

WAR ON THE CITIES

Changing Your Community One Block At A Time

BY

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With

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INTRODUCTION

As a college student, already having published my first book, I was invited by Reverend Edward Victor Hill to come to Watts and write about a sweeping evangelistic program that since its inception in 1965 had changed the face of Watts. The program had been in full swing for a couple of decades when I unpacked my bags at the home of one of Hill's church members who lived a block from the church. I had come for the summer.

Our first work during those hot summer months was to be entitled, "As I See It" and touched on the political, spiritual, and economic scene of the area. When many months later, after I had returned to U.C. Berkeley where I was working on my B.A., I proudly presented Reverend Hill with a completed manuscript. He thanked me and preceded to assure me every few months that he would make some changes and the book would be ready shortly. This went on for years.

Renewing our contact, E V., as I had become accustomed to calling him, informed me that he had changed his mind. He didn't want the book "As I See It." It was time, he said, to write about "Block by Block". Leery that this book, too, might fall by the wayside, I told the pastor that I did not wish to be on salary. Instead I required a written contract, spelling out the conditions for the writing of this new book. E.V. shook my hand and signed the paper that we drew up then and there in his office.

The work began. Living in Watts had been an experience like no other I had known. I had been physically attacked on the way to the store, had my car looted and lived cautiously as I traversed between Sister Smith's home and the church. The kindly people of the church more

than compensated for any inconveniences. I was to work alongside and get to appreciate some of the finest people I have ever had the privilege of knowing. Now, for this second book, I would be contacting them and making trips into Watts for interviews, fact finding and observation.

What I discovered would change how I viewed the world. Many parishioners were poor with major economic challenges. The church, Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, and the World Christian Training Center changed all that. Never had I seen Christians so enthusiastic about being Ambassadors for Christ. It was they who had the answers, they who ruled the world. With love! They knew who they were, and they meant to spiral their communities upward and onward.

And so, they did.

I believe that the book you hold in your hands is the most contemporary, effective program available in bringing the greatest story ever told to the masses. I say this as an evangelist which I became, participating in Billy Graham meetings, serving as a staff member with Campus Crusade for Christ, working with Christians worldwide to reach their universities, cities, and children of Christ.

I have since wondered, now that Reverend Hill is in the palaces of heaven, if he knew when he set out to transform one of the hardest soils of evangelism in the world, that years later, every large city in the world, and many of the suburbs, would have developed into the same hard soil. That the plan God gave him one terrible day during the Watts riot, could be perhaps the most significant tool used throughout the earth to help get the job of evangelism finally accomplished.

I think he did!

By the way, the book which was then called, "Block by Block" was picked up by a leading publisher and sat on their prominent desks for years waiting for a tired and overworked Reverend to make final changes so it could go to press. I took to praying. "God, if you can move a mountain, surely you can move a Hill."

Albeit, I came to believe that Hill was one of the greatest men of the century, if not all centuries. Resisting the temptation for greatness, he sacrificed for his flock and made a name for himself in the process. A book could be sacrificed. His flock could not.

Finally, at a Billy Graham conclave, where both E.V. and I were speakers, he gave me his blessing to do with the book what I could and get it out to where it would help people. Only the thought that now is the time that Christians might truly listen and revel in the glorious task of reaching others with the message of Christ (the times being in such chaos and hopelessness) and put this plan of evangelism into effect, heartens me that God may have had a plan after all.

The book may just be for such a time as this.

WAR ON THE CITIES and the Block by Block strategy of evangelism comes with easy to teach and learn material. The book is for self-starters, followers, in between. It can be used by one individual, a church, a Bible study, a community.

And the plan works.

Try it! Become what you were meant to be!

CHAPTER ONE

IT ISNT WORKING

I live in Los Angeles, California, and I work and pastor in the South-Central area. At its widest point, South Central Los Angeles is about twenty blocks wide and two hundred blocks long. It includes a number of communities: Florence, Graham Firestone, Avalon, Adams and the southern tip of Compton. Approximately 450,000 people live within this area.

We have a little bit of everything in South Central much crime, a soaring divorce rate, teenage pregnancies, pornography, prostitutes, high school dropouts, venereal disease, poverty, social workers, educational programs, senior citizens programs, American Legion, NAACP, job preparation, child care centers, health clinics, cults, drugs, politicians--and every" ism" that ought to be a "wasm" you can name.

South Central Los Angeles is also the home of Watts and the 1965 Watts riot-an event that was to change my life and ministry. I came to South Central, and the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church, in 1961. When I arrived, Mount Zion was in trouble. So was the neighborhood, but I'll get to that in a minute. For years Mount Zion had been a prestigious church boasting the largest congregation in South Central Los Angeles. As one of the oldest churches in L.A, Mount Zion had a tradition of outstanding pastors. The Church reached its active membership peak of 1, 500 in the early fifties, with many distinguished citizens and established families of the community attending. For many years Mount Zion provided wide and generous support for foreign missions.

Then Mount Zion fell. The congregation split. People who had driven miles to attend Mount Zion joined Churches closer to home or stopped going to church altogether. Attendance dropped to 300. The Church was in debt, in foreclosure, and in court (there were 15 court cases involving the church in five years). There were physical fist fights in the church as well. One night it required 27 policemen to control the congregation. Two policemen were required to stop a fight on a January night in 1961, the night the church called me to be their pastor.

Despite problems at the church, my first year at Mount Zion was productive. The congregation seemed pleased to have me and gave no opposition in terms of restructuring and reorganizing. The following year, 1962, attendance had jumped to 700, the church budget had tripled, and the congregation respected me as their pastor. We rebuilt the church auditorium and made plans to build an education building. I also set myself to the task of strengthening the fellowship of the church through Bible teaching, Missionary Society programs, prayer groups, and providing an atmosphere of loving and caring for one another. My third year at Mount Zion I faced something completely different--personal depression in spite of the progress there was not sufficient spiritual growth among my members. And the surrounding community was not being reached for Christ. Something was needed but I didn't know what.

That was what was happening in the church. What was happening in the neighborhood? It was simmering hot. The people knew that governmental help was available, but they were unable to get their hands on it. They had the feeling that they had almost arrived, then realized they were nowhere.

The people in Watts heard the government had poured thirty-five million dollars into the community. They waited and watched, hoping some might come their way. Even after they got their buckets out and held them up to the sky, nothing came!

Then they heard of better jobs opening up. Many were eager to work. So, they waited and they watched, hoping one of those jobs would give them a chance. But they never heard of a job opening. And neither did anyone they knew.

Again, a rumor circulated that food supplements were available. And they thought, "Good. Perhaps we can eat better!" They waited and they watched; the papers said it was coming. and then they said it was here. But no one could get a hold of any food supplements or knew of anyone who did.

Then they had illnesses in their families-and no money to cover expenses.

I understood the frustration!

It was a frustration further fed by the militant racial groups, communists, a sometimes unscrupulous media and other pervasive factors in our community. As pastor of a church in the area, I was pulled into the friction. One day two members of a radical political group came to Mount Zion. Even though some of them had threatened my life, I let them in.

"We have surveyed your area," they said. "We want you to open your church under the leadership of our group to feed 200 boys and girls breakfast every morning."

"Well," I replied, "I'm really sorry to hear that there are hungry boys and girls in our community. Our church has fed many neighborhood people. So, you just give me the list of children and we will see that they're amply fed." The following week an underground tabloid recorded the story of my refusal to be a part of the "Free Breakfast Program." It made the

church and me look as if we didn't care about the children. Everywhere I turned, there was dissension, distrust, but especially frustration.

Frustration, tension, and seemingly unsolvable problems loomed with the church looking confounded and defeated. Until... the riot broke out.

MY TOWN IS GONE!

As everything was burning in the riot, I told the Lord, "My town is gone, it's gone to the devil!" My ministry was a failure. In my mind I could find no answers to solve the complex problems that had caused such chaos. I had no faith. For several years I had felt circumvented. I was stymied by the odds, overwhelmed by the problems. Our young people were not in school, not in church, and not under control. Our adults had lost sight of the true reason for living.

The greatest Christian efforts I could conceive of were infinitesimal in light of the unyielding evil and complacency. We had 500 church houses in South Central, with as many as seven church houses on one corner, but we weren't reaching anybody. In my church ministry I had relied on traditional evangelistic methods. However, traditional Christian outreach wasn't working well. Many years before a revival meeting had been effective. Today it wasn't winning anybody. Special church meetings didn't influence the community as they had in the past. For example, a noted evangelist would attract 30,000. This was a noted boost to the area. But at the same time, another million in the community remained untouched by the gospel message. Modern methods weren't being received as well as they should. Television and radio programs

were presenting Jesus in an excellent manner and had a positive effect, but the devil kept many people switching the channel.

The committed pastors and lay people I knew were diligently standing for Christ. Yet the positive influence only mildly changed the greater status quo. With all the evangelistic efforts in my community we were reaching maybe five percent.

But at my point of greatest distress, God supernaturally gave me a burning desire to keep trying to reach my town for Christ, and He gave me the conviction IT COULD BE DONE. When my town was physically lying in ruin around me, the Lord spoke to me. He said, "I want to claim this whole town as Mine."

"The whole town." He said. IF GOD'S DESIRE were to capture an entire city with His love and forgiveness in Christ, then it followed that the whole town COULD BE evangelized!

Faith came to me as never before. Hope pushed up through the ground. I was certain of God's purpose and sure of his enabling power.

I GOT MAD

Shortly after my encounter with the Lord I got mad. I became angrier than I'd ever been in my life. For about a month, everything that I saw in my town turned me upside down with indignation. In my heart I said, "It's not going to be this way long; the Lord is going to take this whole town for Christ."

When I got thoroughly mad, I confronted the devil.

"Devil, you are going to have to leave South Central Los Angeles."

Then I said, "Lord, I have made my stand. Now, how are You going to do it?"

