, my wife threatened me in order to get me here this morning, but if you think I'm coming back for three hours with the preacher...well, you're nuts."

LET'S GO DO SOME NICE THINGS FOR PEOPLE. Hand out bottles of water, give a free car wash, cook a Christmas dinner for the poor, maybe even help build a house for somebody. This may give us a great feeling and may offer short-term relief to others. I'm not opposed to doing good for others. But most of the time it still ends up with an invitation to the church rather than turning into an opportunity to share Christ with them where they are. It almost appears as a "do something good and nice to them, and then go back to the church facility and hope our kindness enticed them to follow us there at some point."

WE ARE LOSING SO LET'S DO A NATIONAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN. USA TODAY recently reported on the status of religion in America. In an interview with the head of the Southern Baptists, the leader acknowledged their denomination is declining in numbers. Their first step to address this discouraging study was a national media blitz. Methodists did the same thing. Both groups spent millions of dollars for TV and Internet outreach. The Baptists declared, "Southern Baptists: We are your neighbor." I'm sorry, but that's not going to make it. Why not spend a portion of those millions of dollars to train Christians how to share their faith? Am I sounding like a broken record?

Catholics were especially hard hit, especially on the East Coast. Their trumpet call is “Catholics, come home.”

LET’S WIN SOME OVER BY ATTACKING THEM. David Bruce of www.HollywoodJesus.com says that you can’t reach your culture by attacking it. This is so true. Jesus’ main verbal assault was on stuffed shirts and egotistical religious leaders. He said he didn’t come to condemn the world he loved, but to save it. Some delight in taking a stand against immorality. Yet when Jesus went into dark places and interacted with confused and wayward people, he was sympathetic, encouraging, and winsome. We would do well to emulate him and follow his example of outreach. Walking with pagans and gaining the right to speak is a Jesus method.

My friend Dr. Alan Pickering told me, “You can attract a lot more bees with a bucket of honey than with a bucket of spit.” Ugh. Attacking, judging, and criticizing people as a means of outreach is offering them a bucket of spit.

BIG BAPTISM DAYS. In the last year or so we have seen a number of these. All of these I know of have happened in mega churches. It is quite a wonderful event. Sometime as many as 500 people are baptized on one or two Sundays. They come forward at the invitation and are baptized in their street clothes. The angels in heaven applaud, make no mistake about this. My point in this whole article is that big days and big events are mostly at the church facility. Having so many come to Christ is wonderful, but we must not let that deceive us into thinking that this success shows we are doing all we need to be doing to reach people and that it excludes the need for training our people to share the Gospel with those who aren’t there on those special days. If we trained our people to reach people as they go, maybe we would see thousands more being baptized due to Christians sharing their faith with them in their homes or offices.

DEEP DISCIPLESHIP. Over the years we’ve heard much about going deeper in our walk with Jesus. In putting so much time on getting deeper (and I’m not opposed to going deep), we can spend so much time together that we still aren’t going out and making disciples of all the nations. We are so focused on doing it with one or two or five that all the others around us who need reaching are ignored. Many who spend a lot of time going deep aren’t bringing people to Christ. To me, there is no deep if that doesn’t include GOING and winning.

OK, JOHN, where is this all going?

I’m glad you asked!

I could kick myself for not seeing this so much earlier in my life, or if I saw it, acting upon it. Now I’m determined to not let up on this until the Lord sees fit to transport me Home.

Of course I'm talking about helping others become proficient at sharing the Gospel. Surely you saw this coming! Here is what finally hit me, bigger than ever before.

I BELIEVE THAT LEADERS OF EVERY CHURCH, CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, AND MISSION SHOULD MAKE IT ONE OF THEIR TOP PRIORITIES TO TRAIN EVERY CHRISTIAN (IN THEIR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE) HOW TO EFFECTIVELY SHARE THEIR FAITH WITH THOSE AROUND THEM IN A WAY THAT IS EFFECTIVE AND THAT THEY IN TURN CAN USE TO TRAIN OTHERS TO DO THE SAME. Isn't this the heart of the Great Commission? Isn't this much of what it means to be an ambassador for God? It just makes sense.

Now I can't close without a little bit more information about the Peace Treaty, now titled, "IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP." I developed it in the late '70s working on my master's degree. It is currently four lessons. We normally will do one lesson a week with anyone interested in learning how to have peace with God in their life. It was published in the U.S. It has been translated into several other languages. I've used it to help many people come to Christ from playboys to atheists, scientists, wealthy people, poor people, doctors, drug addicts, killers, etc.

It is an effective way to share Christ with others. It is respectful. If a person doesn't want to hear the lessons, you don't share them at that time. It is patient. It normally takes four weeks to do the four 35 minutes lessons, not rushing it all and pushing for a decision before the people even have a chance to hear all the basics. We are called to make disciples not just get decisions. This allows for that.

These presentations give Christians a method to always be prepared to give a reason as to why they believe in Christ and what others need to do to be at peace with God, too.

WRITING SEVEN

CURSE OF THE FOUR WALL MENTALITY

I first thought of this while on a visit to Peru where our team was working in the very poorest of communities. I had been told by a preacher/missionary several years prior that we (the church) shouldn't build church buildings on the mission field. So when we started our new work in Peru, I thought it would be a good time to start practicing that even though I didn't fully understand what all his reasons were.

So instead of building church buildings in the poor areas, I decided we would build community centers. They were cheap by our U.S. standards; \$6,000 each. They were about 10 x 20+ meters. The locals helped build them along with short-term mission teams. They were for use by the churches we were planting as well as by the community people for their local events. This was part of our connecting with the community, or so I thought.

Now prior to building these community centers, our national missionaries were out and among the people in the barrios or neighborhoods, getting to know the people, sharing Christ, etc.

It was about my third trip down after the first community centers were built that it smacked me in the face. I couldn't believe it. I was shocked. I saw it. All of a sudden I got it. I then knew why missionaries or missions shouldn't be building church buildings on the mission field.

I called it the CURSE OF THE FOUR WALL MENTALITY. We are all touched by this disease. Some understand it. Some never see it or understand it.

Prior to building our centers, our people went out and were with the people in the community. The command for the church is to GO. And GO they did. They were doing it and they were beginning to see fruit from it all.

Then we built. We built the buildings and our missionaries mindset changed. I suppose it was somewhat subconscious as it is here in the States, too. They just started doing what they saw other churches do. Instead of GOING, they started planning programs for children, youth, women, and men for INSIDE the building and they hung a sign out front that gave the times and details, and instead of continuing to GO, they started saying,

“Y'ALL COME. It is all happening in here.”

They stopped GOING. And it was a dark day for me.

Our people erroneously concluded that if others were interested they could come. If they came we, reached out to them. Gone were the days of effective going, connecting and sharing Jesus out there.

Over the coming months, many months, we did everything short of abandoning the buildings to try and turn things around. We couldn't get them OUT again. It was tragic. It was my fault. I had the Curse.

So out of that experience came what I call the CURSE OF THE FOUR WALL MENTALITY. Now I guess I can say I'm not against having walls, staff, or programs, but here is what happens. Here is what the curse is. We have it here in the U.S., too.

THE CURSE: We build, buy or rent the best four walls our funds will allow us to use. Then we seek out the best, most likeable, attracting preacher we can find and afford. Then we start adding staff for music, youth, children, etc., who in turn create enticing and interesting programs to draw people inside our four walls (which can include home groups, events, etc.) and we send out flyers, mailers, Facebook announcements, buy local ads, make up brochures etc., inviting everyone to come to US and our events so the professionals can reach them there through their preaching and teaching.

I'm reminded of a part from the book *Dinner With a Perfect Stranger*, written by David Gregory, a preacher (pages 3, 4). The scenario is a man gets an invite in the mail to have dinner with Jesus. Here is a part from the book telling of the man's response as he tries to figure out the invitation: *"At first I thought the church down the street was having another one of their 'outreaches.' We had been outreached on more than one occasion. Their mailbox flier awaited us the minute my wife, Mattie and I moved here from Chicago three years ago. An endless stream of what some church worker considered promotional material followed. I actually started looking forward to them, just for the amusement the sermon titles provided:*

The Ten Commandments, Not the Ten Suggestions

If God Seems Far Away, Guess Who Moved?

Spiritual Aerobics for the Marathon to Heaven.

Did they mean to attract anyone with those or just make the neighborhood disdain them?

Then came the events: the church bowling league invitation, the spaghetti cook off, the marriage retreat weekend, the golf scramble invitation. In a moment of insanity I actually broke down and went to the golf scramble. Utter agony is the only way to describe it. Parking at the course behind a guy's car with a "My Boss

Is a Jewish Carpenter” bumper sticker set the tone. As it turned out, I was assigned to his foursome. He had this perpetual smile, as though someone had hit him with a brick and the plastic surgeon has patched him up on an off day. As for the other two, one guy shot a nice front nine but fell apart on the back nine and started swearing a lot. I learned he headed the deacon board. The other guy never said a word except to track our score. He must have chaired the welcoming committee. That was the last church invitation I accepted.

So what happens with the Curse of the Four Wall Mentality.

We invest our time, energy, money, and personalities in building facilities, hiring the best staff, planning services, events, programs, etc. to try and entice people inside our four walls so we can reach them there.

Again I’m going to say, I’m not against four walls (reasonable ones) or a good preacher and staff with helpful programs, **BUT that often becomes what we call our evangelism program, planning things to invite folks to: Y’ALL COME.**

That is very limiting compared to training as many of our people as we can to GO and seek to share the Gospel with those they know who aren’t interested in responding to our Y’ALL COME. They aren’t dumb. They know what we are up to.

Jesus told his disciples to be as “shrewd as a serpent and as gentle as a dove.” Putting all our evangelistic eggs in the Y’ALL COME strategy isn’t very shrewd. Oh, some of us can get pretty clever in that process. I actually became pretty good at it and years ago I even wrote a book about how to do it. Some considered me an expert in it. But we will never reach most of the world if we hope to do so by waiting for everyone to come to our events. Most we need to reach will never come.

They are on to us about what we are trying to do.

I know some will be offended by what I’m saying.

But someone has to ruffle some feathers and wake us up.

I’m old enough now. I’m willing to step up and do it.

I don’t know it all.

I don’t do it all right.

I don’t have all the answers,

BUT

I do know of ONE thing that will make the biggest difference possible in reaching more people for Jesus: Start training your people how to share the Gospel with those who aren't going to come to our services, events, programs, or seminars.

What will generate excitement, revival and enthusiasm in your congregation? Train them to go and make disciples.

I ask, why not train your people to share the Gospel with all the people they know BEFORE they attend or are interested or willing to attend?

I recently had a friend tell me their preacher didn't like the IAAR. Hey, that is fine. I don't care. It doesn't say in Matt 3:12 that you have to like and or use the IAAR. I'm not losing sleep over it. I'm not judging the preacher over it. BUT I will ask the preacher, "What are you doing to prepare your people to effectively share the Gospel with those they know out in the community?" And don't tell me about another program you have developed for them to invite unbelievers to. Don't tell me that the main way to witness is to share your story and invite them to church.

Train your people, please.

WRITING EIGHT

WE LIVE IN A CONVERSION-CONSCIOUS WORLD

Are you aware that there are literally thousands of groups/people trying to convert us to something? We are going to take a look at that thought for a moment and then we are going to ask ourselves in the church some probing questions.

Now think about this:

Who is trying to convert you to their way of thinking, their philosophy, or their product?

Who is trying to get you to buy into their lifestyle, product, or beliefs?

Here is just a SMALL sampling:

Other world religions and cults

Other denominations, differing theological views

TV and movie producers

Sports teams

Universities

Sororities, fraternities, campus organizations

Those with a particular philosophy of life, atheists, porno peddlers, man boy society, playboys

Brands of alcohol, drug peddlers, friends using those things

Professional clubs, service organizations: there are dozens of them

Child sponsorship programs

Casinos

Service companies

Green groups

Environmental groups

Toothpaste companies, pet foods, etc.

Restaurants

TV, cable, media groups

Cell phone companies, Internet services, cable companies, etc.

Life, health, home, vehicle insurance

Medicines, medications for everything under the sun

Newscasts

Gangs, mafia groups

Malls

Theatres

And it goes on ad infinitum.

What are their messages?

How do they try and convert us?

What do they have to offer us?

How do they promote their product?

Do they have centers, offices, arenas, locations?

What are their programs?

Do they have or use:

Web sites

Facebook etc.

Brochures

Testimonies

Songs

Logos

Gatherings

Who has been successful at persuading you to join in or buy into them?

Whose message have you bought or accepted, believed?