CHAPTER TWO

LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

There is restlessness in our world. Indeed, our planet is turbulent: environmental pollution threatens our survival, nations are trying desperately to relate to one another, nuclear power remains a risk, and cities are filled with inflation. In spite of social programs in many parts of our world, crime, drugs and dissatisfaction master our streets. Even with self-help classes and TV programs, self-centered, unhappy lifestyles predominate. Medical and technical workers are continually overwhelmed by disease, poverty and ignorance.

Our world is confronted with enormous riddles: not only are problems of an enormous magnitude, but there are more people to reach for Christ than in the history of the world. Yet the average believer in Jesus Christ, loving Him and wanting to make Him known, wrings his or her hands in confusion and frustration. We are unsure how to communicate our faith. The diverse and transient thinking of the world shifts rapidly due to the increase of knowledge. Strong religious ties such as those found among Muslims and Buddhists, though prayerfully challenged, seem too strong to break. Addiction, shame and other ills of the 20th century clutch their victims and obscure God's good news. Keeping up with the non-Christian's mindset and needs requires perseverance and prayer.

The sheer logistics of the task of world evangelism are staggering. By the year 2027 AD experts predict that 8 billion people will populate the earth. There will be 4 billion households. The global figure of those who have access to the gospel (evangelized by any and every definition) is less than 70% of the total population. But these efforts still leave scores of people

(an estimated 30% of the world's population) who have never ever heard the good news of Christ, and billions who have never "understood" the gospel--the relevancy of the gospel to their personal lives--even though they may have been exposed indirectly to the impact of God's perspective.

But look at what is happening worldwide. According to documented statistics 33% of the world's population are professing Christians. And among them at least 500 million would be considered Great Commission Christians, seeking to share their faith. Among dedicated efforts of believers, evangelism is taking place at an incredible rate. According to the director of the World Global Office, "we are seeing the greatest turning to Christ in the history of the Christian church." Individuals and churches are urgently seeking to make an impact on those around them. Groups such as Lausanne, Operation Mobilization, Intervarsity, Youth with a Mission, Campus Crusade for Christ, Wycliffe, Navigators, World Vision, Jews for Jesus, and other parachurch groups and scores of denominational ministries, radio and television programs and independent missionaries are communicating eternal hope. In the midst of failure and hopelessness God is pouring forth His spirit. This is evidenced by revival sweeping across areas in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and by striking church growth in such long prayed-over areas as China, Russia and Eastern Europe. And yet, the task of world evangelism still seems insurmountable to the average believer in Christ.

What about US? What about friends and loved ones, co-workers, neighbors and classmates? Is winning them to the gospel within our grasp?

How can we, as individuals, churches and organizations be the most effective at our task? And how do we break down the billions worldwide and the millions in our cities to

sizable portions that WE can reach? How can we put a significant and lasting dent in the task of evangelism now? Allowing you to understand the spiritual journey of those non-Christians about you, as well as those Christians who have “upset” their small worlds about them with the good news, you can best understand the whys, whens, hows, whats and wheres of your own evangelism purpose.

But first.... We need to ask a pivotal question. “Do we, as Christians have anything of value to offer the world?”

CHAPTER THREE

WHEN YOU HAVE JESUS I

I was preaching at a revival meeting in Kansas City. Everywhere I turned folks we're giving their lives to Christ, praising God, and "amening" everything I said. At the close of the service an angry young woman named Denise came up to me and said, "I've listened to you now for over an hour-and-a-half and I want you to know you have said nothing relevant, nothing that would make a difference in my life."

Since there were others waiting to see me, I suggested she step aside momentarily. "When I have had a chance to greet these others," I told her, "we can sit down and talk."

This woman waited until others had left. Then she began berating the church and damning Christians. I sat quietly, praying and listening to her talk, until the Lord opened a wide door for me to respond.

"You tried to get me to accept Christ at your meeting tonight," she accused. "If I HAD accepted Jesus Christ what difference would He have made in my life? In other words. Preacher, what would I HAVE if I had Jesus?"

"Now you asked me," I returned quickly, knowing a good thing when I saw it. "And since you asked, in all FAIRNESS you must let me answer."

"All right," she said, and then proceeded with more questions. "If I have Jesus, will I have all my bills paid? Will I have a split-level home? Will I have two cars and a mink stole?"

"I don't know too many Christians who have all that" I said. "We don't have much silver and gold and houses and lands where I come from. In fact, I must tell you honestly that

accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior is no immunization against problems in this world. Wealth, health and prosperity are no indications whatsoever of whether you are walking with God or not. For the one who came into this world, Jesus didn't even have a place to lay his head. And a Christian is no greater than his Master. "But," I continued, "God has something far better than houses and land and silver and gold for His children-something significantly greater than this world's goods."

"All right," she said, "Is He going to deliver me from stressful burdens and trouble from others?"

"Well, I can't PROMISE you that," I continued, "Because God moves in strange and mysterious ways. I can sympathize with you however, because I have plenty of this world's burdens and oppressions to face myself. But God doesn't choose to remove EVERY burden.

"I CAN tell you what you DO have as a Christian. So why don't you take a pencil and paper and write down this list of what you HAVE when you have Jesus."

She hesitantly said, "Okay." And I began.

PEACE WITH GOD

I took Denise to the book of Romans in the New Testament where the Apostle Paul recorded this piece of good news. "Therefore, being justified by faith we have PEACE WITH GOD" (Romans 5: 8).

"It's important to have PEACE with those you are involved with," I explained to Denise. "In fact, you should stay on good terms with anyone who is cooking your meals, paying your bills or fixing your car.

"But it is even more important to have peace with GOD. He has absolute final say on what happens in this world. With us, He can do whatever he pleases. Our future, our circumstances, our relationships, our finances, our everything is ultimately under His jurisdiction. So, it is necessary and advisable to be on PEACEFUL TERMS with HIM." Denise shifted in her seat and looked at me impatiently as if to say, "Get to the point Preacher. Say something I want to hear."

"An elderly Christian woman in my church called me to her home when she was ailing," I continued. "She was in great pain. Death seemed imminent. When I asked if could pray for her, she said, 'yes, but don't ask the Lord to heal me. Just thank Him and praise Him.'

"Baffled, I asked her to explain her statement."

"I'm almost there," she replied. "I'm almost with God, and He and I are ALL RIGHT.

" I looked at this young confused woman sitting across from me, "Wouldn't you like to have peace with God like this woman had?"

"If there is a God, I would want to have peace with Him" she said. "And if I meet Him, I would like it to be on peaceful terms."

"Well, keep on writing" I said, "and knock out all of the ifs. There Is a God. And one day you WILL meet Him."

PEACE OF GOD

I turned in my Bible to what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, "The peace of God which passes all understanding will keep you," (Philippians 4: 6-7). "When we have Jesus, we not only have peace WITH God. We have the peace OF God."

"What do you mean?" Denise wanted to know.

"Not only do we have peace with Him who is ABOVE, but He comes DOWN to dwell within us and give us His supernatural peace."

"First, we learn of God's provision of rest and tranquility. Then we come to understand His calming presence. But peace doesn't stop there. It gets down inside us. It pervades us. In fact, it is beyond understanding how we can have such serenity in the midst of conflicts, tragedies, persecution, lack, grief or trials. Those watching us marvel -- such repose in the eye of the storm.

"My mama sat in front of meager portions of molasses, hoe cakes and fat meat, bowed her head and gratefully thanked God for the BLESSINGS she was about to receive. The contentment of God was hers despite poverty. The Apostle Paul, weighted with chains in a cold and dismal prison, sang and PRAISED God (Acts 16: 25). Daniel in a den of lions slept composed (Daniel 6: 22). Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, thrown into a fiery furnace in Babylon, walked and talked with God (Daniel 3: 15-23). Paul, on a ship in the midst of a life-threatening storm had enough peace left over to encourage others (Acts 27: 34).

"A friend called me recently and said, 'Reverend Hill, I hear you're having trouble.' And I thought, 'he is years too late. I've been having trouble all my life. '

“When I pastored in Houston I was assailed with threats by the Ku Klux Klan. In Los Angeles I needed police protection from Black Panther militants. In fact, I’ve never had an uncloudy day! But because of the peace of God, I have slept with crosses burning, and turned over and snored when warnings came that my house would be blown up.

“Lucy Campbell may have put it best in one of her songs: ‘When I should feel so sad; Why does my heart feel glad? Why does my soul feel so happy and gay when all around me burdens fall? Yet, I’m not worried at all; Because King Jesus rolls all burdens away.’”

Denise appeared agitated and for a moment. I thought she was going to interrupt, but I motioned gently that I wasn't finished.

“The poverty fund in Los Angeles had grown from 518 million a year to nearly fifty times that amount. There are plans for every kind of welfare program, educational program, drug program, job training program and every program you can imagine. But what is missing is the peace of God that passes all understanding.

“The poverty commission can’t understand some of our Christian folk who are hurting financially, but praise God anyway. While others are fighting for themselves, gathering everything to secure themselves, and hating those who are better off, there are those of us who don’t worry about those things, who are in fact, helping and giving to others.

“As a young minister, I visited one of my church members, Sister Harrison, in the hospital. I had been having a difficult time coming up with a message to give on Thanksgiving at my church. As I drove to the hospital, I was asking God to give me something for Sister Harrison, as well. But I was dry, bone dry.

“The reason I was so concerned for a word from the Lord for Sister Harrison was that she was 70 years old, with no legs and blind. How do you walk up to the bed of a blind amputee and start telling them about the goodness of God? Just thinking about it I prayed, ‘Lord, if the day ever comes when you take my eyes, please take me as well.’

“The nurse took me to Sister Harrison's room and announced that a man was there to visit her. She jokingly responded, ‘A man? Running ME down? Who is it?’ she asked.

“Your pastor,” I answered trying to sound encouraging.

“A big smile came over her face and she said, ‘Come over pastor and take my hand. I wonder what I have done so good that God would bless me like this by bringing you here to see me?’

“And she began to pray, ‘God you have been so good to me. I love you so much.’

“I couldn't pray. I had nothing to say. I just listened. When she finished, she said to me, ‘Isn't it wonderful that God blesses us from the inside out?’

“‘What did you say?’” I asked.

“‘Well you know what I mean,’ she said, ‘you're the pastor. It starts on the inside and it goes out.’

“And as I went home that day, I said to the Lord, ‘Lord if it would please you that I could have no legs and no eyes, I thank you that You will be there with me.’

“When you have Jesus,” I said to the young woman sitting across from me, who was resentful and bitter, “You not only have peace WITH God you have the peace OF God. Wouldn't you like to have that?”

“If it does all you say it does.” she answered.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHEN YOU HAVE JESUS II

The young woman sat across from me with an attitude of scoffing written across her face. Her manner was not quite as angry as it was when she first approached me, but she still looked unsettled and nervous. Since I had insisted that in all fairness it was my turn to talk by answering her question, "What do you have when you have Jesus?" I continued on with my list.

CHILDREN OF GOD

I read to Denise from I John 3: 1, "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God."

"One of the most thrilling things about accepting Jesus Christ as Savior," I said to Denise, "is that we become children of the living God.

"Christians are not just members of a church, or good people, not just helping others, or being respectable members of a community. Christians who have put their faith in Jesus Christ to be their own individual Savior, are CHILDREN of God. We enter the heavenly family with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities there with.

“Now when I preach about this message at my church my whole congregation begins shouting Glory to God. This is indeed the greatest news the world has ever heard, news to make people jump to their feet and start praising the Lord and hooting hallelujah!

“At the church where I pastor, we have an unusual custom. A young woman will often not kiss a young man before she passes him before me and gets my approval. This is done because so many young women in my community live without a father. And so, Sundays after church the women walk their young men past me and if they get a thumbs up sign, they know they have my blessing. So, it happened that one of our young women fell in love with a Jehovah's Witness. She told the young man that he would have to go and talk with her Pastor. So, he came into my office to convert me.

“Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to overwhelm the one they are talking to with information. So, I kept time. When he finally slowed down,” I said:

“‘You've talked with me seventeen minutes. Now I want equal time.’

“‘All right,’ he said ‘I'll conclude with this. This business you teach about being a child of God, it doesn't make sense. The Apostle Paul said that we must RUN THE RACE. At the end of the race we will be put on a scale and weighed. If our good deeds outweigh our bad deeds, we'll go on up to heaven. If our bad deeds outweigh our good deeds, we'll go to hell.’

“I told him I disagreed. He asked, ‘How else will we know if we have won the race? Right now, we're only in the process of running the race?’

“I said to him ‘Did you watch the world series?’

“He said ‘Yes.’

“Do you remember when the batters hit those long home runs putting the ball over the fence and up into the bleachers?”

“Yes’

“Was it a home run?”

“Yes.’

“Could anybody put him out?”

“No.’

“Well then, why did he run the bases? The ball went over the fence but still he had to touch first, second, third base and come on home. But he was in no danger of being put out. Was he? You see, ‘I said to him, Jesus, on Calvary, put the ball over the fence. He didn't hit any single or double or triple. The ball is gone! It's out of the ballpark. And NOW those who have received Christ as Savior are children of God. And it is AS a child of God that we run the bases.’

“Being offspring of the Father, we are members of His family. And there is no family on earth like it. I can travel almost anywhere around the globe and meet other parts of His family. And upon hearing that I too am an enrollee into this heavenly household they embrace me, open their homes, share their food, give me their bed and serve me as a special guest. Why? Because we are spiritual relatives.

“An amazing feat in God's clan involves family networking. God puts an idea, plan, or vision on the heart of one of his children in California and at the same time on the heart of another constituent in Africa. At the right time God brings the two together for a specific divine purpose. One of his children in India prays for a need. God burdens the heart of a family member in England to meet that need. Christians in countries at war and hostile with one another have a

stronger love for one another and reach out to one another.

“And in the midst of tragedies, who, but those who have Jesus, have the aid, the comfort, the encouragement, the wisdom and the love of such a great group of heavenly progenies? When one is down, the other lifts him up. And when he falls, sisters and brothers in the Lord move in to assist that fallen one; all because we are part of a divine brood.

“Which brings me to my next point. That when we have Jesus and when we are His children, we are owned. We belong!”

WE BELONG

I turned in my Bible to Matthew's rendering of the life of Christ.

“In Matthew 10:32 Jesus Christ states, 'Everyone who shall own Me before men, I shall not be ashamed to own him before my Father.’

“Denise”, I continued, “Every child needs a dad to tell other folk, ‘That’s my boy,’ or ‘That’s my girl.’ And every child needs a father who claims him or her not BECAUSE of what he or she is, but in spite of the fact. When you have Jesus, you have someone who is not ashamed to CLAIM YOU AS HIS OWN.

“I had guests come to visit me in Los Angeles. I took the entire family to a buffet dinner. And when I came to the cashier, I told her that I had friends coming along for whom I would be paying. She said to me, ‘I don’t know your guests.’ So, I tried to describe to her each of my

guests. But she looked at me and said, 'I'm sorry, but YOU will have to stand here and identify these individuals as they come through.'

"Finally, the father came along. And behind him was his wife, their two children and the wife's sister. And I said to the cashier, 'These are mine. Add it up.'

"It didn't matter to me how much it cost. I brought them there as my guests. I wanted them to have a good meal. They were not required to pay. I was glad to pay. And I did.

"Here we come with broken promises and broken pledges. Here we come with sin and not fit for the kingdom of God. 'Add it up,' Jesus says. 'I bled enough on Calvary to pay for it all. I will stand here until the last one who was not ashamed to call me Savior, to OWN me as their personal Savior on earth, has come. And whatever he has on his tray, I've already paid for.'

"Fortunately, when we are born into the kingdom of God, we can't be unborn. Once God takes us into his family, He begins the task of making us 'fit children.' And this process takes a lifetime.

"Many years ago, I did something very stupid. I wish I hadn't done it. I was greatly ashamed. But I did it. And shortly after a well-known minister of the gospel was at my church to preach.

"I'm glad you're here, 'I told him. 'Because I'm about to make an announcement.'

"What are you going to say?"

"I'm going to tell the people that God has fired me.'

"Is that so?"

"Yes'

“‘Why?’

“So, I told him what I had done and when I had finished, he said, ‘Well, you're right. What you did was bad. It was very stupid on your part. But,’ he paused, ‘ what does that have to do with God firing you?’

“‘Well,’ I said, ‘anybody that did something as stupid as that, God would have to fire.’

“I’ll never forget what this godly man said to me. ‘Let me see if I can understand what you are saying. Once upon a time God looked out over the earth and saw a bright clean, unspoiled and untainted, brilliant young fellow named Hill. He was very impressed with Hill until He called Him to preach. He discovered new information He had been unaware of when He originally called Him. So, He has withdrawn the call-in light of new evidence.’

“‘You know that isn't true,’ I said.

“‘I know the whole thing isn't true,’ he said

“‘Well then what is happening?’

“‘What is happening is that God isn't finished with you yet. You've got some growing to do. But you're owned by God and still called to do His work.’

“In a world where people are searching for identity, where they are isolated and alone, and long for someone to care about them, how joyful to announce that when you have Jesus you have someone who owns you, who in spite of what we are and what we’ve done, claims us for his OWN.

“‘Wouldn't you like to belong?’” I asked the young woman across from me.

“Yes, she said. “If there were that kind of love, and that kind of family alive in the world, I'd like to belong.”

SEATED IN THE KINGDOM

I took my young woman friend to the book of Ephesians in the New Testament of the Bible. Here I showed her that in chapter 2, verse 4-6 it reads, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus..."

"When you have Jesus," I told Denise," "YOU HAVE A SEAT IN THE KINGDOM."

"Sometime ago I received a telegram asking me to come to Washington, D. C. The President of the United States was requesting my presence at the White House. With this prestigious invitation I did not have to worry about making any of my own arrangements in Washington. When I got off the plane I simply said, 'I'm E V. Hill.' And they said, 'Right this way.' All at once limousine doors and fancy hotel doors opened for me. And, in the middle of the plate, in front of my seat, in the large conference room in the east wing, there was a card which read, Edward V. Hill. No question! This was my seat.

"We who are believers in Jesus Christ have been given a far greater honor. We are seated in the east wing of heaven. We have been invited by the Lord. The table is set. The place cards are on the china plates. The angels of heaven are our servants. All arrangements have been made.

"The world applauds the Academy Award winners, the Nobel Prize winners, the astronauts, the Olympic gold medalists. They think how great it would be to be employed at a leading law firm, or to be an outstanding newscaster, journalist, politician or ambassador. Yet it is far more prestigious to be seated in the kingdom, working for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

“Whether we are saving souls in prison, in the jungles of South America, on the college campus, or working with drug addicts, executives, children, or whatever, we, who have been called to be seated in the Kingdom, have the highest privilege of all. As someone has said, ‘If God has called you to be a missionary, why stoop to be a king?’

“And as citizens of heaven, God has appointed Christians to be Kings and Priests (II Peter 2: 9) on this earth, carrying out His ever so important business. To be a ball player on the Dodgers baseball team, to be the mayor of a city, to be a ballerina in the great ballets, to be a millionaire at age thirty because of great business skills and drive or to be a rock star, is to produce possibly for a lifetime. If we are lucky, two lifetimes. But we would soon be forgotten. Our efforts would die out as have those of generations before. But to teach a group of girls in a Sunday School class, to go into the sororities and fraternities of our land and tell how Christ can make a difference, to sell all that we have to promote the gospel around the world, to pray in the quiet recesses of the night-this work is eternal.

“And when we have Christ, we are seated in the kingdom; we are citizens of heaven; we do Kingdom work and what we do...lasts!

“If a telegram came for you today from the President of the United States requesting your presence at the White House, you would drop all you are doing and tell everyone you know about such an honor. You would arrange your schedule around to the White House date. Preparation for the event would consume your time. You would rehearse your behavior again and again in order that no error in judgment or manner would occur on your part. It is a far greater honor to be seated in God's kingdom.”