What don't you like about the process of some? Which methods are ineffective with you?

Which methods do you like?

Now, what is our message in the church?

How is our message different?

What is unique about it?

How is what we offer different?

How are our methods of trying to convert people to Jesus just like what the world does to convert us to their offerings?

Is our way of trying to convert them different?

Why would they accept our message?

What would make people more open to our message?

Which of our approaches or techniques do more damage than good?

Which of our methods are ineffective?

What do we offer?

How do we offer it?

What is the best way to share or sell our message?

Very often churches think they have to have a great:

Place, facility

Location

Leader, attractive, likeable spokespeople, point persons

Great music, bands, worship teams (show, presentation)

Logo or theme, mission

Variety of offerings, something for everyone

Attracting events, activities

Great use of social media

IN ORDER TO MAKE DISCIPLES OR LEAD PEOPLE TO JESUS.

Is that true?

What is wrong with that thinking?

How are we any different than a business trying to sell its service or product?

DID THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH DO ANY OF THESE THINGS?

WRITING ELEVEN

SOMETHING IS SERIOUSLY WRONG

What is wrong when someone attends a church/congregation for 1- 50 years and is never TRAINED how to share the Gospel with other people one on one?

What is wrong when church planting organizations send people out to plant churches that have not been thoroughly TRAINED in how to effectively share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus not shown how to train those in the church they are trying to plant how to share the Gospel with the people they know?

What is wrong with a mission agency that sends people all over the world but doesn't insure that those who are sent are thoroughly TRAINED how to share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus how to train believers in the country they go to how to effectively share the Gospel with the people they know?

What is wrong with a Christian college that spends years educating people for their future life but doesn't effectively teach or TRAIN those students how to share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus how they can train other Christians how to do the same?

What is wrong with a Christian ministry/organization that can build staff, resources, programs, or whatever but they don't ever TRAIN that staff how to share the Gospel with other people one-on-one, plus train their staff how to train other Christians how to do the same?

What is wrong with Christian non-profits that do all kinds of nice things, helping all kinds of people in crisis all over the world, but they don't TRAIN their staff or people who do those things how to effectively share the Gospel with people one-on-one, much less train others how to do the same?

What is wrong when we hold or attend national conventions for our leaders and people, and we offer a smorgasbord of all kinds of popular seminars and classes to attend but they don't ever offer TRAINING on how to share the Gospel with others one-on-one, or how those people can train others how to do the same?

Oh, we have classes, preaching, teaching, seminars, retreats on every subject under the sun:

How to improve your marriage

How to manage your finances.

How to deal with all kinds of personal problems.

How to preach better.

How to disciple people.

How to “grow” your congregation.

How to use social media.

How to improve your music and worship team.

How to raise more money.

How to manage your staff.

How to, how to, how to, how to, ad infinitum....

It wears me out.

It blows me away.

We have a serious problem.

OK, some of those things are very helpful, but when we leave out effective, ongoing TRAINING for Christians in how to share the Gospel with others we have a GIANT BLACK HOLE in the middle of all we are doing.

There is a renewed emphasis on DISCIPLINING PEOPLE FOR JESUS going on right now. I listen. I read. And 99 percent of what is talked about is what to do with those who have already become Christians, from spiritual infancy to death. We’ve got it all covered. Almost.

Yes, I find that winning the lost is briefly addressed. But where is the TRAINING????? In the great commission in Matthew, disciple making STARTS WITH UNBELIEVERS. Come on!

I remember reading some interviews of the Southern Baptist leaders before one of their national conventions a couple years ago. I so appreciate their honesty and awareness. Three things they said jumped out at me.

1. We have lost our passion for evangelism. (And I thought, they aren't alone.)
2. Everyone loves talking about it as long as someone else is doing it. (And I thought, they aren't alone.)
3. Our preachers are not equipping their people how to share the Gospel with the people they know. (And I thought BINGO. You hit it. Congratulations. And again, you aren't alone.)

I agree with them on all points. And it applies to more than just them.

Now the question is, what are we doing about it?

And I wonder, is anyone listening?

Some might get tired of hearing me address this issue but address it I will, till I die.

We have got to turn this around.

The world is waiting for us to get focused on what we are supposed to be doing and sharing with them what they need, OUT THERE.

WRITING TWELVE

THE QUESTION I SELDOM GET AN ANSWER TO FROM CHRISTIAN LEADERS

WHAT ARE YOU DOING OR USING TO EQUIP AND TRAIN YOUR PEOPLE HOW TO EFFECTIVELY SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THOSE THEY KNOW AND MEET ALONG LIFE'S JOURNEY?

I am going to spend as much of the rest of my life as possible helping Christian leaders and in turn Christians learn how to share the Good News with those they know or meet along life's journey.

I am using the Peace Treaty (PT). (New name is "It's All About Relationship") Download a free copy and watch the video presentations of it at: www.apeacetreatywithGod.com

I first developed these presentations in 1980 and have been using them ever since, and I've trained many people how to use them.

It is NOT the only way to share the Good News, but it is an excellent one.

Not everyone we offer it to will want to go through the four presentations. But we need to make the offer.

Not everyone who does go through the presentations will accept Christ. But we need to plant the seeds.

Not everyone who accepts Christ will stay with him. But we need to try. Remember the parable of the sower?

But many, many people will chose to follow Jesus. It is happening right now.

I have been and will continue to say (AT LEAST UNTIL IT CHANGES) that fewer than 1 percent of our churches or ministries have any kind of ongoing, effective training for their people in personal evangelism, or how to share the Good News with the people they know. I haven't had one person argue that point or disagree with me about that. I wish I were wrong.

I have started talking to a lot of Christian leaders, preachers, professors, mission agencies, church planting organizations, etc. I offer the training in the IAAR or I offer to train them how to train their leaders who can then in turn train their people.

Most all at least listen to my offer.

But then something happens. Or I should say with the vast majority, nothing happens.

Hey, I don't take it personally.

You don't have to like the PT. I have heard a number of reasons why some don't want to use it.

I have responses to every one of them I have heard. It is OK if you don't like it or don't want to use it.

But then here is the big follow-up question I get no answer to.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING OR USING TO EQUIP AND TRAIN YOUR PEOPLE HOW TO EFFECTIVELY SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THOSE THEY KNOW AND MEET ALONG LIFE'S JOURNEY?

And how is that working?

While not using the PT/IAAR is OK, NOT equipping or training Christians how to share the Gospel IS NOT.

It is negligence to the Lord for the work we have been given in the Kingdom.

It is relying on dynamic preaching, facilities, multimedia, music teams, and a variety of programs and events and telling our people to share their story with those they know, be loving to them, and then invite them to church.

While that reaches some people, it will not reach the vast multitudes of people who are not interested in our church, preacher, music, or programs. The church is to prepare to GO, not prepare everything inside our four walls. We try to make it all appealing and enticing to outsiders and then we tell all those out there to COME to us.

OK, we can offer the best preaching possible, have the best worship teams we can put together, use multimedia, social networking, great programs for children, youth, women, men, etc. but we MUST be training our people to share the Gospel not only with those who do come, but to the larger group of people who will never come inside our 4 walls first.

I repeat: WHAT ARE YOU DOING OR USING TO EQUIP AND TRAIN YOUR PEOPLE HOW TO EFFECTIVELY SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THOSE THEY KNOW AND MEET ALONG LIFE'S JOURNEY?

Until we start training ourselves and our people, we are just scratching the surface of what could be happening for the Kingdom.

I can't forget what my preacher buddy told me. "John, for too many years I did Hyena Evangelism." He explains this in greater detail in an upcoming writing in this book.

The question is "Who do a pack of hyenas hunt or look for?" The answer is always the same. The weak. Now that can be the young, old, injured, separated from the flock, or the sick.

Here is what my friend said. For too many years I was looking and waiting for the easy pickin's: The family that walked through the doors to our sanctuary, the kids we sent off to camp for a week. They were all easy to reach in comparison with the ones not coming to us. Now those folks and kids were all important. That is not the issue. The issue is that unless they came to us, we didn't do much. My friend has learned and is practicing going into the community to connect with the not-so-easy folks. And he is loving it.

I believe the reason most people don't connect with those they know in their family or community is because they aren't prepared to share the Good News. They don't know how to bring it up and if it comes up, they aren't prepared to share the Gospel. They are taught to share your story, be loving to them, let your light shine (I'm not opposed to any of that), and invite them to a group, service, activity, event or program, then we will try and share Jesus with them. Some will come. That is good. Most won't. That's not good.

If you want to see how to start training your people in an ongoing, never-ending training program in using the PT, let me know. John.hendee@cox.net

WRITING THIRTEEN

DO WE HAVE IT BACKWARDS?

Writings Thirteen, Fifteen, and Sixteen are very similar.

I'm confused.

I'm wondering

At times it seems like we spend 90-percent of our time, energy, and resources (money) trying to win people over to the church instead of Jesus.

That seems ineffective and backwards.

It seems as though we are trying to make disciples for the church instead of Jesus. Oh, we'd never really say or agree to that, but when you look at what we are doing, you have to wonder.

Oh, I understand the idea. If we can get people to church and they are impressed with us, our facilities, our preachers, our programs, our music, etc., then we can win them to Jesus.

It seems that at times we are making the church, CHUM for fishing. Now for those of you who have fished in the ocean you understand CHUMMING. A deck hand on the fishing boat starts throwing out small amounts of live anchovies in the water to try and attract the big fish you want to catch. Then when they show up, you throw out your line with the BIG hook and hope you catch a few of the big fish.

This is fine for fishing in the ocean, but it really seems a bit off track when we are talking about making disciples for Jesus.

Now obviously we (the church) are a vital part of the process, but I think we have a process going on at times that really is ineffective and off track. I believe that putting all our eggs in this basket and seeing some results from it deceives us into thinking that this is the BEST way. The truth is, it is very shallow and limiting compared to what we should and could be doing.

I believe that one of the main reasons for turning to try to attract people to church first is that we have done a terrible job equipping or preparing Christians how to share their faith in Jesus with others. We've taken the route of building a building, hiring a staff, building programs that we hope will be attractive to outsiders, do some promo, and IF they show up and like what they see, THEN maybe we can reach them. I don't see the early church in Acts doing that. AS THEY WENT, they won people to Jesus.

Doing what we often do is like a guy who is attracted to a gal and wants to win her heart to him but his plan on how to do that is to try and get her to fall in love with his family first. Then maybe she will be more open to liking him.

“Look at my family’s beautiful house.

You will love my dad.

We have great family gatherings.

We have great trips and vacations.

Oh, the large screen TV and stereo sound system - it is the best.

And we have a playground in the backyard for kids.

Oh, and the heated pool,

The game room,

Nice cars, and

Lots of great food. Mom is a wonderful cook.”

And the other person is thinking,

“That is all cool, but I’m not interested in them and that.

What about you?

You are the one I might be interested in, maybe.

“Is all you can talk about your family and their stuff? What are you trying to hide?

What is wrong with you?”

I have found that most people while dating do all they can to keep their candidate away from their family for a number of reasons. They want to win the other over to them not their family. You normally don’t start with the family!

But we most often do that in the church. Can you see this?

I confess. I'm guilty. I have been pretty good in the past in creating ways to attract or entice a number of people to our church facility, location, services, programs, and events. Some considered me an expert in that. I've written a book about how to do it. I have been known as an idea guy. Ask Dr. LeRoy Lawson about his stories about me and my idea-creating abilities. A couple of them are actually funny.

Now, on the one hand, I'm not opposed to some of this, but if we are doing this in place of training our people how to share the Good News with those outside of the church, we are seriously limiting what needs to happen.

Aren't we called to be making Disciples for Jesus? Few will disagree with that. While that is commonly accepted, it seems that the strategy of many is to win people to US (the church) first and then to Jesus. That just seems backwards.

I understand that works with some. But it will never work with the vast majority of people we need to share Jesus with.

They don't like church. They don't like our services, programs, and events, and those are the last places they ever want to be found.

Most of them understand what we are trying to do. They know what we are up to by trying to entice them inside our four walls.

Many Christians have their guns loaded to talk about church.

"We have a great preacher.

We have a great facility.

We have great programs.

We have special events."

How many things do you have to help your people promote Jesus to those outside of the church?

We were told to GO. We sometimes go, but it is seldom to share the Gospel. It is to invite them to church.

We were told to ALWAYS BE PREPARED to tell people about our faith. Our people are not prepared.

I recently thought that when we try to get people to the church and then Jesus, it is a little bit like going out in our fishing boat and getting to the spot we want to fish, and then

making neat little rows of anchovies on the bottom floor of our boat and waiting for the fish to jump in the boat to eat the bait!! Hummmmm.