I asked my young friend, "Wouldn't you like to be a citizen of heaven? Wouldn't you like to be a part of something that lasts?"

CHAPTER FIVE

WHEN YOU HAVE JESUS III

The young woman continued to listen. Now she was interested. I knew she was thinking about what I was saying. In answer to her question, "What do you have when you have Jesus?" I continued my list.

RESTORATION

I took Denise to the book of Psalms in the Old Testament of the Bible. "In the 23rd Psalms, David wrote, 'HE RESTORES MY SOUL' (Psalm 23: 3).'

"A friend of mine tells the true story of a pastor who worked in New York. 'Please pray for me,' the pastor asked his friend, 'I just hate white folk. 'A year later as the pastor struggled working in the ghettos, he told my friend, 'Please double up your prayers After working here all year, I don't like black folk either.' He was burned out. Sick of everyone.

"According to some professional counselors and psychologists, the number one problem in America is 'burnout.' That is not surprising since the average person is in such a hurry. We hurry to bed, so we can hurry and get up, and hurry to breakfast, so we can hurry to the car, so we can hurry to get to work, so we can hurry to get off work, so we can hurry to get home, so we can hurry to the table, so we can hurry to bed, so we can hurry to the bathroom...

"Most people are sick and tired of the daily grind of work, the never ending grind of

responsibility, the futility of life.

“When life empties us and there is no reserve, we do a lot of strange things. We go to false gods and learn how to chant. We buy a purse of marijuana. From there we try cocaine. We go to astrologers to let them tell us what to do. We go to alcohol to try to forget what we are doing. We buy a new fur, or a new boat, or a half-million-dollar home in an effort to relieve the monotony. But an empty shell no cult can fill, no degree, no Mercedes Benz.

“Usually just before attempting suicide a person cries out, 'Isn't there anyone who can restore my soul?'

“I'm not sure why, but Sweet Home, Texas, is where God so often meets me with restoration. It is the one place in the world that I can cry. I can't cry much at Mt. Zion, because so many people depend on me to be strong. I seldom cry in front of my family. And I try to manage not to cry in the presence of my enemies, for they would celebrate. But out where I grew up in that two-room cabin, I can go and cry and cry. And somehow the Lord enables me to come back refreshed.

“When we have Jesus, we have one who restores our soul.

“If there is anything that deeply disturbs me, it is how an individual can jump on a man who is obviously burned out and needing restoration. Such was the case of a preacher friend of mine who was about forty years old. I called him at his church one day and was informed that he didn't pastor there anymore.

“Well, where does he pastor?' I asked.

“Oh, he doesn't even preach anymore,' they told me.

“Where does he live?'

“‘Oh. he doesn't even live here anymore.’

“‘Well, tell me about it,’ I said.

“‘Well, you see, he committed a sin. And in our church when a pastor commits a sin, we have to get rid of him.’

“‘So, I inquired where to find him, and it took a bit of searching to track him down in another state. So, I called him.

“‘Ed Hill,’ he said how did you find me?’

“‘I said, ‘There is a United Airlines ticket waiting for you Friday at the airport. I want you to be on the plane. I want you to come and visit me.’

“‘No. Ed, ’ he said, ‘you don't understand. I failed the Lord and I'm not preaching anymore.’

“‘I didn't even mention that. There is an airline ticket, prepaid, waiting for you. I'll meet you at the airport.’

“‘I don't preach anymore, Ed. I just lay brick. I go to church and hide in the balcony. No one knows me.’

“‘You haven't HEARD me,’ I said. “‘There is an AIRLINE TICKET. I want you to be ON the plane.’

“‘It took some doing, but he finally got on the plane. I picked him up at the airport and said, ‘Now let's not talk. Let's just ride.’ And we rode.

“‘When we got to the office, he said, ‘I can't hold it anymore.’ He cried and I cried. Then I drove him around to show him what the Lord was doing in my city. Then we talked some more.

“Finally, he said, ‘I feel so much better.’

“‘Fine,’ I said, ‘and if you’re ready I would like you to preach on Sunday.’

“‘No, no, he said. ‘I can’t do that. I’m washed up. I cannot preach no more.’

“‘But I said, ‘we are a different denomination and we don’t believe a man is washed up because he sins. We believe that Jesus paid it ALL and has cast our sins far from us. Ours is a God of restoration. And if you would like to preach in another pastor’s pulpit who has sinned, I would like you to preach in mine.’

“We wrestled all the way up until 11:30 on Sunday morning. And finally, I announced that he was going to preach. He sheepishly came forward. As he began to preach, he was filled with power. People were saved and lives were changed as he ministered. He moved to Los Angeles and worked and served with us. For years if anyone needed a message of refreshment, I would introduce them to this man who bore witness that God restores a soul.

GUIDED

“One thing I had desired for many years was to travel to Africa and trace my roots. With much excitement, I arrived in Africa-to great disappointment. Africa was so westernized that there was little difference between African cities and South-Central Los Angeles. One day I signaled a cab and told the driver to take me far out into the back country. I wanted a look at the REAL Africa. After an hour of driving we came to the very end of a dirt road. The cab operator pulled over. Looking around at the deserted outlands I told the driver ‘PLEASE wait.’

“Sheepishly I commenced walking inland through dense jungle. I was looking for a mission which was located on my map. After hiking a short distance into a mass of foliage, suddenly a native, dressed only in a small lion cloth, jumped out of a tree. Boy, did I take off! The inhabitant started running after me babbling I knew not what. Terrified, I ran and ran until I could run no more. Finally, out of sheer exhaustion, I fell limp to the ground. The native approached me. Bending over me, he said in clear English, ‘Do you need a guide?’

“As my guide led me, we watched out for poisonous snakes and other creatures. He directed me out of the jungle, where every turn looked just like the turn before, and skillfully brought me to my destination.”

I asked my young lady friend, “Wouldn’t you like to have a guide, a good shepherd who knows how to maneuver you through this cluttered and broken world? Who can usher you into fulfilled dreams? Who can steer you around obstacles and bring you to a place of peace and rest?”

“Yes,” she said. It was not hard for my friend to see that all about her were men and women whose lives indicated they had no shepherd, no one to forge the way, no one to tell them what to do. In fact, in our homes, in our government, in businesses schools and churches, there is ample evidence that men and women are not being guided by God.

“If there is anything that is clear in this world, if there is anything that we know for sure, it is that men and women NEED A GUIDE” I continued. “David wrote in the book of Psalms chapter 23, verse 1, ‘The Lord is my shepherd.’ When we have Jesus, we have a guide through this troubled world.

“My earthly father died when I was one and a half. Then when I was five, I went to live with my new Mama and Papa. Since Papa died (when I was age 11) until now, I have never had an earthly father to give me guidance. For the most part, I never had a father to tell, ‘Dad, those boys are jumping on me. What shall I do?’ or ‘Papa, will you help me figure out this problem or that problem?’

“Maybe that is why I have tried to be a very thoughtful guide to my own children. When my daughter, Norva, was 16 years of age, the two of us clashed mightily. It broke my heart. One afternoon I asked Norva to come into my study. After we got past the ‘I love yous’, Norva said, ‘Dad, I can't take any more of your chauvinistic attitude and dictatorial manner.’

“‘All right,’ I said. ‘Perhaps we should make some sort of compromise.’

“‘All right.’

“‘Here’s my compromise. For the next four years you will do exactly what I say, when I say it and how I say it. In return I promise to give you money and provisions for college. And I promise to give you my BEST instruction. All I have learned from life during my years upon this earth and all the good things that others have learned and shared with me. I will make available to you.’

“Norva's face looked hostile at this request, then bitter. But realizing that her college education might rest on this compromise, she agreed.

“‘Sign here,’ I told her. Thus, we entered into a father-daughter contract.

“At the end of Norva's college career (she entered at age 16 and graduated when she was 19: she takes after my side of the family), she came to me.

“Dad, I have had a difficult time these three years. But somehow this last year I have come to love you and appreciate what you have been trying to do. Therefore, I would like to make another contract.’

“What kind of contract?’ I asked suspiciously.

“For the next four years I will do exactly what you say, when you say it and how you say it. In return you can put me through law school and keep teaching me all you know.’

“What?’ I excitedly answered, ‘That’s a \$30,000 commitment.’ I argued with her that she would be too far from home to keep the contract. Besides she was too old to be told what to do. But in the end Norva won out. I signed the contract.’

“At the end of four more years, Norva and I had a strong relationship and I had a daughter who had been guided in the ways of life. (Of course, one might question who guided who?) After leaving law school she joined the third-largest law firm in California as an attorney and later married an attorney.

“At 24, Norva said to me one day, ‘Dad what shall I do?’

“No, no, Norva,’ I said, ‘you’re too old for that. You and the Lord are on your own now.’

“Maybe this form of human guidance wouldn’t work for everyone, but how grateful my daughter was that someone loved her enough to supervise her through this difficult world.

“And if we do exactly what Jesus says, when He says, how He says, and for as long as He says it, we’ll be on a safe path, a chosen path. There’s no need to stumble and fall or wind up in life’s detours, when He is showing us the way.

“Many years ago, my wife Jane and I were driving home from some distance. At midnight we were on the Grapevine, a very isolated stretch of road in Southern California. Jane and I were talking and sharing with one another, when all of a sudden, we ran out of gas.

“We were miles from any gas station and Jane did not want to be left alone. ‘Let’s just perish together,’ she said.

“But I knew I had to get out and hitchhike the many miles to a gas station. So, I got out and finally flagged down two long haired men in a souped-up hotrod.

“The guy asked, ‘What’s wrong, dad?’

“Jane was scared to death. She was afraid they were going to do away with me.

“In a rumble seat, I bumped up and down to a gas station. Then the two men were kind enough to take me all the way back to my car, where they helped me siphon gas and crank the motor. Then they bid me farewell.

“‘Wait a minute,’ I said. ‘I’d like to pay you for your trouble.’

“‘Oh no,’ they said.

“‘But I have to pay you,’ I said, ‘you went over 20 miles to help us out.’