I ask how much of your church's budget is spent equipping people how to share Jesus?

How much of your time is spent training Christians how to effectively share the Gospel with those they know.

How many hours a week do you spend sharing the Gospel with people one-on-one? A month? A year?

Most think this means going out to the public and trying to convert strangers on the spot. That IS NOT what I'm talking about.

How many resources, books, web sites, videos, face book stuff , brochures, etc. do you have for your people to use to help those who are lost learn about Jesus.

We have it all for CHURCH. Promotions, brochures, flyers, invitations, books, DVDs, websites, Facebook pages, etc.

We spend thousands of hours and tens of thousands of dollars on facilities, programs, events, and services. How much on preparing people to be effective in sharing the Gospel?

Do you have a goal for how many Christians you want to equip every year in how to effectively share the Gospel?

How much time do you spend on that?

How much money do you spend on that?

How many of your staff members are equipped and active in winning people outside the church to Jesus?

How many of your staff are training others how to share the Gospel?

How many of your leaders are sharing the Gospel outside the four walls of the church?

How many of your leaders are helping train others how to share the Gospel?

How many of your members are equipped and active in winning rather than just inviting people to church?

We aren't called to invite people to church.

We, THE CHURCH, are commanded to make disciples. Can some become disciples after attending something offered by the church? Of Course.

But if we haven't seen yet that that won't win the world, we are blind to reality.

IF SOMEONE IS WON TO JESUS, THEY NEED TO LEARN TO LOVE AND SERVE AS PART OF THE CHURCH. But we have to get things in order.

Have some reasonable programs, events, etc. BUT we MUST start investing time, energy, and money preparing our people how to effectively share the Gospel.

BUT WHATEVER YOUR PLAN IS FOR MATURING DISCIPLES, IT IS INCOMPLETE IF you do not include training or equipping them how to make other disciples.

Most all the plans I read for this are:

Be kind and loving.

Let them see your light.

Share your story.

Invite the others to church, group, events, etc.

Obviously we need to be kind and loving.

We need to be light.

Where are we commanded to share OUR story?

I thought it was HIS story.

Where are we told others will become disciples when and if they see our great lives?

Where do we see the New Testament church going OUT to invite people IN to their services, events, and programs?

So back to making disciples.

How many in your congregation have been trained in the last five years to share the Good News with those they know?

How many are you seeking to equip in the next five years?

Any disciple making plan (or as I prefer to call it, disciple maturing) you have that doesn't include that is very incomplete. It has huge holes in it.

WRITING FOURTEEN

A SIMPLE QUIZ

While many of the items below might be needed or useful in an effective ministry, I want to ask you to pick ONE, just ONE of the following items that you believe would be the MOST EFFECTIVE in helping your congregation reach more people they know (friends, relatives, neighbors, associates, etc.) for Christ:

1. Build a new sanctuary
2. Build a new sports/family life facility
3. Start up new children, youth, or adult programs
4. Add new staff members
5. Have a more powerful worship team, better music.
6. Have more large special events to draw people to the church
7. Find a more powerful preacher who will preach more about evangelism and attract more outsiders
8. Relocate to a more visible place.
9. Launch a powerful promotional campaign in the community seeking to invite more people to your church
10. Do more benevolent projects in the community such as food kitchens, clothes closets, etc.
11. Hand out more evangelistic tracks at malls, etc.
12. Make better use of social media, website, sermons on line, etc.
13. Improve use of audio visuals in work of church/ video, large screens,
14. Start satellite churches
15. Start a house church program
16. Start or expand radio and TV ministry
17. Have baptism Sundays where we try and baptize dozens to hundreds of people on the same day.

18. Insist that you (preacher) and your staff start and continue training as many of your members as possible to effectively share the Gospel with those they know outside of the church, who aren't attending now and probably aren't interested in coming to anything you are doing or offering 'at church' or through the church.

While many of these things are important and needed, there is one thing that is most often left out that will help your congregation grow more than most other things.

What is it? Well, it would be number 18. Now this is not to eliminate the need for prayer and holiness in our lives. But doing number 18 will build your current disciples in their walk with Jesus and it will show them how to go and make disciples. Most of us are using some combination of 1-17. Many of them may contribute to a strong ministry but 18 must become a HIGH priority and if 18 is left out, we are missing the middle of our target.

WRITING FIFTEEN

SELLING THE CHURCH

Where are we taught, told, or commanded to SELL the church to the world?

Where are we told to make members for the church from among the lost?

Where is the church told to go and preach the church to the lost?

Where is the church told to go and convince people how good the church is for them and the community?

Where are we commanded to go and tell people OUR story?

Where are we commanded to go and invite people to church?

We are commanded to GO and make disciples of Jesus.

But look at the budget of most any church and compare the amount of money spent on themselves (Oh, it is all said to be to help them reach the world... Sure... yeah...) and the amount of time and money they spend on preparing the church to GO out into the world and make disciples of people. You will normally not find much if any time, money, or energy spent on the latter. Watch for smoke and mirrors, too. Just because we call something evangelism or evangelistic doesn't make it so.

And short-term mission trips. I've watched them and participated in many of them, but we are only fooling ourselves when we think most of them are evangelistic. Fewer than 5 percent are. Most going on them have NEVER shared the Gospel with anyone.

We spend most of our time, money, abilities, and energy building the church and trying to make it look appealing to people so we can invite them to IT.

Our thinking seems to be, "If we can get them to church and our programs, events, and activities then we can win them to Jesus." If they like US, hopefully they will listen to us talk about Jesus inside our four walls.

What are the weaknesses in doing that? You make your list.

Where can that lead us?

What is wrong with that?

Most people in the world aren't interested in church.

And Jesus didn't tell them to be.

He didn't tell them that they needed to:

Hear about the church,

Believe in the church,

Love the church,

Repent and surrender to the church,

Confess their belonging to the church,

Be baptized into the church,

Live all their life following and being faithful to church.

Now if I'm a disciple, I am a part of the body of Christ, the Church, the Bride of Jesus, and I'm commanded to love my brothers of the faith and meet together to sing and teach and preach and encourage each other in the faith.

And then, GO.

Where in the New Testament do we read about the church inviting unbelievers to their services?

Or planning special events to get people to attend in order to win them to Jesus? Or having seeker-friendly services?

While I'm not against some of the things local churches do, I am against using them in such a way that we think we are being evangelistic and reaching the world while at the same time we have dropped training our people to GO out there and share the Good News.

How is what the normal church is doing today different from what the local professional sports teams do?

They have ads, promotions, brochures, schedules, fan clubs, special events, concerts at half time, specials for children, celebrate special holidays, guest appearances, and they try and have the best players.

They do social projects, visit the children's hospitals and schools.

They do attract people. Oh, and they charge a pretty hefty price too. And they try and entertain us so we will return and spend more and help them build a bigger stadium, one worthy of their fans.

We rely too heavily on The Attraction model (what we think is attracting, that is). Instead **of going**, we plan friendly services, great music, special seminars and courses, events, and our message to the community is

Y'ALL COME.

So our thinking is that if we can get them to come, be enticed in, and then like:

Our facility

Preacher

Programs

Events

Holiday specials spectaculars,

THEN, maybe then,

they will want to hear more about Jesus and then they will LIKE Him.

The problem is we start with US.

Are we blind to what the world sees when they see US?

Divisions.

At times excessive spending on our facilities and maybe staff.

Infighting

Denominations all saying they are right.

Arrogance

Being judgmental

Poor examples in leaders and members

Hypocrites

Crazy doctrines

Events and activities copying what they find in the community.

Our focus is on our leaders, our programs, events, seminars, retreats, trips, etc. Us, Us, and more of US.

WRITING SIXTEEN

WHERE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT WERE THEY INVITING PEOPLE TO CHURCH?

I have been working in/for/with the church for 48 years. I've worked in small churches and mega churches. We have served overseas and been involved in missions for 20 years.

As I'm getting more deeply engaged in training people how to use the new Peace Treaty called "It's All About Relationship" (www.apecetreatywithGod.com), I seem to be waking up in the morning thinking about and seeing things differently than I have in the past.

Here is one of those things I am seeing that I think we need to address. I'm finding a mixed bag of responses. Some are loudly shouting out AMEN. Others seem to be offended or disagreeing with it all. Some just ignore it.

I already addressed it in part in another writing of mine titled "Selling the Church."

There are a number of points I want to address here.

Where in the New Testament do we see the church being told to or practicing inviting unbelievers to church services (worship, celebration, seeker or whatever you call them), special events (Christmas specials, Easter specials, 4th of July, etc.) or to courses or classes designed to meet some life needs, such as how to improve your marriage, family life, finances, etc.?

I don't see it. But that seems to be the MAJOR way most churches are doing what they call evangelism today. And according to Leadership Network, 80 percent of all Protestant churches are just holding their own or dying!!! I would say it isn't working very well.

So what do we do? We try and find more interesting or creative ways to draw unbelievers into our churches/congregations. A small percentage of churches are growing just doing that. Just growing is not the objective. Just having more numbers doesn't mean we are doing what we are supposed to be doing.

There are two great examples of this I've recently seen. There is a father and son team offering church growth seminars across the country. I get their emails frequently. Recently, ne arrived that was titled "Stop Inviting People to Church!" That got my attention. As I read it they said that most people today (contrary to some published statements and surveys) don't want to go to church. They had my attention and amen,

but then they turned to their proposal. Don't invite them to church but plan and then invite them to special events or classes that might be of interest to them and what they need in life. Poof. They lost me. That was a typical approach we are being told to us today. Nothing was said about how to train your people how to share the Good News.

Most people don't want to go to church these days. And the interesting thing is I thought that Jesus told the church TO GO rather than invite everyone to it. We are to go and invite people to Jesus, not church.

Then I found a free book advertised on Kindle. I got it and skimmed through it. I was curious. The title is *IGNITE: HOW TO SPARK IMMEDIATE GROWTH IN YOUR CHURCH*. Now that was inviting. The author used all the right passages. He used all the right statements. He hammered away that we need to witness more, etc. But in the large context in my opinion he redefined witnessing to mean that we need to plan Big Days or Special Days at church. Then we need to ask all our people to make a list of 10 people we know who need Jesus. Then we need to prayerfully give them one of the nice invitation cards the church prepared and invite the 10 people to our special Big Day. That was basically the definition of witnesses. Invite them to the Big Day.

Now I know Big Days can be a point of entry for some people. BUT that is still missing the mark in that we aren't training our people how to share the Good News with the millions who still don't want to come to our Big Days but still would be open to hearing about Jesus.

I'm not saying that you can't have special days, and services and classes.

But I think there is a more effective way, a more Biblical way, to reach out to your community and win people to Christ.

Once again the questions are:

1. Are you equipping people how to share their faith?
2. Are you so rejoicing in your growth, whatever that may be, to the point that you are blind to what you could be doing instead of what you really are doing? Are you so caught up in the successes you are having that you just don't see it? Maybe what you are doing is so great compared to what you have done in the past, or compared to what others are doing that you are missing it. Now the truth is only a small percentage of churches are having what you could call success in evangelism.

Are you so suffering in your lack of growth or your decline that you are missing it to? Don't try and copy the 'attraction model'. Start training your people how to share the Good News with those they know and meet in life.

I remember an old saying: The eternal enemy of the best is the good. Could it be that the good some are seeing is keeping them from seeing and doing the BEST?

OK, so you have led _____ (you put in your number) to Jesus this year. GREAT.

But how many of your people are you training, equipping to effectively share the Gospel with others out in the community, those they know there?

Communists have extensive training for their people in how to propagate their movement.

Military leaders spend a lot of time training their soldiers.

Medical professionals spend years training to ply their trade.

Pilots spend hundreds of hours in training to learn how to fly.

Mormon missionaries are trained for at least SIX full weeks in how to share their message.

And the church?

What is the church called to do?

Make disciples from those in the world.

Are you training your people in doing that?

I challenge you to start doing it.

Unfortunately those in the church are too often like college or professional sports fans.

A select few learn how to play the game or become players.

Then we pay them so we can sit in the stadium or on our couch to watch them play the game. And often we let them play in our place instead of our going out and playing ourselves even if it is just with our friends. We let the pros do it and we cheer them on and we feel up and emotionally high if our team wins. We become spiritually overweight from sitting, watching, and eating. And we lose the excitement, benefits, and fulfillment of being in the game ourselves.

I've heard some say, "But, John, they are making disciples, winning people through their

HOME GROUPS

EVENTS

PROGRAMS

SERVICES

ETC."

And my response is GREAT. You don't have to stop all of that, but if that is your strategy, then your growth is a fraction of what it would be if you were preparing your people to GO and share the Good News with the people they know who aren't coming to these events, the Y'ALL COME method, trying to get people to COME to our stuff so they can hear the Gospel from the lesson, sermon, drama, music, (the professionals) etc.

Don't we get it? The great majority of the people outside aren't coming inside our "stadium." They aren't interested in our "game".

We need to prepare our people to go outside. We aren't selling or promoting a game (church life). We are to be sharing Jesus and his Way, Truth and Life.

Say what you will, until you are making that a major priority in your ministry, you are shortchanging yourself, your people, and the Kingdom.

We have turned it around. We start with Church. We tell people about our great church, preacher, building, services, programs, events, etc. We hope they will like US first and then we will get to Jesus.

Now the truth is that it does start with Church, a church of trained ambassadors going OUT.

I recently make a list of the kinds of people who are out there in our society.

Now read down this.

Here is my question.

How are you going to reach them?

What class, event, activity, or service can you plan that you think will interest and reach them?

How many people from these groups are in your congregation?

Gang members

Criminals

Atheists

Drug addicts

Prostitutes

Alcoholics

Politicians

Playboys

Homosexuals

Abortionists

Materialistic

Bullies

Pornography addicts

Murderers

Adulterers

Liars

The list is endless

Do you have to have a program to entice them in or would it be smarter to train your people so when they go out and meet those others as they live life, they will be prepared to share the Gospel with them. And many of your members know such people. They are their relatives, friends, neighbors, work associates, etc.

What will change the people listed above? A program or Jesus?

Now you are saying the purpose of your program is to introduce them to Jesus. Great! The problem is that more than 98 percent of the people we need to reach aren't coming to your class, event, etc.

So keep trying to be creative and clever enough to create programs to interest all these people to attend and sit and watch and listen, or start training your people how to share the Gospel with them outside of the four walls.

So why don't we train our people.

Why do we think only the professionals can share the story?

Where did Jesus say people would become his followers by seeing us being loving?

"They will know you are my disciples by your love." It doesn't say, "They will believe in me and follow me when they see your love for each other." He said they would know we are his disciples. Let's not take this out of context. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, the Good News, not from seeing me love someone else.

Yes, he said be salt, light, loving and to live exemplary lives but FAITH comes by hearing the WORD of God, the story of Jesus.

So have good PROGRAMS, EVENTS, SERVICES, BE NICE, DO LOVING THINGS....that is not my point. Train your people how to share the Gospel, and if you aren't good at that, get the training for yourself, too. Don't let pride stop you. You are missing out on something fantastic.

We've all heard the question, "What is insanity?" It is doing the same thing repeatedly hoping to get different results.

How long do we have to go on trying to improve our programs, events, etc. hoping that is going to help us reach more, to reach the world for Jesus instead of starting to train our people in how to win others to Jesus by knowing how to effectively offer and share the Gospel to those they know.

WRITING SEVENTEEN

HYENA EVANGELISM

The following is written by a preacher friend of mine, Jim Larsen.

“A few years back I made a sad confession to our congregation: I’ve often been a Hyena Evangelist. The Hyena picks off weak, straggling or defenseless zebras and such.

I was pretty good at picking off THE EASIER ONES THAT CROSSED MY PATH OR ENTERED MY TERRITORY. Perhaps the analogy doesn’t apply across the board, but so much of my evangelism has been a matter of mainly sharing the Gospel and baptizing people who had moved into the arena of my ministry. THEY ARE THE EASY ONES. WE INVITE. THEY WALK IN THE FRONT DOOR. THEY COME. WE FOLLOW UP AND SHARE.

Kids come home from camp and want to give their lives to Jesus. We love that, don’t we?

A visitor begins worshipping with us. I do some follow-up, often helping them put their feet on the Jesus Trail.

Children of our church folk reach an age where they are ready to take the plunge, and I’m there to do the dipping.

SOMEONE ATTENDS A SPECIAL EVENT WE HAVE.

So long as we have visitors showing up, I have a prospect list.

But intentionally moving into dark places with a candle in hand not waiting for them to come through our door? That has only more recently been my practice.

Enough of waiting for seekers to make their move toward me! I AM INTENTIONALLY BECOMING MORE PRO-ACTIVE. I WANT TO GO WHERE THEY ARE AND SEEK THEM OUT WHERE THEY ARE.

I offered one of our Sunday morning classes at a Mexican restaurant. As I did that, I developed a trusting relationship with the owner and staff.

Another local coffee shop is my main office. I have developed more ongoing friendships (and opportunities to discuss Kingdom matters).

My wife and I host a Christmas party at our place. THAT GIVES US CONTACT WITH MANY NEIGHBORS. They know us, and we know them on a first-name basis. This

results in personal evangelism opportunities. I taught an online university class that resulted in contact with many outside the Kingdom. It is amazing how this is resulting in seeking people coming to Christ.

We were doing a meal in the park on Sunday afternoons for a long time for any passerby but intentionally reaching out to build relationships with homeless people who spend a lot of time there.

A friend of mine and I have hosted a local television program, filmed at a local bar-*CHURCH AT LOUIE'S*. When the bar owners divorced, both parties asked for spiritual guidance. The bartender requested help in aiding his fiancé as she dealt with her father's death.

I've handed out copies of very short articles that I wrote once a week for a local newspaper. Those always stirred up conversations with people in the community who are positive contacts.

Several members of my service club (after years of friendship) know of my faith and allow me to share deeper things with them. Friendships have grown there that result in opportunities to share Jesus.

I have campouts and invite unbelievers to go with me.

I offer canoe trips through a raffle, which includes great food. That offers me more contacts with previously unknown people.

I offer strawberry plants to clerks, waiters, and others I meet in town. Many take me up and I deliver the plants at a later time. Those are new friendships started that will often give me opportunities to share Jesus later.

I try and get to know the grocery store clerk, the waiters at the restaurant, and others I can intentionally see regularly to build bridges. They aren't just faces of servants, but lives I am seeking to touch for Jesus.

No more just waiting for seekers to move into my orbit. I'm going into theirs. And it is exciting and fulfilling.

And what am I to do with these many, many ongoing friendships? I'd not be much of a friend if I had a cure for what ails others but I only offered it when asked or they show up at my front door seeking it.

Now I pray for good timing with them, to know the right moment to offer a few lessons on how to make peace with God. Like so many others, I've found the *Peace Treaty with God* (Now "It's All About Relationship") to be just what is needed. And such an offer need

not be intrusive. “If you’d like, I’d be happy to show you how you can have peace with God.” Sometimes the answer is yes, but not always. Still the relationship continues. I’ve made the offer. With time, most of them know they can trust me. I’m not going to jam something down their throat against their will.

In the past when I was involved in pre-marital counseling I required the *Peace Treaty* as a part of all pre-marital preparation with couples. They need my class on communication. Of course every couple benefits from learning to budget and such. But at the core of their needs is a solid relationship with God. I can provide help in tying the knot and connecting up God as well.

My old method of sharing Christ with folk was effective but not transferable. It sprang out of my years of experience as a Christian and pastor, but it wasn’t something I could effectively train others to use. And that should be a part of my work as a Christian leader, helping others gain confidence and a way to share their faith as they move out into the dark places.

The time of just waiting for others to request help in following Jesus, waiting for them to show up at my door, gone.

So many people don’t even know they have such a need. No more Hyena Evangelism, looking just for easy evangelism situations. I’m not saying to ignore those, but we need to go WAY beyond that.

The commission Jesus gave us includes making disciples for Him as we go. I want to do that. Along with every other believer I’ve been given that task. Now life is more about stepping into the world where others live and entering into genuine relationships with Kingdom intentions. Now I have a tool by which I can make an offer to people of peace beyond their comprehension. It amounts to being a true friend.

My friend has moved WAY BEYOND Hyena Evangelism. While it is easier programming for it and waiting for people to come in your front door, that is so limiting. And it is not nearly as exciting. It really even isn’t the New Testament model of evangelism.

The true model is more effective and it is a whole lot cheaper (not that that is a major issue). Are you using or relying on Hyena Evangelism for your evangelism program?

(Used by permission.)

WRITING EIGHTEEN

HOW TO GET OUT THERE

HOW TO EARN THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD.

How to GO.

Hey, it isn't easy. Jesus didn't say it would be. But so what. It is possible. It can be done. Many are doing it.

I've been told that the actual translation of the Great Commission is not GO, but AS YOU GO.

That means as you go about your daily life, be alert to the people around you. Few of us will ever be missionaries and GO to another country. That is not the idea here. While some must GO to other places, the vast majority need to know how to love and reach out AS THEY ARE GOING ABOUT THEIR DAILY LIVES RIGHT WHERE THEY LIVE.

I was in a conversation with a Christian leader in which they said, "I don't go into relationships with an agenda."

Later in the conversation I returned to that point and said, "I go into all relationships with an agenda. I'm an ambassador for Christ. He gives me an agenda. It is my job to find out if the other person is in Christ or not. If they aren't in Christ I have a calling and an obligation to at least make an offer to let them know why they need Jesus and how they can become a disciple. If they are IN Christ, then my responsibility is to help them grow in Christ. There are no exceptions. That is LOVE in action. While I'm far from perfect in carrying this out, it is my agenda." Without that I'd be living 'Churchianity' rather than Christianity.

We are called to be alert to all those around us as we go about life. Our job, calling, command, and mission as we go about daily life is to be alert and look for opportunities to share the Good News with those who are living in darkness.

It is our responsibility as ambassadors (II Corinthians 5:18-20) to show interest in others, look for the way and time in which we can find out if they are in Jesus and if not how to offer to share that information with them.

It is our job to attempt to plant the seed of the Gospel.

There are some basic issues we must be conscious of to be effective in this.

First we must prepare ourselves. If we aren't prepared, we won't be looking or sharing. We will be passing by most people like ships in the night.

We need to pray that God will show us those around us who need to hear about Jesus. Actually that would be EVERYONE who is not IN Christ. I don't pick and chose who I want to get involved with.

We need to look for opportunities to befriend people.

Paul told us we are to make the most of every opportunity.

Why has Jesus not come back? There is ONE reason. He wants to see more saved. It would only seem logical then that we should be busy doing what our King has asked for.

So here are some basic ideas as to how to find people. This should be an ongoing, intentional activity in the life of every Christian.

Look in your own back yard. There are all kinds of people around us that we don't even think about reaching out to.

Most of what follows here is something I had to learn.

Growing up I was:

Quiet

Shy

Timid

Fearful

Insecure

And I got the dry heaves whenever I went into new situations or had to meet someone new, etc. Fortunately after I became a Christian, God gave me some great models of people who were great in befriending other people.

For me it started at the beginning with a desire to share Jesus with others and a strong interest to be more open and less fearful even though that was my basic nature. I've had to force myself to look at people, smile, and be willing to start a conversation with them. I'm still learning. It is not my natural personality. But I'm learning and I guess you could say I have trained and pushed myself to go beyond my comfort zone in this area.

As we live our lives we must do the following, let me repeat:

Be prepared to share the Good News.

Pray for opportunities and EYES to see those around us.

When you leave the house realize you are on a Mission. You don't have to go to Haiti to go on a mission trip. You can go on one every time you leave the house. Actually it might start with someone who is living in the house.

You aren't going to share Jesus with every person every time you go out, but you can work at building relationships that can lead to that with many people.

As you go about the neighborhood, office, mall, grocery store, etc. look at people. Most people go about life NOT looking at others they meet along the way or cross paths with. We avoid eye contact. Stop that. You have to be careful in the way you do this. Be prudent, but start showing interest in the people you meet along the way.

Look at people. Acknowledge they are there, that they are alive and actually exist. Now you obviously need to be careful and not look with flirtatious looks.

SMILE. It is amazing what a smile does. It breaks barriers. Look, smile, just a simple smile, not a Cheshire cat giant smile, nor flirtatious, but just a nice smile, as opposed to a frown.

SPEAK UP. It is so easy to say hi. Or hello. This just acknowledges the other person's existence. Some might not respond. Do it anyway.

TALK; Depending on the situation you might have the opportunity to say something more.

There are a million possibilities, and it depends on the situation. But it could be,

"Hi, neighbor, how are you today?"

"What brings you to the seminar?"

On a plane. "Hi, how are you today? Are you leaving home or going home?"

"Have you been working all day?" with a clerk, waiter, etc.

If I end up sitting with some new person at a meal, or for coffee etc. and we have some time I have used a thousand times FORM as a guide for my conversation. I explain the FORM a few paragraphs below.