“When they again insisted that they would take nothing, I asked them why they would go to all that trouble for another human being in the middle of the night.

“‘Well, you see,’ one of them said, ‘my friend and I get our kicks from helping stupid people like you.’

“We need a guide. What we learn as Christians is that Jesus gets a great joy out of helping stupid and needy folk like us. Even for those who have passed up opportunities in life

and now sit out on some lonely road unable to go anywhere, there is a shepherd who spends his time just driving up and down dark roads looking for people to guide.

SUBJECT TO DIVINE FAVORS

“You may not always get what you want when you want it,” I said to my young friend. “But, when you have Jesus you are subject to divine supplement, a candidate for heavenly provision and in fact, it is very possible that you will receive at any moment, fantastic, unbelievable, supernatural favors.”

I took her to the book of Ephesians where it states “God will do exceedingly abundantly, above all we can ask or think” (Ephesians 3: 20).

“Ph. D 's, scientists, psychologists, learned people, poor people, religious people or otherwise are not sufficient by ourselves to provide fully for ourselves. All of us can just reach so far... and no farther. Even the wealthiest can't buy extra time on this earth. The most skilled psychologist can't reach into the depths of many a troubled mind. The benevolent politician can't provide for everyone's needs. Nor the best trained doctor cure every ill.

“What we all need is somebody who is able to add a rope at the end of our arms and extend our grasp. We need somebody every now and then to reach out to us and say, ‘Here! I have something for you.’

“Don't you have some needs that demand meeting?” I asked Denise.

“Oh yes,” she said, “you know I do. My problems are so great.”

“I don't want to promise you that your ship will come in, that all your problems will immediately clear up, or that you won't ever have another heart-ache. But I can tell you this for sure... God has done it before! He's run into some awful messes we've created down here. He's had some cantankerous people on His hands. Yet many times at our weakest and neediest moment He has just reached down and said 'Here!'

“When I finished high school, I was the ONLY graduate. I was class president and delivered the valedictorian address. On my way home from high school with diploma in hand, Mama announced 'You're going to college.' For years it had been a miracle that I had been able to go to high school.

“In spite of holding every summer job I could get my hands on, when it came time for college, I still had no money at all... except for \$5.00 Mama gave me as she put me on a Continental bus bound for Prairie View A and M.

“As I ascended the bus steps, I wasn't sure what I was doing. I had no money for school. I hadn't the faintest idea how I'd get it. All the way to Prairie View, I kept thinking, 'How much will college be? I don't have any money.' But I also thought about Mama's words, 'I'll be praying for you.'

“When I got to Prairie View A and M, I walked to the treasurer's office where they were enrolling students. I saw a line of new students. At the front of the line was a sign \$80.00-cash, money order, or cashier's check. I had nothing but \$ 5.00. In fact, I didn't even have that. I had splurged en route and had only \$ 1.94 left.

“But I got in line, not because I had any money. But because I had a praying mother, and a generous God. And mama told me to go to school and that she would be praying for me. As I stood in line the devil began his work.

“You fool. What do you think you're doing in line? Best you can do is get out of here quick. Because there are only four people between you and the secretary, and you don't have any money. The secretary is going to want \$ 80.00. Do you have it?”

“No.’

“Do you have a check?”

“No.’

“Do you have a money order?”

“No.’

“Do you have a cashier's check?”

“No, no!’

“Well, then go home, fool.’

“When there was only one person between me and the secretary, the devil was still working.

“Just one more person and you're going to look like a fool.’

“But mama told me that I should go to school, and that she would be praying.’ Then the girl in front of me paid her fee and left. And just when I was thinking what I should say, Dr Drew, one of the deans, tapped me on the shoulder. ‘Are you E V. Hill?’ he asked.

“Yes.’

“The one from Sweet Home?”

“Are you Ed Hill whose professor is Robert Arnold?”

“Yes’

“Have you paid yet?”

“Not quite. ‘

“Well don't pay,’ he said to me. ‘We've been looking for you all morning. We have approved a four-year scholarship in your name which includes all your tuition, room and board, and gives you \$ 40.00 a month to spend.’

“When you have Jesus,” I told the young woman, “you are a candidate for divine favor. God is able, at any minute, when were least expecting it, all of a sudden, without warning to open up heaven and shower down blessing.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

“But there is one more thing you have when you have Jesus,” I told Denise.

“What is that?” By now she was listening with great interest.

“The best is yet to come!” I said.

“I hired a young girl to work for me at the church. I knew her name, but I had no idea that she was the child of a famous person, until a member from my church asked me, ‘Don't you know who she is?’ He informed me of her family's status. So, I called her into my office.

“Why didn't you tell me who you were?” I asked her.

“I didn't know it was required,’ she answered. ‘I just wanted a job.’

“‘You have been very faithful working for me, and I don't pay you very much,’ I said to her. ‘Yet your dad is well known and very well off.’

“‘Yes,’ she said. “My dad is well off and he has left me a great deal of money. But you see, I haven't come into it yet. I have to be twenty-one. Then I can receive what has been allotted to me.’

“And those who are children of God, who work long nights rescuing men and women from sin, who forfeit pleasure on earth in order to be useful in Gods kingdom, and put up with many abuses in this life, have not yet received all that has been allotted to them. As God's children, the riches of heaven are ours, but we just haven't come into it all YET.

“The Christian will live forever in heaven. There will be no more tears, no more sorrow, no more burdens, no more pain, no more bills, no more persecution, no more misunderstandings, no more sickness, no more frustration, no more hatred, no more greed, no more starvation, no more murder, no more want, no more fear, no more... My list goes on and on.

“Wouldn't you like to have Jesus?’

“Yes,” she sighed. “Yes, I would.”

Denise is not much different from men and women that I and my church members talk with every week. People are thirsty for the water Jesus offers. You remember His conversation with the Samaritan woman drawing water from a well? He said he would give her water that would quench her thirst forever. That's the Good News this world is dying to hear. It's the

Good News he commanded us to proclaim. “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creation” (Matthew 28: 18).

For years I knew that Jesus was the hope of the world. From the pulpit I could preach it, and I did-long and hard. But I lived some difficult years before I learned principles of making a sizable dent in this world. Principles I wish to pass along.

CHAPTER SIX

HOW YOU GONNA DO IT?

How was the Lord going to do it?

I had the heart to reach my city for Christ. I had the conviction that it could be done. I needed more! I was still facing drug abuse, crime, immorality, cults, self-righteousness, poverty, disease, indifference, complacency and hard hardheadedness. What followed was an interesting conversation with the Lord.

“God,” I prayed, “I need a strategy. I need a plan.”

“Aren’t you the one who used to be in charge of your political party’s block workers in Houston, Texas?” the Lord asked me.

“Yes!”

“All right, nice seeing you.” And the Lord excused Himself.

“But Lord,” I called after Him, “I didn’t ask you about politics in Houston. I asked, how are we going to take this town?”

I recalled my early ministry in Houston, where I had become involved as a political block worker. There was never a question as to whether my political party would win in the community. The only question was by what percent?

As I pondered this experience, I realized that the important question was, “How did we get those winning statistics?” The answer was simple. We found a member of our political party on every block, who was willing to influence the rest of his or her neighbors on the block to our

party's point of view. Only one "turned on" enthusiastic party member was needed to stir up the rest of his or her own block.

The politicians had used block-by-block strategy for years. Social workers employed the concept. Many cults utilized the idea. Could Christians employ the same method? The truth was beginning to dawn on me. How do you take a city for Christ? By stationing a born-again believer on each and every block and MOTIVATING and TRAINING him or her how to win neighbors to the Savior. God was commissioning me with the command to "Go to South Central Los Angeles and train block workers for my Kingdom."

What God began to show me was that block-by-block may be the evangelism of the future! Why? Because it is biblical, personal, and practical.

I turned to my New Testament to see how they spread the Good News. I quickly found that the first Christians aggressively had gone "to the people" rather than just inviting the people to "come to them" (Acts 4: 1, 5: 25: 8: 4, 5, 25, 26; 10: 19, 20; 13: 4, 5, 14 -16: 14: 1, 8-9, 19: 8: 21: 40 26: 1-29). I found that Jesus had preached to anyone, anywhere to the masses on the hills outside Jerusalem (Matthew 5: 1-12), to Jews in the synagogues (Matthew 4: 23), to drunks and prostitutes in the heart of the city (Mark 2: 1-16, Matthew 21: 32) and to hardened religious leaders in the streets of Jerusalem (Luke 15: 2-32). I saw that Paul had met the needs of people where he found them; he'd reasoned with the philosophers on Mars Hill (Acts 17: 18-34), addressed the magistrates in court (Acts 16: 27-34) and proclaimed the Messiah to Jews in their Synagogues (Acts 17 : 1,2).

But then I made a big discovery that a large part of first century evangelism was door to door. The disciples shared in every house in the cities they evangelized: "And every day in the

temple and from HOUSE TO HOUSE they kept right on preaching Jesus as the Christ” (Acts 5: 42 NASV).

I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable and teaching you publicly from HOUSE TO HOUSE.” (Acts 20: 20 NASV).

“And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from HOUSE TO HOUSE, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2: 46-47 NASV).

NO ONE LEFT OUT

Far from merely employing a system, the New Testament Christians simply did not want to leave anyone out. Thus, they knocked on doors, imploring their neighbors and friends to trust in Christ.

Could the biblical principles of “house-to-house” sharing come alive in South Central Los Angeles? After all it is a personal and practical means of seeing that NO ONE IS LEFT OUT.

I knew a favorable environment for evangelism had to include love, opportunity for interaction and freedom to share problems and questions without fear of rejection, judgment of harm. There was and is a great deal of isolation and suspicion in society, especially in the city. Why open your front door to someone who may con you, rape you or pull a knife on you?

If the ones who evangelize were recognizable, friendly and available, some huge obstacles to success would be knocked down. What better way to approach those in need of

the Savior than with, "Hi, I'm your neighbor down the block. I just wanted to meet you and tell you about something that has made a difference in my life." After all wasn't that why block-by-

block strategy had worked so well in recruiting Houston voters? And in Houston I'd also learned how practical the method was.