I train people how to do this in courses I teach. If you are interested in my 8 week on line course write me at

John.hendee@cox.net

Or johnhendee.com

and I'll share with you the information on the training.

Asking questions can open doors. It is a great way to show interest without being too nosey.

It helps break the ice. It helps earn the right to be heard by them in return.

It takes the pressure off feeling like I have to start preaching to them and witness to them on the spot.

Once we have connected, I just ask them questions (FORM) about the following areas:

I want to avoid very personal issues or things that could be embarrassing or awkward for them.

I just follow the FORM. This eliminates me having to fret over what to talk about.

F-family. Start asking questions related to them and their family. i.e.

How long have you lived here?

Where did you or your family come from?

Do you have many relatives living near you?

Do you come from a big family?

(If I know they are married) How did you two meet?

O-occupation. Then you can move onto questions related to their work.

What line of work are you in?

Are you going to school? What are you studying?

How did you get into this line of work?

How do you like it? What do you do?

That is interesting, what exactly do you do in that job?

RELATED TO THIS ARE AREAS OF INTEREST OR HOBBIES.

That would be if you found out someone is really into:

Sports, music, dogs, a special kind of help group, etc.

How did you get started in that?

How long have you done it?

What do you do?

R-religious background, You can later move into this area.

You know I'm curious, do you have any kind of religious background?

(If yes) How long have you been involved in that? Would you consider yourself an active participant in it?

What exactly does that faith/church/religion teach or practice? What are the key elements of it?

It could be atheism. It doesn't matter. Just ask about it.

There have been times when I have been with someone I had known for a long time, and I brought up the subject this way. "We have known each other for some time (or all your life if it is a relative) but I have never heard you talk about being involved in some kind of religion or faith?"

There are many other questions you can use here. The idea is just to get a conversation going. It is not to confront, challenge, or tell them how they are wrong.

What does your religion/philosophy/atheism teach about life after death?

What do you have to do to get that life?

What do you do weekly or monthly as a practitioner in your faith?

What's it like? What's it involve? How do you practice it in your daily life?

We are JUST asking, not attacking.

Listen and show sincere interest.

I most often will ask the following questions at some point. You have to be gentle, not attacking in doing this, but it is very interesting and opens a huge door for me to go on to the M of FORM. If done properly, people will not have a negative reaction to this. I've asked it of hundreds and never had anyone get upset or angry.

*I'd like to ask you a question in light of your (religious) background that I've asked a number of people and the answers are always interesting. It is a deep question and it makes you stop and think. Here it is. **"Have you come to the place in your life where***

you could say for sure that if you were to die today, that you would go to heaven?"

(Then you wait for their answer. Most all say "NO." or "I don't know.")

If that is the case, I then go on to M of FORM.)

Now, moving on to M.

M-message. This is getting to my making them an offer based on their answer to R.

My response is often something like this. "You know if you would be interested, I would be glad to get together with you and share with you four presentations called 'It's All About Relationship.'

They show us what we need to do to be sure that when we die we will go to heaven. The Bible shows us that God does not want us to live out our life not knowing what is going to happen with we die. He wants us to live in peace and have confidence about that subject. Each lesson is about 35 minutes long. We can do it at your place or where ever. Would that be of interest to you?"

Then you wait. If they are interested, you set up a time for the first lesson. I don't try and convert people on the spot. That is not very effective.

If they aren't interested, I let them know that if they ever are, they can let me know and I'll be glad to do it with them.

You can offer these lessons I have developed called It's All About Relationship

to all kinds of people:

Family

Friends

Neighbors

Professionals, doctor, dentist, chiropractor, etc.

Work associates

School associates

Club associates

Team members

Service people, waiters, barbers, yard service, computer repair, car repair,

House repair, pool service, mail man, grocery clerks.

Who are the people you see on a regular basis?

They are often OFF OUR RADAR because we don't know what to do.

Get trained. Put them on your radar. Love them, care about them, and make the offer to them.

If you are interested in the training or have questions let me know.

Johnhendee.com

WRITING NINETEEN

TELEMARKETING CHURCH GROWTH

You know, it doesn't sound very good, does it. But I think we need to take a closer look at what we are doing and see what we can learn from it all.

I was talking with a friend recently about the plethora of seminars, books, workshops, etc. offered by preachers, most often from mega-churches, to other usually smaller churches.

Leadership Network recently reported that .5 percent of Protestant churches in the U.S. are classified (by man's definition) as mega-churches. That is half of ONE percent. While they get a lot of attention, they are a small part of all the churches out there.

The same report says that 80 percent of all churches are just holding their own or dying. Combined with that, I've been told that there are currently about 6,000 church mergers per year. Those are generally smaller, struggling congregations that merge with larger churches just to try and stay alive. And sometimes partnering with a larger congregation seems to provide immediate assistance in their stagnant or dying condition.

It seems as though the .5 percent is getting most of the attention these days within the Christian world and outside. Isn't it odd that our focus is fixed on the size of the congregation instead of the health of the congregation? One would conclude that because someone can attract a large crowd that they are automatically the ordained role models for everyone who leads a smaller congregation. I'm not attacking mega churches or gifted preachers. But listen to what I'm sharing.

Now I've been a part of both mega and non-mega churches over the years in the U.S. and outside the U.S.

I worked as an integral part of the staff of a congregation. I was there for 17 years, and the congregation grew from about 350 to 3500+. Since I left there for the mission field years ago, it has continued to grow and expand to other campuses as well as adopting or absorbing smaller churches.

I wrote a book about our experience during my years there. It is titled *Smart Fishing*.

But I have a concern about some of the workshops and seminars offered by leaders of the mega churches and everyone from smaller churches going to them to learn about what they did to grow and then their making it a model for the small church.

Having been a part of a mega church and having observed many of them, I feel it is important for everyone else to realize a few things. THIS IS ONE MAN'S OPINION.

I'm not against big churches. Some are doing some amazing things for the Kingdom. Some are doing some amazing things for **their** kingdom. I'm not here to judge that but just offer my opinion that might help a whole lot of churches regardless of their size.

Most congregations will never become a mega church.

Let's face it and accept it. It is OK. Jesus spoke of people with five talents, two talents, and one talent. For a person of two talents to desire and then try to become a five-talent person is going to be discouraging and disappointing as they struggle but never achieve that stratosphere. And it can become a distraction that might result in discouragement, phoniness, failure, and deception.

There are five-talent people. But most of us try as hard as we might will never be five-talent people. Can we learn from them and become a better two-talent person? You betcha.

There are some five-talent people who have taught me a lot. I remember one day years ago as a young youth worker sitting in my office and with tears running down my face praying "God, make me like my friend, my model, Tim (a five-talent man)." It never happened.

But knowing Tim and eventually even working with him helped me learn to accept myself and realize that God didn't want me to be Tim. He wanted me to be the BEST John that I could be with Jesus' help. That was a huge moment in my life. Tim was a mentor, and I have learned a lot from him and in some small but important ways I have grown to be more like him; but I'll never be Tim. And that is OK. It is just fine with God and now with me.

I think we need to be careful of wanting to be something as a congregation that is not going to happen. It is OK to be a one- or two-talent church. In fact, 80 percent of all of them are that and to attempt to become a five-talent church will likely result in a disaster.

Can you learn from them? Of course. But the five-talent church needs to understand that if part of their mission is to suggest to all the others that they can grow and be like them, if they just do it our way can be a serious error.

Now maybe all of them aren't saying that overtly, but the message, the idea is often implied. Do what we did and this too can happen to you.

Years ago I worked with Gene Rogers. He was the preacher of the same congregation in Los Angeles for 50+ years. He was a wise preacher, innovative, evangelistic, etc. The congregation was located in a tough area, changing races, lower middle class, older

established area, a tough area. The church maybe got to 250+ at one point. It fluctuated over the years. For a while he wrestled with seeing neighboring churches move to the suburbs and often experience significant growth as a result of the move. He lamented about that for a while. One day he told me, "Hey, John, I finally figured this out. We are a BIG church. Now not in numbers, but we are a BIG church. We are reaching out and going to people around us where there is heavy poverty, drug use, and racial tension, etc. It is a highly transient area. We are loving people and touching lives. We have to GO and connect with them and love them and share the Gospel with them." And he was right. It was a BIG church. He wasn't being blind to reality or trying to live under a false illusion. No, they didn't have 3,000. And he finally learned to accept that and be content with that. He didn't want to try and be something he wasn't and his congregation probably would never become.

Had he been in a newer suburban church, I think he might have seen a congregation grow to a larger size, but he learned to appreciate what they were doing where they were. And they WERE making disciples. They got into people's homes and lives. They were training people how to effectively share the Gospel. I loved his insight. They WERE a BIG church.

To become a mega takes a special combination of things that smaller churches will never have and will probably just kill themselves trying to copy or reproduce.

What are a few things often needed to become a mega church?

- The issue of gifting - God gives some leaders five talents. In my 50 years in the church I've realized that the group of 5 talented people is a small group. For the most part, it is a great group of people. Sometimes they attract other five-talent people and as a team they can be powerful. Those of one or two talents will likely not be able to do what the five-talent people do.
- A powerful leader, preacher - more often than not someone who is dynamic, very likeable, attractive, a powerful leader, etc. Often a five- talent kind of person. He can't be reproduced. While there are other five-talent leaders, a two-talent leader trying to do what a five can do will usually fail.
- Staff - as they grow they start to add good staff, children, youth, music, women, men, sports, etc. And many of these people are five-talent people in their area.
- Location - from what I have seen, most megas are in growing or stable communities with some level of economic stability or growth, and white middle class. There are a few exceptions that I know of. People are often moving into the area looking for a new church. There are lots of families with kids and they are looking for something good for their kids.

- Programs -The job of the staff is to build and provide a smorgasbord of great programs and events to ATTRACT people to come to them.
- Facility - They usually try and provide the best they can with the funds they can raise. At times. the facilities are quite impressive.
- Economics, money - It takes a LOT of money to build and maintain a mega church. There are salaries for the preacher and staff, facilities, programs, etc. Few mega churches are in financially suffering areas (although I have seen many megas ending up in financial crisis as they overspend).
- God - I don't want to exclude the role of God in the growth of some of the mega churches. Some are growing with His help. And some are doing incredible things. I am grateful for those.

My thoughts on this are not to put down the mega church but it is to point out that the vast majority of smaller churches will never be one. Those that are megas and are offering training for the smaller ones need to be very careful in using their story or model as the model for the smaller ones. It won't always be the best model.

My friend I was talking with about this subject made an interesting comment. He said, "What some mega churches are doing (while maybe not their intent- they want to be helpful) in their seminars, books, etc. is like TELEMARKETING on TV."

He was referring to TV telemarketing shows proclaiming to one and all how to get rich by flipping houses or properties. My friend has gone to many of these. He is a realtor. He has become good at what he is doing in spite of what he was told at these seminars. He doesn't go to them anymore. He said, "What they are saying, sharing, teaching and promising will work for very few." Many will go under trying to make it happen for themselves.

My friend said that the telemarketers may have a great product or system they are trying to share with others. It worked for them. But what they are really doing in their seminars is SELLING DREAMS, AND PROMISES. You do this, buy this, practice this, do it like we have, etc. and you TOO will be successful just like us!!!!

My friend proposed that we can do the same in the church. Maybe we get caught up in our culture and apparent successes, who knows? Can we be selling dreams and promises? Do what we did, the way we did it and you too can grow and be a big church.

Hey, if the shoe doesn't fit, don't get offended. If it does, then I challenge you to look at what you are doing. You can still be a huge help to smaller churches. You might just need to look at and change some of the ways you are trying to do that.

What some megas have succeeded at is not going to work for many smaller churches. And to suggest that it will is to set many good, loving, committed church leaders on a path of trying to reproduce something that is going to fail. In the end, they will end up more discouraged and frustrated and will likely feel like a failure and throw the towel in on it all. The truth might be that they are doing a good job as a two-talent leader, where they are. Now if they are failing and going backwards, they need help.

And while most of the mega churches talk about the need for evangelism and witnessing and DISCIPLESHIP, my experience has shown that few of them are training their thousands in how to effectively share the Gospel one on one with the people they know.

Most of them are using the attractional model to grow. The congregation's members are normally only shown and encouraged how to invite people to attend a service or event and not how to personally lead those they know in how to have a covenant relationship with God.

I have a suggestion for all congregations large or small.

What if you started training six people (including yourself) in how to do effective personal evangelism?

If you are a small congregation, start with six.

If you are a mid-size congregation, start with 12.

If you are a large congregation, start with 24.

Let's go back to starting with six people. We train them and get out and start doing it.

And then six months later those six each recruits another and they train those six new ones in effective personal evangelism.

Now you have 12.

And then those 12 each recruit someone to train and they train them for the next six months.

Then you have 24.

If you start with six and repeat that cycle for five years, you will have trained over 3,000 believers in how to GO and make disciples.

Can you image what that would do to your congregation?

OK, so you only have 150 in your congregation. Forget the 3,000.

Get started with six and see what happens. Don't stop training until you can't find anyone new to train. And don't forget the ones you are winning to Jesus. They must be trained.

I'm in favor of ALL CONGREGATIONS growing and maturing.

Let's get the training of our people going.

It will make a huge difference.

I'm saying these things in many places and finding some positive responses.

Some get it and are getting on with it.

Some others just seem to be offended and shine it off and ignore it.

Some are like deer looking at the head lights. They see the light but are frozen and don't do anything. Nothing changes.

Or they just don't agree.

Nothing changes when nothing changes.

I encourage you to step up and start training.

SPECIAL HELP FOR CONGREGATIONS FROM

50 TO APPROXIMATELY 1,000 IN SIZE.

I want to recommend someone who has developed a tremendous plan for congregations to organize for ministry, discipleship, and growth. It would work for all sizes, but is excellent for churches under a 1,000.

Dr. Michael Householder

He has lived and worked in Europe and here in the U.S.

He currently lives in the U.S. and travels within the U.S. and other countries preparing and training churches for growth.

He has a tremendous plan for churches that want to do effective disciple making and maturing and equipping of new Christians.

If you are serious about wanting to grow and mature, here is the man and his materials.

Write him at: mikerhouseholder@gmail.com

Phone him at: 865 573 9794

WRITING TWENTY

OUR SHRINKING WORLD

Following is an exercise I do with many groups as part of my training.

I ask them to make a list of all the kinds of people most Christians don't feel comfortable being with or around.

It often takes a few minutes for them to get warmed up, but once they get the idea they are pretty good at this. Following is a list of the kinds of people that end up on the list. There are more.

Again, who are the kinds of people most Christians don't feel comfortable being with or around?

People with:

Piercings

Tattoos

Different hair styles

Different sexual life styles

Homosexuals

Unmarried couples living together

Transvestites

Playboys

Fornicators

Adulterers

Sexual predators

Pedophiles

Porno addicts

Multiple mates

Mate swappers

Cross dressers

Transgender

Sexually immoral in other realms

People who believe in:

Aliens, space ships, etc.

Evolution

Abortion

People who use:

Drugs

Alcohol

Tobacco products

People who are in:

Cults

Different Religions

Satanists, witchcraft, etc.

New Age groups

People who are:

Atheist/ skeptics/ agnostic

Criminals

Abusers

People who:

Have a different personality, loud/quiet, neat/messy, late/punctual, clean/dirty, social/withdrawn, confident/unsure, etc.

Are not so pretty

Hunters, non-hunters

Gun owners or anti guns

Have different diet styles, eat meat, don't eat meat.

Handicapped/ limited

Illegal aliens

Old

Very overweight

Too skinny

Small people

Mentally challenged

Physically challenged

People from:

Different social groups

Different political groups

Different economic groups

Different races

Different social views

Different career/jobs

Different environmental views

Different educational level

Different nationality

Different religious groups

Different denominational groups

Different eating views, vegans, etc.

Different environmental views

Who else would you add to the group?

After spending some time building the list, I address the following:

We are commanded to go and make disciple of all peoples.

How can we reach the people of the world around us if we are hiding from them, avoiding them, or always attacking them?

It is easier to think of “all the nations/peoples” as those living on another continent. But wait. That is not the idea. If we take all the above-mentioned people off our disciple making list, who is left? Jesus said he didn’t come for the healthy but for the ill. First off that includes all of us. None of us are perfect.

WHO DO YOU WRITE OFF, IGNORE, AVOID, JUDGE, BELITTLE, RUN DOWN, ETC. because they are different, live differently, think or believe differently?

If you were they, do you think someone with a bad attitude toward you would reach you?

Don't be too quick in your response. Be honest. Think this through. Make YOUR list.

1 Corinthians 5:9-12(NIV) 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people” 10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11 But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister[a] but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. 12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church?

Did you see that? “Not at all meaning (not to associate with) the people of this world who are immoral.” Hummmm.

How can I reach them without being with them, associating with them, or at some point at least talking to them?

Who are we to make disciples of in the world?

Who did Jesus die for? Some or all?

Are we to love our enemies and those who are different or just those who already are good people and just need to join the good people club or society?

How can we reach them if we don't go to them?

Did Jesus come to condemn or to seek and save?

Who was Jesus accused of being with?

By the time most box off, or wall off those they don't like, feel comfortable with, or know how to relate to, their world is pretty small, consisting of likeminded people, people who act, think, dress, eat, drink, and play like them! And for most that might get down to a very small world.

Most of us think OUR way of doing things is the right way and anyone else is to be rejected, shunned, or walled out. I'm not saying we don't have or shouldn't have Christian standards, but if our standards lead us to avoiding all others who are different, then how can we reach the world that way?

How do we break down the walls we have created?

How do we live in the world and influence it rather than be influenced by it?

What do we do when someone wants nothing to do with us? And that does happen.

Do I have to attack them or avoid them when we have differences?

What are the other options?

How do we love them when they are so different. This applies to those in our own families as well.

1 Corinthians 9:19

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. 21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the Gospel that I may share in its blessings.

Here is a quote out of a book titled *JESUS, A Theography*, written by Leonard Sweet and Frank Viola. This comment really fits in here well.

"You call yourself the church? Show me the bad people. If you are not living in company with bad people, what right do you have to call yourself church? Jesus died as He lived: in the company of "bad people." In fact, the gospel has been summarized as "Jesus ate good food with bad people." We live and die together, good and bad. And we never give up on anyone, no matter how bad. In fact, on the cross Jesus Himself converted only

50%, even when the 'bad people' were in their dying moments. How much better do you think you can do?

WRITING TWENTY ONE

0.5-PERCENT ISSUE: CHURCH GROWTH AND EVANGELISM MODELS

I pulled a couple quotes out of: **2012 Large Church Salary Report**; Research Trends from Leadership Network by Warren Bird, Ph.D.

Among all Protestant churches across North America, roughly 20% are growing and 80% are plateaued or are in decline. These figures hold across most denominations and networks.

Figure 1 demonstrates the uniqueness of this large group: among North America's 325,000 Protestant churches, only 1,600 (0.5%) have attendances of 2,000 or higher.

Beyond size issues described above, churches selected for this report are located in 34 states and 3 Canadian provinces. The oldest were founded in the early 1800s, and the youngest ones in 2005. In terms of ethnicity, 83% describe themselves as predominantly Anglo/white

Now, did you see those numbers above? Only 0.5 percent of all the Protestant churches in North America have an attendance of 2,000 or more, yet for too many of the other 99.5 percent of churches, those 0.5 percent are the MODEL of what the others want to become and many in the group of 99.5 percent are trying to copy the methods and strategies of the 0.5 percent to become just like them. A small percentage of them will ever achieve that and may end up failing in their attempt to do so.

I have a better suggestion for the 80 percent that are plateaued or in decline. I have a suggestion as to what to do rather than try and copy the 0.5 percent and become like them. I even encourage the 0.5 percent to adopt what I'm proposing. It might just amaze them at what happens. This is for EVERYONE.

If you do what I recommend, you will reach people. You will grow. (Actually I think what I'm proposing was Jesus' idea long ago, so I can't take credit for it.)

What I'm talking about here is for ALL 100 percent of congregations regardless of their size!!

What can you do to grow and reach more?

Hire a new preacher?

Build new buildings?

Move to a new location?

Add new staff people?

Get a new music team?

Get a new look?

Use more social media?

Now some of those things might be helpful, but I'm not going to deal with that here either.

What I'm recommending will result in new excitement, sense of purpose and fulfillment for you and those in your congregation as you seek to follow Jesus.

It will result in your seeing new disciples.

Here it is:

How about training as many of your people as you can how to effectively share the Good News with their family members, friends, neighbors, work associates, classmates, fellow club or team members, etc. who aren't disciples of Christ?

I venture to say, based on my observations, hardly any of the mega churches are doing that.

To me, that is CENTRAL to what all of us are supposed to be doing!

I mentioned in an earlier writing that I went to the website of a mega church. I studied it thoroughly. I found over 40 different opportunities offered by the church.

There were:

Home groups, Sunday school classes, classes on how to recover from losing a mate, how to deal with discovering your child/adult has announced they are gay, how to get out of financial crisis, how to improve your marriage or family life, sports leagues, etc.

BUT I could not find (and confirmed it doesn't exist with a phone call to them) anywhere for a Christian to go to be trained in an effective way to share the Good News with those they know and meet in life.

What in the world is going on? This is a shortcoming that exists in churches all across the county and world.

We were called to make disciples. Now I'm all for helping those with specific kinds of problems or challenges. That is not the issue. But if we think we are going to reach the un-reached world through a smorgasbord of classes, holiday special events, sports

programs, trying to entice them inside our four walls so a few can reach them through their preaching and teaching, then we are going to come up short of achieving what God has commanded and called us to do.

And even the 0.5 percent are very limited in the number of those outside of Christ they will actually reach without doing this. Their numbers often look spectacular when compared to small churches but it doesn't change the fact that most of them aren't training their people how to share the Good News.

Many experts tell me that most of the growth of the mega churches is coming from transfers from the other 95.5 percent of the smaller churches who can't compete with or offer the variety of things the larger church can.

I'm confident that if a mega church started doing what I'm recommending, they would see a kind of growth they have never imagined.

If you are interested in a plan to train your staff and your congregation in effectively sharing the Good News with those they know, regardless of the percent group you belong to, let me know. John.hendee@cox.net

WRITING TWENTY TWO

IT HAS SO MUCH POTENTIAL: CAN YOU IMAGINE?

I was having a short conversation with a preacher friend. In the middle of the conversation, something moved him to say, “John, the Peace Treaty doesn’t work for us because we can’t get into the homes of our visitors.” He said a couple other things and we went on our ways. I didn’t even bother responding to what he said at the time.

But later I thought about what he said. I realized he had a limited concept of what the PT (IAAR) was for, or who it was for. He thought it was **just** to use with people who visit his congregation. After their visit, you try follow up on them in a visit to their home where you offer going through the lessons with them. Now they work really well in that scenario, but they are CERTAINLY NOT LIMITED to that. And to limit them to that is to really limit the tremendous potential our people have in reaching others for Jesus.

As I thought about that conversation, I created the following scenario. Think about this.

Let’s suppose the congregation where he preached had 2,000 older youth and adults. And that would be close to his situation.

You can do this same scenario using the number 200 or whatever and adjust it to your situation.

OK, 2,000. Now let’s suppose that each of those 2,000 had on average 10 people they knew fairly well, on a first-name basis within 50 miles of where the congregation meets - family, friends, neighbors, work associates, school friends, etc. I think 10 is very conservative, but let’s work with that.

Now if you have 2,000 in your congregation $\times 10 = 20,000$. So that is 20,000 people who are known by the people in your congregation who aren’t attending now or you would be running 5,000 or more (Not that our GOAL is to get people to attend your congregation; it is to make disciples for Christ). Now we’ll concede that some of those 20,000 are already believers going to other congregations.

But my question is how does this preacher plan to reach those who are unreached among the 20,000 people? Stick with me.

Is the method to build more buildings, hire more staff, and offer more creative programs, services, and events to attract them IN?

While that will work for some of them, a really small percentage of them, it won’t on the vast majority. I believe and am convinced that the New Testament model is to equip the

Christians to GO and effectively share the Good News with the people they know OUT where they are.

SO how can you get into the homes of those 20,000? How about through the 2,000 who know them? It is either that or wait until they attend something you offer and then try and figure out how to get into their home or get them to attend a 101 class. Many of them already get into their homes or invite the others to their home.

Remember that many of those 20,000 aren't interesting in coming to church or any church event or activity.

So, with all respect, I ask preachers, what are you doing to equip, prepare, or train your people to effectively share the Gospel with those 10 people? After all, that is the command, "To GO and make disciples," not just INVITE them to church so someone can share the Good News from a pulpit or lectern. Some will come. Some will hear. Some will accept Christ, and that is wonderful. But I don't see much of that model going on in the Book of Acts in the New Testament, and it is not going to make a major impact on our society.

Again, I ask what about the thousands who aren't attending now and likely never will unless they hear the Good News first. So how will they hear the Good News first? A track? A TV show? Well, some Christians have been doing those kinds of things for decades with little to show for it. There has to be a better way. It is the New Testament way. But how few are doing it. It is sad.