Block-by-block gives people a workable strategy for carrying out the "Great Commission." Motivation was not my church's problem. They wanted to spread the Good News. In fact, they were so motivated they were frustrated. My failure was that I told them to "go" and "do", but I neglected to show them "how." They did not have a practical strategy.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Most people then and now, do not understand what they're responsible for in terms of evangelism. They might have a vague sense of witnessing responsibility; they might witness randomly. But the responsibility has not been adequately defined to make it accessible and within their grasp. EITHER WE MAKE THE VISION OF EVANGELISM TOO INCONSEQUENTIAL SUCH AS "JUST WITNESS BY HOW YOU LIVE," OR WE FLOOD PEOPLE WITH AN OVERWHELMING VISION OF REACHING THE WHOLE WORLD FOR CHRIST. I saw that block-by-block strategy would break the responsibility down into "bite-sized" segments (blocks), practical and manageable for almost every Christian. Any Christian could and should witness outside of his or her block at work, amidst family and relatives, in recreation, on planes, in restaurants, however God might lead. But wouldn't it make sense, if we strive not to leave anyone out, that we could acquire a "personal area of responsibility" in order to get the job done?

At this point in my analysis, I imagined my church members standing before the Lord. Their neighbors were standing next to them listening to them give account of all the things they have done for the Lord. Then the neighbors turn to my members, "Do you mean you knew about Jesus Christ and His love all those years and you never bothered to walk a few houses down the street to tell me?" The scene solidified my sense of vision.

I had a task ahead of me. Now where was I to begin?

CHAPTER SEVEN

POWER

Before I address the nuts and bolts of block-by-block evangelism, I want to discuss the heart and soul of evangelism. The power of God given through the Holy Spirit is the foundation of any work that counts for eternity.

One day I was arriving by plane in Philadelphia. The pilot of the plane announced that landing instructions would be audible on channel one of our headsets. Because we had had great turbulence on this particular flight, I was most eager to hear these instructions. So, as we began to approach Philadelphia, I heard clearly the conversation between the man in the tower and the pilot. The air controller said the words "Flight 88." Immediately, that brought gladness to me, because I knew that he saw us--he was tracking us on his equipment. The instructions from the tower were to lower the altitude, reduce our speed, and watch out for thunderstorms in the area. Listening in was comforting. The man in the tower guided us from a stormy, fearful airplane ride to safety on the ground.

"You're down now. Taxi on in." What comfort to have the knowledge that there was someone in the tower who knew exactly where we were. In fact, different tracking stations had known of our whereabouts all the way from Los Angeles, and they knew the problems we were confronting and were able to give us precise directions. On this Flight the Holy Spirit reminded me how important it is to keep in touch with the tower.

Yet, I know of churches that are two hundred years old but have never turned to channel "one" for directions. I know of well-motivated Christians that crank out a witnessing

experience without relying on the Lord. I know pastors and Christians who do everything BUT wait upon the leading of the Holy Spirit in their lives. They read books, seek human counsel, duplicate someone else's program, preach and pray but not under the leading of the Holy Spirit. They just operate out of their own minds, consciences, and experiences to their own detriment, and to the losing of our world for Christ.

PRAYER AND THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE A TWO-SIDED COIN.

What priority should prayer have in our lives? For the best answer, we must look to the life of Jesus. In what place did He put prayer? He was amongst us to seek and save the lost; did He need prayer to minister? He ministered healing, compassion, and forgiveness to others; did He need time for prayer in order to do that? Over and over we find that scripture tells us, "Jesus prayed." He spent time with the Father, sometimes all night. He was a man of prayer who gave priority to prayer. That was His secret. It was His lifeline. It was His power. He said that He could do nothing apart from His father. And prayer was that access to His father.

What did Jesus pray for? What did He need? When He was pursued, He retreated to the place of prayer. When He broke bread and distributed it, He asked God's blessing. When He travailed in prayer for the disciples, He asked for unity and faith for them-that they would not falter. In the Garden of Gethsemane, He poured out His heart and then yielded His will. At the tomb of Lazarus, He implored God to reveal His power through Him.

Why did Jesus depend so fully upon the Lord? One reason is that He understood God's sensitivity to the situation on earth. Nothing caught God by surprise. There is a move on to

paint God as someone who is not even aware of what's going on in this world and who, if He did know, does not care. Jesus, like the pilot of Flight 88, understood that there was someone directly concerned with His safety. He came to God easily, and dependently, with His fears as well as His victories. (Mark 6: 46, 14: 32, Luke6: 12).

There is a further move to suggest that we must put on special airs to come into God's presence, or He will not hear us. We must use a certain vocabulary. We must be flawless in the Christian life. Many are adding that we must already have a high level of faith or our coming to God is useless. In fact, this is an attempt to come to God in our own name, rather than in the name of Jesus who has clothed us in His righteousness.

Jesus placed prayer as the foundation and pivot of His life and ministry. Jesus was a man of constant prayer. As a result, Jesus did not do that which was not necessary. He did not waste His time on trivialities. In fact, He accomplished the work God called Him to do in His brief lifespan of 33 years.

If we are to reach the lost and build others in the faith, we must also pray before we begin, as we go forth and when we return to our homes. Always and everywhere. We simply can do nothing for ourselves. If our lifeline is not intact, we are most likely producing out of our own insight energy, and convictions rather than God's insight energy and convictions. This is NOT the Christian LIFE. This is NOT the Christian WITNESS. The Christian life is a supernatural life.

Some of us stumble along. We don't tune into the tower that provides us with power—simply out of ignorance. A well-used story serves to illustrate. A man bought a ticket for a luxurious seven-day ship cruise. But he had just enough money for his ticket. So, he brought

with him cheese, sardines, crackers and the like because he felt he could not pay the price for

the gourmet meals served in the dining room. Finally, near the end of the cruise, he as so hungry for a good meal that he decided to spend what little he had left in the dining room.

When he arrived at the dining room the maître d' noticed him for the first time. "How did you get on this cruise?" he asked the passenger.

"Well, I've been on here since the beginning," he said.

"Why haven't you been in the dining room?"

"Because I didn't have any money."

The maître d' looked puzzled.

"Let me see your ticket," he asked.

The passenger pulled out his ticket. There on his ticket was printed the words:
Meals Included With The Price Of The Ticket.

Most Christians do not experience the leadership, comfort, encouragement and assistance of the Holy Spirit because they are ignorant of His presence and POWER in their lives. Yet, the Holy Spirit, and all He represents came with our salvation just as the meals came with the cruise.

The Holy Spirit enters a person the moment he or she believes in Jesus Christ (Romans 8:9). He will never leave. However, even though the Holy Spirits resides in every Christian, He only empowers those who DESIRE it and surrender to His leadership in their lives. Once we desire the Holy Spirit's leadership, we have only to understand a few simple truths to maintain a consistent Spirit-filled life.

First, God commands every Christian to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5: 18: "Be filed with the Spirit"). What prevents it? Ignorance, lack of faith or unconfessed sin on the

part of the believer prevent us from experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit. When we grieve or quench the Holy Spirit by unbelief or disobedience, we make His power inoperative in our lives. The Bible explains what we are to do about this sin. We confess it. The most significant verse for Christians in this area is I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Confess means to "name" the particular sin-admit that it is sin. Not "God, I have sinned" but "God, I have lied or lost my temper or failed to help someone." This helps us to really assess what it is we have done or not done. When we have admitted the particular sin we then appropriate or receive God's forgiveness. On the basis of our forgiveness, which was accomplished by Christ's death at Calvary, we can ask the Holy Spirit to empower us for His service. We can pray a simple prayer thanking the Lord for His forgiveness and asking Him to fill us with his Holy Spirit.

When you first understand the ministry of the Spirit, it may be helpful to WRITE DOWN those sins that defeat you. Then after completing the list, WRITE ACROSS it the words of I John 1:9. After that initial experience, confess the sin AS you become aware of it.

Confess your sin, claim God's forgiveness, receive the filling of the Holy Spirit and then move on! When you sin again, confess your sin and ask God to fill you with His Spirit. At first you may have to repeat this process (confess and be filled) many times a day.

How can you be sure you are filled with the Holy Spirit? By faith.

FILLED BY FAITH

The apostle John wrote in I John 5:14-15 that if we pray according to God's will we know that He hears us and whatever we ask for we receive. Since we know it is God's will that we be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), we know that if we ask God for this filling, WE WILL HAVE IT. It's not a matter of feeling, it's a matter of faith in God's word.

How has the Holy Spirit made a difference in the lives and witness of Christians? The Holy Spirit gives Christians power. Shortly before the ascension of Christ, he told His followers: "But you will receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. "

One woman said, "I used to hate the thought of witnessing. But since I've yielded my will to follow the Holy Spirit, I look forward to sharing my faith. A Christian man explained, "Fear of witnessing immobilized me. I would do anything to prevent a situation that required me to testify. After drawing upon God's power, I became bolder. I can testify in my own life that asking the Lord to fill and enable me with His Spirit is the secret to consistently leading others to Christ."

When I was a young preacher, I was sure I could preach a sermon without the Holy Spirit as well as I could with Him. I thought I had answers to the hardest questions. I had great confidence in my own ability to solve any problem that arose. Yet the older I have become the more grateful I am for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Before I got out of my twenties I learned about His power and help; as I have continued in the Christian life, I have realized that I do not have all the answers. My words only go so far. I cannot move the immovable in my own strength. On my own, I cannot have the answers to the complex problems of my church

members and family. More and more I have recognized my need to lean on the Holy Spirit and to distinguish His gentle leading and encouragement from my own thoughts, my own conscience and my own experience.

Instead of reacting to a problem with my own wisdom I have developed a habit pattern of shifting my burdens to the Lord and waiting for His answer.

“Lord,” I pray, “help me, show me what to do; show me what to think; show me what to say.” Such is the attitude of the Spirit-led Christian.

Yet, isn't it sad that, due to ignorance, and sometimes to pride or fear, or rebellion, many individuals and churches go an entire lifetime without relying on the Holy Spirit... much like the passenger who did not take advantage of his prepaid meals.

Without prevailing prayer, it is difficult for a Christian to carry out the work God has called him or her to do. As we witness, we turn to Him and He will give us what to say, when to say it, and how to say it. He doesn't just tell us to witness and then see how we carry it out on our own. He expects that all along the way we are seeking Him, living in an attitude of prayer, constantly bringing everything of concern to him, becoming more and more sensitive to his answers and enabling power. More and more we learn how to turn to channel one and listen to his instruction.

The Bible says that “Eye hasn't seen, ear hasn't heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for those who love Him” (I Corinthians 2: 9).

“Ask that you might receive that your joy might be full” (John 16:24).

Why, therefore should we pray? Because Jesus said that things would happen if we

pray. God says to us, "I may shut up the heavens. I may send trials among you. I may cause the ground to shake and famine in the land." But then He says, "If you pray and humbly seek my face I will hear and answer."

God has many options. There is so much sin in this world that consequences overflow sometimes even to the saintliest saint. For God is just, and sin deserves a positive response. But if God's people will pray humbly and with faith, He delights in answering their prayers. And no prayer is too small for God.

All through the Bible, saints prayed--Abraham, Joshua, Moses, David, Jesus, and Paul, to name just a few. And God answered. They prayed for almost everything under the sun. And if it honored God, look at the amazing list of answers. It is encouraging to know that we can open our Bible and find similar situations to those problems that exist today and find that God answers prayer and helps His people. But even if we feel we are in a unique situation in history, we can be assured that sometime somewhere some believer has been in a similar spot. They prayed and God answered.

I always answer a question from my son Edward by saying "No." It doesn't matter what it is. My son is a politician and if you don't start with "No" with a politician there's no telling what they might get out of you.

One of the reasons I have done this was to prepare him to justify what he wants. And now, as soon as I say "No," Edward politely says, "Now, Daddy, let me explain it to you."

If Edward then makes a good case out of it; if he argues his point well, and if he has an appreciative and humble spirit, and closes out by saying, "Daddy, I trust your judgment but please do what I ask," he almost knows he has what he wants.

In answer to prayer God will do great things. In regard to witnessing, I have learned that we need to be seeing God at work in our own lives as a witness to those with whom we share. An illustration from the life of my wife Jane, with whom I served the Lord for many happy years, illustrates the miracles that accompany those who seek the Lord's best and of a God who answers prayer.

I met Jane in Springtime. It was a case of love at first sight. And from then on though other pretty girls crossed my path, I was confident that Jane was my woman. Very confident until... one nervous night when I had to confront her parents with the proposal. Jane said it was the only time she had seen me chew gum. I was nervous!

The big event was on August 29. And Jane and I were sure of God's blessings on us. As a little girl, my wife used to go into her mother's bedroom, take the long, lacy nylon curtains, wrap herself up in them, gaze into the dresser mirror, and imagine it was her wedding day. With her imagination went a prayer to God.

"Please Lord, You send me my husband and be sure to let me know when he's the right one."

Jane's father was a professor at Prairie View A & M, and one of the things he enjoyed doing most was keeping a beautiful garden around their lovely campus home. So, it was no surprise that by the tender age of seven, Jane had already decided that her wedding would be out in the garden amidst the pampas grass and assorted flowers. Not only had she chosen the

ideal location, but she had defined and imagined every possible detail of her wedding, from sandwiches to seating arrangements.

Then, some weeks before the anticipated August event, her father was taken ill. Jane, not wanting to be a burden on her parents, gave up many of her dreams, then decided she would be content with a wedding-minus all the trappings.

But she was truly disappointed with the garden. The sun had scorched the southern fields all summer which by August was normally abloom with lovely flowers of all descriptions.

Jane was taken by a big surprise, when her mother began preparing the sandwiches. They were the exact variety that Jane had hoped: chicken salad and green cottage cheese with nuts. Then the punch was mixed: lime green to match Jane's colors of green and white. The seating arrangement, the extra decorations-all were as Jane had imagined as a child. It seems that her mother had been collecting Jane's dreams over the years. Nothing had been overlooked.

The wedding was scheduled for 8:00 p.m. The well-lighted garden was arranged to highlight the splendor of the pampas grass standing tall beside the bride and groom, but the pampas grass offered no lovely cotton candy blooms.

In the afternoon hours as Jane thought back to her dreams of this special day, she particularly reflected on her prayer, "Let me know for sure that this is the man for me." God was about to manifest His answer to that prayer.

About 3: 00 p.m. it started. Rain by the bucketful poured from the sky. At 5: 30 the rain ceased. Five minutes later the sun burst through the clouds, filling the field with blazing heat

before it lowered into the horizon. Have you ever seen a miracle? Jane did. She stood on the back steps of her home and watched each flower peel back its greenery and make its debut: roses, chrysanthemums, pansies, gladiolas and the pampas grass with its lovely white cotton candy popping at the seems like popcorn.

God delights in answering prayers.

How then do we pray as we seek to reach the lost?

Prayer: "Lord, make me a fit vessel for your service."

If Christians are to attract people to Christianity, they need a life to back up their message. Most committed Christians have periods of walking with the Lord, when the fruit of the Spirit radiates from their lives, but they lack consistency. What we need is **CONSISTENT POWER IN LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.**

The work of sanctification and its renewed consistency can be performed **ONLY** by prayer: "Keep me steady, Lord."

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, against such things there is no law. Our part is to seek this growth and desire God's work within us.

Prayer: "Lord, enable me with your spirit to speak Your truth with power and boldness" (Ephesians 6:19). What we are not able to do in our flesh, by God's Spirit we are empowered to do.

Prayer:" Lord, may your Holy Spirit minister the work of regeneration to this one with whom I'm sharing" (Romans 10: 1, John 3:3). The best training in the world is inadequate if the

power of the Holy Spirit is not unleashed to deal with individuals while they listen to the good news. Prayer for the unsaved is the greatest tool in connection with salvation.

Prayer: "Lord, lead me by your Holy Spirit to those with whom you would have me share." Availability is a daily prayer for every Christian.

Prayer: "Lord, give me wisdom as I talk with others" (James 1: 5). Our wisdom is not sufficient in regard to eternal causes.

Prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit, an unbeatable combination in reaching this world for Christ!

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TRAINED CHURCH

Sometime ago I was asked to speak to a very conservative Christian group up in the backlands of Arizona. I shall never forget the small two engine plane landing at the airport near where Barry Goldwater (one of our presidential contenders) was born. The town was so small, even the airport attendant knew I was coming.

When I got to the meeting the first thing on the agenda was the mission report. I listened attentively.

“We didn't win anyone this year,” the superintendent announced.” But then again, we didn't lose anybody either. And we don't have any new preachers to add, but all our old preachers, I am happy to report the ones that are still hanging in there.”

If this weren't enough, the superintendent added “All we need is to stay saved and safe. We needn't worry about what is happening in the world,” he explained to men and women whose heads were nodding in agreement,” because after all, Jesus is coming soon and He will make everything right. Then we who have been saved will be delivered and taken on into Heaven.” Upon completing this report, they all rose and sang Beulah Land.

As I was hearing this report, I began to think of every way I knew to get an emergency phone call and be ushered out of the meeting on some important business. But way up in the Boon docks, I couldn't get anyone to call me. I couldn't get away, and I knew I wasn't going to agree with them in my sermon.

I was headed for a conflict. But then the Holy Spirit, Who is a very present help in time of trouble, gave me a joke.

“There was a negro preacher down in Alabama,” I told them. “He had a great deal of revelation. But not much education. His daughter, however, was a trained musician. And she had the choir sing; “There is a Balm in Gilead.”

When the preacher stood back up, he was crying.

“Chillum.” he said, “I hadn’t heard about it. It is a very sad thing. They are bombing Gilead. They’ll bomb Jerusalem next. There ain’t no safe place to go.”

And so, I told my audience, there’s no safe place. Not here. Not anywhere. And God never told us to sit around and play it safe until He comes. We need to get out of our comfortable pews and reach this world for Christ. Why? Because hell is a real place.

After a message, I preached on “What happens to the lost?” one of my church members just wept and wept. He came to me sometime later and said, “Brother Hill, thank God for that message you brought. I cried because I saw my brother slipping into hell. I went that afternoon and packed a bag; my wife thought I was crazy. I caught a plane that day, flew to Dallas, and stayed all night with my brother talking with him, prayed and talked with him all Sunday until Sunday evening he believed in the Lord and was baptized in the church in Jesus name. With great relief I caught a plane and came back home.” Many in my congregation pray all through the service, and at all-night prayer meetings, because they know, understand and believe that there is a hell. The fact is if we believe what He said about heaven, we must believe what He said about hell. This is not a hell God wants to send people to. In fact, He paid the greatest price of all time to keep us from going there. That is the good news the world needs to hear from us.

There are certain things the righteous dare not do! They must not hide, close their doors, seal their mouths, run for cover, shut their eyes, or retreat. For God has a call on every Christian to be involved. In this age, right now, right where we are, every Christian has been called to live Godly lives...and preach the gospel. Share the good news, propagate the Christian message, be ready to give an account, persuade men and women, and redeem the time.

I had spoken about personal soul-winning at Mount Zion for many years. It was my wholehearted desire that we be a soul-winning church. I would prod, pray, exhort, compel, push, poke, and nudge my members into action. But they just weren't catching on!

Shortly after the riots, I heard about a group that was super-effective world-wide in soul winning. I was curious as to know how they accomplished this. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, I sent four of our church members to Campus Crusade for Christ (now called CRU), an interdenominational Christian organization, for a Leadership Training Institute. During this three-day seminar, members of the church were taught how to effectively share their faith. Among those who attended was Edward Bass. Bass and I had been friends since high school days, and now he worked for me as my right-hand man, but he wasn't interested in going to the training institute. And so, a somewhat humorous conversation took place.

"Bass," I said, "who do you work for?"