I wrote in another place about my best friend telling me that what he did for years is what he came to see as and call hyena evangelism. Let me repeat it.

He asked me if I had ever seen a pack of hyenas or wolves hunting in a nature film. Yes. "Who do they hunt for?" Well, the weak. The old, young, sick, injured, or isolated.

"Yes," he said. "For way too many years I majored on picking off the easy ones. The people who walked through our doors. They were relatively easy to reach (pick off). Then we would send a gang of kids to camp for a week. They came home and many were easy to baptize. The easy pickin's."

While my friend wasn't depreciating the faith or decisions of those folks, he was making a commentary on himself and what he did or didn't do to help train or equip those in his congregation to reach the not-so-easy folks who weren't walking through the doors to a service, event, or program. He has seriously changed the way he operates. He is a great model in how to GO.

Now, don't ignore those walking through your doors. That is not the point.

The point is WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO TRAIN AND EQUIP YOUR PEOPLE TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS WITH THOSE 10+ PEOPLE THEY KNOW WHO AREN'T INTERESTED IN EVEN COMING CLOSE TO THOSE DOORS RIGHT NOW, regardless of how great your preaching is, your worship team is, and how many cool programs or events you have?

If you need help in this, let me know.

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WRITING TWENTY THREE

I'M INTERESTED TO HEAR PREACHERS TALK ABOUT THE PEOPLE Who:

Attend their weekend services.

Attend their home groups during the week.

Attend their 101 classes.

Attend their camp/retreat/seminar.

Watch their TV program.

Watch their sermons on the church website.

Go to their website.

Follow them on Facebook or Twitter.

Or the number of those who:

Accepted Christ through their ministry during the past year, or their

Big Baptism Sunday (i.e. 500 baptized on one day) or their

Big event, special program, or new facility.

God uses a lot of things to build His Kingdom.

But I am on a one-track course, and I have one basic question I am going to push the rest of my life.

I should have started pushing it a long time ago. I confess that and regret not having started more forcefully before now.

But I push it with hopes it will wake us up. I can tell some are upset with this, but so be it. Better to have stirred the pot than to have never put the spoon in it. That is my new saying. Oh, well. But we need some stirring of the pot in my mind.

Recently, I have been asking many church, mission, and Christian college leaders what they are doing to equip their people in personal evangelism. The answers I get are very revealing. The answer usually goes like this.

“Oh, our evangelistic efforts are working very well. We planted ___ churches over the past ___ years. We had ___ baptisms last year. In fact on a couple Sundays we had over ___ baptisms. Yes I think it is going very well. Thank you.”

Now don't you dare take what I'm saying out of context. I rejoice with everyone for every person who accepts Christ.

But I think we have lulled ourselves into accepting something that is FAR from what we could be doing and should be doing by taking the easy road, taking the second best. What is the old saying? “The eternal enemy of the best is the good.” So all the church plantings are good, all those baptisms are good, but here is my question.

How many people in your sphere of influence, your congregation, mission, or ministry, have you trained in the past five years to share the Good News with those they know outside of the church and who aren't interested in going to your service, programs, events or new church plants? And that is most of the people they know outside of the church.

How many of your people do you plan to train or equip to share the Good News next year and the year after?

Here is a comment of a pastor in Arizona who took the online class. He is the son of a great preacher and he is a pastor himself.

*“2 Timothy 2:2 talks of taking what you have learned (gospel and being a disciple) and giving it to others who will be faithful to do it and pass it along also. This course has challenged me in that I have not made teaching a priority. **I have not shared with another believer how to have conversations, how to explain the gospel or what Christianity is really about, and how to lead someone in becoming a disciple of Jesus. I feel that this is something God wants me to make a priority. I feel silly and embarrassed saying it because one would think that this is a standard requirement for anyone in the pastor role.**”*

Are we caught in what I call the Curse of the Four Wall Mentality? I explained this earlier. We build or rent our four walls, hire the best preacher we can get, start hiring staff members to provide programs for children, youth, music/worship, women, men, etc., and then hang a sign out front and say “Y'all Come.” We try and provide what we think will ENTICE people to come inside our groups, services, or programs so the professionals can reach them. Now if you get the ball rolling, you can provide some things that will be pretty nice - music, speakers, seminars, courses, sports, etc. Maybe we can call it the Curse of the Four Wall Mentality and the Curse of Over Programming.

Now here is my question again. Mega church or small church, what will help us reach more people for the Lord? More buildings, special programs, staff members, church plants OR training the people we have to GO out into the world and effectively share the Good News with those they know and meet along life's journey?

WHATEVER FRUIT YOU SAW FROM TRYING TO DRAW OR ATTRACT MORE PEOPLE INSIDE YOUR four WALLS, in this man's opinion will be dwarfed by the number of people your congregation or ministry COULD reach if they were trained in how to effectively share the Good News with those outside the four walls first.

I have been saying for some time now that fewer than 1 percent of all our churches have any kind of ongoing, effective training in personal evangelism. I haven't had anyone challenge me on that yet. We MUST change that. I'm not even going to share here the passages that call on leaders to equip Christians, to help them be prepared to share the Good News. We know what they are. But are we doing it?

If you are interested in training your people how to effectively share the Good News with those they now, in a non-attack way, a respectful way, let me know and I'll explain our training and our tool, "It's All About Relationship" with you.

Start training your people. Turn this thing around.

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WRITING TWENTY FOUR

HAND-GRENADE EVANGELISM AND EVANGELISTIC RAIDS

Much of what churches do in the name of evangelism is what I call either hand grenade evangelism or evangelistic raids.

Let me explain.

Both strategies are very weak, ineffective, and still leave our people unprepared to share the Gospel with the people they know.

We have substituted these in place of preparing our people to share the Gospel.

HAND GRENADE EVANGELISM

This is when we pull the pin and throw out or leave a hand grenade (the Gospel in some form) out there hoping it will go off and impact someone for Jesus. I suppose we could call this land mine evangelism, too. It is the same idea.

In doing so, we try to introduce people to a personal relationship with Jesus through very impersonal methods.

While some of these have impacted some people, these methods have been tried for decades and are not reaching the world for Jesus. They have been tried and tested and are very poor and weak substitutes for what we are called to do. They are impersonal methods. There is no relationship involved. In fact, there is usually no personal, real people contact involved. It is mostly long distance. We hide in our foxholes, throwing out the hand grenades or planting land mines and then we run.

While some of these methods can reach some people the results are small compared with the applying the best method?

Handing out tracks to strangers.

Leaving tracks somewhere.

One day I went to the post office and someone has taped a small evangelistic track to all the P.O. boxes. Good attempt, most of them had been thrown on the floor. I'm sure these tracks might have left the man having to clean them up in a state of swearing.

Leaving Bibles or Bible portions in different places.

Evangelistic TV programs. Few non-Christians watch them. For the most part, it is a preacher preaching to the choir, or those who are already Christians, and they call it evangelism.

Evangelistic radio. Same scenario as TV.

Street preaching. While I admire the courage of these folks, I don't see much fruit from this.

Maybe the greatest example of this is the following: "If I can get my friend, neighbor, or relative to come to church with me, maybe the preacher can lob some message from the pulpit that will touch or impact them and they will accept Christ."

Hey, it happens. And that is fine. But the reason we think that way is because we aren't prepared to share with that same person on our own. We have been convinced that the preacher is the one who is good at this convincing and converting.

101 classes. While these may have good information, the same applies as to thinking that the preacher can reach the people. And 99 percent of the people we know who don't know Jesus will ever make it to a 101 class.

Now for EVANGELISTIC RAIDS.

This is a little different.

Evangelistic raids are some variation of the following.

We have a group meet at the church facilities to go out together to carry out some helpful work. This might even include most of our short-term mission trips. We have planned the event, we raise our funds, we meet, we pray, we go. But what do we do when we go? Generally speaking, we do something nice or good in the name of God for others. I've seen all kinds of things: hand out free clothes, food, shoes, paint houses, build houses, clean up areas, dig wells, hand out bottles of water, distribute medicine, etc. And in the process, we let the people (normally strangers) know we are doing it because we love God. We most often tell them where we came from. Maybe we leave them a brochure or pamphlet. And we go back home. We feel good. We hope they follow us back to our place.

Now we are told to do good works. That is GREAT. But that is NOT a good or adequate substitute for making disciples through personal relationships and evangelism. We do many of these things hoping that the people we do it for will be touched by God through our actions. That is good. But often we do these things in the name of evangelism with strangers. We STILL don't know what to do with those people we know, much less the strangers we are doing something nice for. By the way, Mormons and Muslims do many

of the same things. A big difference is that most Mormons and Muslims are well trained to tell others about what they believe.

Now as we go out to do our good works, we will often drive past the houses of our neighbors, friends, and relatives (with whom we have never done anything in the way of sharing the Good News because we don't know how) on the way to do "evangelism" with strangers.

While leaving hand grenades and going on evangelistic raids most Christians are still not reaching out to and attempting to share the Gospel with those they know. That takes preparation. Handing out a track might take a lot of courage but little or no preparation. And we are doing most all these things with strangers because we don't know what to do with those we already know, and we aren't prepared or equipped by our churches to do so.

WRITING TWENTY FIVE

BENEFITS OF THE IAAR

Following is a list of BENEFITS I have seen from having a tool like “It’s All About Relationship” to share the Gospel with others. There are FOUR presentations/lessons. We offer to go through the presentations with people usually in their home. We normally do one a week. This is not an in-your-face kind of approach.

Benefits

- They are not a high-pressure method. You won’t be forcing the Good News on someone. If they aren’t interested, you don’t do them.
- They are printed. Each person has their copy of that week’s lesson as you go through the presentations. You have yours, too. They follow along as you guide them through the presentations.
- You don’t take your Bible with you. That scares some people off. From their perspective, it is like our walking into their house with a spiritual gun and they KNOW you are going to use it on them!
- You don’t have to dress up formal or fancy. Neat and clean is the rule.
- You want to take a partner with you. They can help with the people’s kids if needed, and it is part of training them to share the Gospel, too.
- You will be giving a GREAT answer to what people need to hear, The Good News.
- You don’t have to memorize it. You have it all in front of you.
- You don’t do it with those not interested in doing it.
- You have several meetings with them. It is not a one-shot presentation. There are many benefits to that.
- It helps you be relaxed and confident. You know what you are doing.
- You leave a copy with them. They might want to look it over again. If you use a memorized presentation, they likely won’t remember even one verse of what you shared as you walk out the door. This way they have it all to look at again.
- It helps build their confidence and trust. You aren’t forcing it on them.

- It gives the Holy Spirit more time to work on convicting them of their need for Jesus.
- It is sharing with people the ONLY thing that speaks of the real Truth, and gives the reasons for a legitimate Hope for this life and for eternity.
- It is sharing the ONLY thing that can truly break through hard hearts.

“Reasons” not to use the IAAR presentations. I’ve heard most of these over the years, and most of them come from those who haven’t used the presentations.

- It is canned.

Well, if you aren’t well prepared, it could come across that way. But then so is the Gospel of Matthew. It is the same every time I read it. Your preparation and the way you present are very important. Preaching can be canned, too, if the preacher isn’t prepared.

- It is limiting Holy Spirit.

Then so is reading Matthew! It is the same every time I read it.

- It is too long.

How long is a good courtship/engagement? How long do most take in getting to know the other? Or, preacher, how long is your sermon? Or your class?

- The training is too complicated.

Well, is the training for a pilot or brain surgeon too complicated? Are you just looking for the easy way out, the share-it-in-five-minutes approach? It isn’t complicated. It just takes commitment and time.

I remember reading about a broom company that sold its brooms door to door. It bragged about its grueling 25-hour training program for its sales people. And that is to just sell a broom.

T-Mobil or any other company has extensive training for its people.

Airlines have serious, extensive training for their pilots.

And we want to shrug off some training to share the Gospel because it takes time and we have to do some homework? Get serious.

WRITING TWENTY SIX

HOW TO DRAMATICALLY INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE MAKING DECISIONS FOR JESUS.

There is a ratio between the number of IAAR studies and the number of people making decisions for Jesus. It is very simple:

Few studies = fewer decisions and responses.

Little planting of seeds = small harvest.

Do more IAAR presentations with people = potential for more people accepting Jesus.

We pray. We plant seeds. We wait. We water. Then we harvest.

No planting = no harvesting. And when we have the Curse of the Four Wall Mentality, what we are actually doing is planting most of our seeds in the BARN!!!

MANY TRY TO GET PEOPLE TO RESPOND TO THEIR

- Preaching. That is good but very limited. Most in the community never hear it, plus it isn't really personal.
- 101 classes. They can be good but very limited. Most in the community never attend.
- Special events. They can be good but very limited. Most in the community never attend.
- Home groups. They can be good but very limited. Most in the community never attend.
- We are told in most churches to **witness**, which usually means share your story, love them and invite them to church. That is OK at times but very limited and at times very ineffective. You can do all that and they still haven't heard HIS story, the Good News about the cross of Christ and what that means for them. GO. Show interest. Offer. Plant. Water. Reap the harvest.

WRITING TWENTY SEVEN

I WAS SKEPTICAL

After showing a solid Christian man our evangelism training he enthusiastically said, “Wow, you need to share this with our preacher. Now would be a great time. He just got done preaching a great series on our need to be reaching out, witnessing, and evangelism. This would go perfectly with what he said.”

Well, I paused for a bit and asked him, “During his great series did he offer you any training on how to do that effectively with the people you know, your friends, relatives, neighbors, work mates, etc.?”

“No,” was the answer. I assumed that would be the answer. It almost always is.

I’m skeptical.

I get around. I hear preachers preaching about witnessing all the time.

What does that mean? Here we go again!

Be loving.

Do good things for them, help them.

Let your light shine.

Share your story.

Invite them to church (a service, event, activity, group, class, program, concert, or something).

And in some cases if our services, events, activities, groups, classes, programs, concerts are good enough, some of the people our folks have invited come and some in the end will find Jesus. Great. But to put all our eggs in that strategy is so limiting and shortsighted (plus it can be very time consuming and expensive).

And some can have enough success in those methods that they then become the model for others in how to reach and grow. Some have enough success in this that they think they are doing it the best way possible.

Are we just too BLIND to get it, to see it?

That is so short sighted, that is missing the point. That is not doing or reaching the potential of what we have been commanded to do.

We have been doing it so long that it just all seems normal and right to us.

So we keep trying to come up with better groups, events, programs, or spectaculars to invite people to so the really talented, gifted people can reach them for Jesus.

We have something that can help train you and your people how to reach out to those they know and meet in life.

Now don't misunderstand me. You don't have to like or even use my materials to carry out the mission of training your people to effectively share the Gospel.

But if you don't, then my question is what are you using or what are you doing?

I don't claim to have the only way to do it. I can't declare it is the best.

But what do you have? What are you using? Have you found another effective tool? GREAT. Share it with me, too. It might help me. I might be able to help share it with others.

What is it?

I had a mission leader tell me about a conversation he had with his boss. The man was sharing his doubts with his boss about the IAAR being reproducible, that is, used to train other Christians how to share the Good News.

The conversation ended when the boss told the man, "Well, all I can say is that I like what John has better than what you don't." Hummmmm.

I appreciated the openness and humility of this leader to even share that with me. He is a good man.

So, if you have something better, USE IT.

But if not, give the IAAR presentations a try. It has been proven to be effective.

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WRITING TWENTY EIGHT

TESTIMONIES OF SOME CHURCH LEADERS WHO HAVE TAKEN AN ONLINE COURSE I TEACH ON HOW TO USE THE IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

Following are comments from students of the eight-week online course titled: Relationship Evangelism. This course is an intense training in how to use the four presentations of It's All About Relationship, and how to train others. All these people worked full time for a congregation.

If you are interested in taking the course or getting a group from your organization to take it together, let me know. It is a three-unit college course, but any adult can take it. It is eight weeks long, and you do your studying and homework when you want to in your own schedule. If you are interested, write me and I'll send you the information.

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First comment

FROM THE LEADER OF A CHURCH PLANTING ORGANIZATION IN THE MIDWEST. *The IAAR material is actually an answer to prayer. Let me explain. For the past several years I have made it my prayer to invest in things that will allow me to help make disciples who make disciples. This is a crucial part of church planting (evangelizing in places where there are not a lot of Christian Churches [under-churched], or that lack ethnic opportunities [most of our congregations in the Christian Church are Caucasian, middle to upper class, suburban], and places that are strategically ready for rapid community growth and development. In this ministry environment it is imperative that one has a systematic, reproducible, easily transferable teaching instrument. The It's All About Relationship material meets the needs that I have to be more effective in personal evangelism plus help others do the same thing. I foresee these studies having a huge impact in our ministry as we equip others to share their faith.*

Second comment; church pastor

I am not sure that it changed my mind, since I have always seen a need for personal evangelism. However, I somewhat fell in line with the Church culture that uses the worship service as the main evangelistic thrust. Even those who are using the "Missional Approach" still rely heavily on the "gathering." in many contemporary churches there is little to no evangelistic training or modeling.

I believe that this course has helped me to get back to where I want to be with a priority of reaching others with the Gospel and then making disciples who make disciples, who plant churches! The basic challenge is; if we can train even a few dedicated personal evangelists in most of the Christian Churches, we could claim this country and the world for Christ!

Third comment; church pastor

I went into this course with a negative mind set. I didn't want to do it and I didn't understand why I had to do it. I just couldn't imagine how 4 printed lessons could be effective in making disciples.

I'm coming out of it with a positive one toward using the Peace Treaty or "It's All About Relationship." I am doing SEVEN Peace Treaties right now. It is starting to interfere with my work. SMILE!

Fourth comment

*2 Timothy 2:2 talks of taking what you have learned (gospel and being a disciple) and giving it to others who will be faithful to do it and pass it along also. This course has challenged me in that I have not made teaching a priority. I have not shared with another believer how to have conversations, how to explain the gospel or what Christianity is really about, and how to lead someone in becoming a disciple of Jesus. I feel that this is something God wants me to make a priority. **I feel silly and embarrassed saying it because one would think that this is a standard requirement for anyone in the pastor role.***

Fifth comment

I have become a Christian and served in dynamic and contemporary churches that focus on evangelism since 2003. Yet in all that time and my ministry experiences in these places I was trained in "How" to do evangelism. Yes I took classes that addressed the subject, but never once did I leave with a tangible or practical "how to." We always discussed doing it in Group Models, or organically by letting actions speak louder than words. This course has made me feel much stronger about having an applicable and teachable way of evangelizing rather than the ambiguous routes of modern examples. I also feel strongly that it is part of the job of a believer to teach another disciple how to make a disciple. This is even more crucial for those in ministry leading as well.

Sixth comment

IAAR is a great study that both stands on its own, but also is just the entry point into the Kingdom for people. Because of this it is more than just a seminar to satisfy the intellectual or educational needs of a congregation. On the other hand, it is not an event that ends with session four. The IAAR must become a piece of the entire relational discipleship process in our ministry. Therefore, I would like to train a number of apprentices who in turn can take people through the IAAR, and then help them to take the next steps as they become fully assimilated into the ministry of the congregation. In other words, we are praying for workers who will not only be capable of sharing their faith, but also serve as mentors who help people to become fully mature followers of Jesus. The ultimate goal is for mature believers to reproduce themselves!

Seventh comment

Let's face it; we live in a high pressure world! We as church staff are expected to produce visible results! Sometimes our paycheck is partially determined by the number of additions that our church has had in the past year. Fact of life!

What I appreciate about IAAR is that, properly understood, it takes the focus off of me as a person and off of my performance as a "professional." This allows me to take a deep breath and rest in the Lord. It also allows the person that I am sharing it with to do the same. I do not have to use behavior modification techniques, pop-psychology, manipulation, peer-pressure, and sales tricks to coerce people to "become Christians." All I need to do is share the study with them and let the focus to be on being in right relationship with God and others. It allows people to become a part of the body of Christ because of His leading, and in all probability, they will stick for a longer time!

Eighth comment; church pastor

I was previously trained in FAITH evangelism in another church. We'd try to get into the home of every person who visited the church. We'd call ahead to set up an appointment. Once we were there, our mission was to determine if they had any needs, and if they needed to hear the gospel message. If there were no needs, we were there to share, even though the other person wasn't expecting it!

What I really like about the IAAR, is the "ask." Visit with them first, then tell them about the IAAR and set up a time to meet again to start it. If they're not sure if they want to hear it, give them a couple weeks to think about it.

Ninth comment; church pastor

One of the best parts of the peace treaty is the fact that it truly is a concentrated vaccination of good doctrine. The awesome thing about vaccinations is that they are equally good for both adults and infants. The It's All About Relationships study can help anyone to have clarity in their understanding of what Christianity is all about.

Tenth comment; church pastor

One of the chalk talks that impressed me the most was the first one. "It's a Calling, Not a Course." I have associated with any number of people who want to reduce evangelism to an event, and who do not see it as a process. In other words, the goal seems to lead people to the water and then drop them and go get another. One of my minister friends even named his evangelistic team "The Cherokee Scalping Party." Yes, he was hugely successful in getting decisions. He was not so good at making disciples! As a matter of fact, due to attrition, the church actually never grew very much. But they sure had a lot of baptisms!

The reminder that evangelism isn't a program, it's a lifestyle. It's not an event, it's a process. It's not measured by wet robes on Sunday afternoon, but by transformed lives on Thursday afternoon. It's not a sprint, it's a marathon. We are not allowed the indulgence to be off again, on again! We must always be ready to give whoever asks us, an answer for the hope that we have within us!

Eleventh comment; church pastor

My gift is not evangelism. In today's politically polarized climate I learned to be hesitant when expressing Christianity. I am usually wary of "pushing" my faith on people. This course has helped me understand that the great commission is for everyone; regardless of culture or gifting. It has started in me, a desire to see others know Jesus.

WRITING TWENTY NINE

COMMENTS OF SOME WHO HAVE BEEN USING THE IAAR FOR YEARS

(Earlier known as A Peace Treaty with God)

I'm sharing these with you not to call attention to me but to confirm that using the IAAR works. Many have been using it in its earlier form for decades. There are many, many more stories. Here are just a few.

FIRST

I attended John Hendee's Ambassadors for Christ training at a convention in Cincinnati about 25 years ago. At that time I was fully convinced this evangelism tool would work well in the congregation I was serving in Kentucky. I used the Peace Treaty with several nonmembers and saw immediate success. After I had gained some experience with it I trained our Associate Ministers and some Elders to use the Peace Treaty. Over the years we found it to be a most effective approach to lead people to Christ. I am still using Peace Treaty and will be converting over to the newer version. The results continue to be confessions and baptisms for Christ. I expect even greater results with the new version.

SECOND

Awesome! I am so excited to see this in print again! Literally I have seen hundreds begin their relationship with Christ thru this tool! And it provides the best retention rate of Christians staying firm in their walk than any other method I know!

THIRD

Thanks for the wonderful tool, the Peace Treaty. I baptized two ex Mormons and a 21-year-old young man Sunday after Peace Treaty Studies. I try to have at least one study going every week. Just finished one with a 45-year-old woman who has been mad at God for the last ten years. She told me, "I told God for the first time in my life this morning that I believe that Jesus Christ is your Son and I want Him to be my savior."

FOURTH

We have had baptisms every week for about ten weeks! Four last week and three lined up for this week (so far!). I am on my way to Africa, but I have The Peace Treaty in Neur (S. Sudan and parts of Ethiopia) sitting on my table. Praise God!

FIFTH

I have been using Peace Treaty for about 25 years upon the recommendation of a preacher in St. Louis, at the time. I have baptized numerous people after taking them through Peace Treaty. Thank you for a wonderful evangelism tool. I took your training at a North American Christian Convention in Cincinnati years ago.

SIXTH

An older gentlemen taught me to use the Peace Treaty when I was an intern at Lincoln Christian Church. I have used it since the beginning of my ministry, and have led tons of folks to Christ.

The Spirit works powerfully though the scriptures included in this tool to bring a seeker to a place a faith. The four parts take longer to go through but allow a deeper relationship to be established between the evangelist and seeker.

Though training, virtually any believer can take a non-Christian through these studies and with minimal explanation, see great fruit from their efforts. I was very excited to hear this tool has been updated and am deeply grateful that it is released as a gift for all to use without the heavy price points other tools require.

We are planning on training all our leaders to use this tool later this summer at Lakeside.

SEVENTH

I've been meaning to get in touch with you for some time now. I've been the lead Pastor of Halifax Christian Church and somewhere early in my ministry here I came across the Peace Treaty and have used it with a few hundred people. Last year I started checking online to see if there was an updated version and discovered "It's All About Relationships." I struggled a little bit with it, at first, but I am now flying with the new material. I want to thank you for the way in which you make that available to us to be able to use. It is an amazing tool in evangelism.

Well, if you made it this far and you are interested in knowing more about the "It's All About Relationship" series of studies and how to get trained and then train others, write me.

I'll be glad to help.

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For the King

Our Father,

John