"You, Reverend." he said.

"And Bass, who signs your checks?"

"You do, Reverend."

"Well, don't you want to go to Campus Crusade for Christ?" I asked.

“Yes, Reverend,” he nodded woefully. So, Bass hesitantly drove to the training.

Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday were difficult days for Bass. The experience was very new and different to him. Once he called and asked permission to come back. I'm not getting anything here, Reverend.”

“But Thursday told a different story. It happened that Bass was assigned to door-to-door witnessing, alone. Bass describes his experience.

“The first lady on the block was a Buddhist. I found little interest in Christ there. At the second house, a father of two children opened the door. Even though I was black, and a stranger and he was white, he was willing to let me share with him. I could hardly believe my ears when, after I had presented a simple message of the gospel (which I learned at the training institute), the man responded positively. We prayed together and he trusted Christ as his Savior.”

That evening Bass returned to church to finish some work for me. Working way into the night, he eagerly desired to finish and return to the training program the next morning. On Sunday I received a telephone call: “Reverend. this is Bass. Would it be alright if I stayed another week here at Campus Crusade?”

Surprised and excited to find out what prompted that, I told him, “No. Come home now. We've got plenty to do here.”

TRAINED AND MOVING

I was amazed by the new attitude and effectiveness of those who attended the training.

And the more I thought about this idea of training, the more it made sense. Of course, we had trained our block workers in Houston. We taught them how to approach their neighbors, what

to say, and how to answer questions. We had them practice until they had it down, then we sent them out. I believed the same plan would work in South Central, only with a much higher purpose in mind.

I decided to invite a Campus Crusade for Christ team to conduct similar evangelistic training for the rest of our congregation. People came from a number of churches in the area. By the end of the week of training, our members were excited about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ!

Through several experiences, Sister Butler's relationship to Christ changed that week. I laugh (with her) when I think of one of them.

Sister Butler loved the Lord. In fact, I'd say she was one of the pillars of the church; but, for the first time as a TRAINED believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, she was going to make clear to another human being the good news of Christ.

Sister Butler had prepared well. Fearful and nervous, she had memorized the full presentation. She knew all the right questions to ask and had a few Bible verses tucked away just in case. Sister Butler hadn't thought about results. She was just going to follow instructions like the obedient servant of the Lord that she was.

Her first witnessing opportunity was at the beauty shop. The manager, having a few minutes free consented to take the spiritual growth interest survey. When she was through, Sister Butler asked,

"Do you have a need for a stronger faith?"

The lady said, "Yes."

According to the instructions, if the lady said “yes,” Sister Butler was to present the Four Spiritual Laws (a small booklet with a clear presentation of Christ).

“Have you ever heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?” she asked.

“No,” said the lady.

“Would you like to?”

“Yes” she replied.

After sharing the principles, Sister Butler asked the next question on the list.

“Is there any reason why you would not receive Christ right now?”

“No,” was the response.

“Would you like to pray for Christ to come into your heart?”

“Yes,” came the reply.

Like a well-trained soldier, Sister Butler further explained the simple prayer the women could pray as an expression of her faith. Then, halfway through the prayer, Sister Butler suddenly looked up.

“I beg your pardon,” she interrupted. “What did you say?”

“Yes. I would like to receive Christ.”

At that, Sister Butler's eyes got big as hot cakes. Dropping her purse and her booklet she rushed out the door of the shop, headed in the direction of the church, shouting so folks could hear her down the block: “Pastor, I got one! I got one!”

Now here's a woman who testifies that after forty years in the church, that was the first time that she had personally led anyone to know about and receive Christ as Savior.

Sister Butler's training in evangelism made that possible.

Thorough training was the key to helping the Christians in my church be effective in evangelism. I am happy to report that I have seen thousands in my own community enter the kingdom of God as a direct result of Christians being trained and effectively sharing the “good news.” Many others have been influenced in that direction.

Webster defines “train” as “to teach so as to be fitted, qualified, or proficient.” That’s more than teaching or exhortation. It is, I learned, thorough preparation. Christians should be helped to know exactly what they are to do in terms of evangelism and how to do it. “Be ready always to give an account of the hope that is in you” (I Peter 3:9).

The devil has been at his game a lot longer than you or I. If he is well-prepared in how to keep a soul from God, shouldn't the church be thoroughly prepared in how to capture that soul for God?

Even if a Christian has his or her theology right, it often happens that when the basic Christian message is passed on to another individual, it includes additional elements, such as answers to questions which haven't been asked or are not relevant, church membership, or confusing growing as a Christian with becoming a Christian. In other words, we often put the cart before the horse, adding distorted or burdensome precepts while sometimes neglecting to explain the essentials: the cross, the resurrection, and the decision. The gospel is simple and clear. Yet, as a pastor of many years, it is amazing to me how easy it is to garble or misrepresent the most basic message of Christianity-how one BECOMES a Christian.

The essence and simplicity of the message is this: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (I Tim 1: 15). He accomplished this NOT by calling for us to get our lives together,

love him, or serve him. Jesus knew all about us. And he knew that our efforts, however noble, would never bridge the chasm that exists between God and man. Something more was needed.

The penalty of sin is death, and that penalty requires payment. Jesus paid it. His death on the cross paid the penalty of sin for every member of the human race. He paid it ALL! No effort of ours is required or allowed. Jesus footed the bill. We either accept or reject what he has done for us. But we can't add anything to what He has done.

This is Christianity. Instead of placing our faith in ourselves to achieve salvation (A system which most every religion practices); we put our faith in Jesus Christ. When the Bible says to "repent and believe" it means we turn 180 degrees around from trusting in ourselves, to trusting completely in Christ. We place our faith, in Him, not in our efforts, not in good works, not in money, fame, or worked up feelings--Christ paid it all and we put our trust in Him. If in answer to the question "How do you know you are a Christian?" you have any reason other than "Because of what Christ did for me on the cross," then your understanding a limited source. You may still be trusting in yourself.

To have the gift of eternal life one must believe. There are over fifty Biblical references which indicate that "believing" is the only necessary requirement for receiving God's salvation through Christ.

For example: It says of Abraham, "Then he believed in the Lord, and he reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Genesis 15:6). Paul instructs the Philippian jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved..." (Acts 16: 31). Jesus told Nicodemus: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). Paul argued the issue to the saints at Ephesus, "For by grace you have been saved

through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast" (Eph 2:8, 9). John records Jesus saying that the basis of condemnation is simply unbelief: "He who believes in him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God" (John 3:18).

And what does scripture record concerning those who enter into God's grace, and by what means?

"...at the Passover many believed in his name." (John 2: 23).

"...many of the Samaritans believed on Him." (John 4: 30).

"...many of the Jews which came to Mary believed." (John 11: 45).

"...among the chief rulers also many believed on Him." (John 12: 42).

"...Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed." (Acts 18: 8).

Christian conversion is an instantaneous act of God. Salvation is a gift that is received and secured in one single instant, having already brought by the Lord Jesus Christ in His death on the cross.

That was the message my church needed to be trained to share. "The one who comes to me ;I will certainly not cast out" (John 6: 37b). We must never confuse becoming a Christian with growing as a Christian. Indeed, to do so may put an eternal obstacle in an unbeliever's path. Some who insist on including the "forsaking of sin," the denouncing of all worldly goods, and a call to making Christ "Lord of all" as necessary for salvation, are "front loading" the gospel and as such have changed the gospel to what they think it should be. Not what it is!

The first homosexual who tried to join my church I ran away under the philosophy that he was not right with God.

About four months later he came back, saying that the Lord had sent him back.

“For what?” I asked.

“Every time I ask God for help, he tells me to come to you, Pastor Hill. but when I come over here you send me away. Isn't there a gospel for homosexuals, Pastor Hill?”

And for the first time it hit me.

“What are you seeking?” I asked. Are you seeking to join the church while persisting in your lifestyle?”

“No,” he said, “I want to be free and I need your help to get straight.”

I worked with this man for many months. He did not perform perfectly, falling back into sin many times, but after another six months he came to me. “You know pastor, I have the sin of homosexuality but there is one sin that many of your members have that I do not have.”

“What is that?” I asked.

“I have never lusted after a woman.”

He had me. Yet still another six months passed, and he came to my office again.

“Guess what, Pastor. I have a girlfriend.”

“Is she straight?” I wanted to know.

The story took place many years ago. My friend married his girlfriend. Today he has a teenage daughter and a successful pastorate.

Was this man saved when he finally got over his sin of homosexuality? No, he was saved when he BELIEVED. Because salvation is a gift from God, dependent on what God did

for us, not what we are able to do for him; on Christ bearing our sins on the cross, not on our ability to make Him Lord over everything in our lives. And if an individual never gets complete victory over his sins, or if he finds himself lost in his own sinfulness, or even if he is so discouraged and he quits trying, this is neither salvation nor lack of it. Simple, once-and-for-all" faith" in Christ is the means of salvation. After which, the new Christian should be encouraged to seek the Lord and begin to GROW as a Christian.

Not everyone is going to accept Christ, but we must keep obeying the mandate. We can further count on it being difficult at times.

We must have faith that if we do what is right, we are going to harvest one day. "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord. Expect to be rejected and have doors slammed in our faces." You see, the coming being rejected and having the doors slammed is just a part of the groundbreaking before we plant.

No, we must never sit in our churches "saved and safe" singing Beulah Land, at least not while there are those who need to hear!

CHAPTER NINE

What is a Christian's duty in the world?

For years this question has raised controversy. Some people call for a "social gospel," some call for an "activist" gospel, while others preach what they call the gospel of "love." The central question seems to be these: Do we feed and clothe a person first, hoping that through our benevolence he or she will come to know Christ? Do we concentrate on fighting pertinent issues for the purpose of reestablishing proper priorities, hoping that this will strengthen the Christian witness in the culture? Do we just love everybody into the kingdom believing our model is enough to influence people for the kingdom? In other words, what is a Christian supposed to BE to this generation?

I was confronted squarely with this issue at The Worldwide Conference on Evangelism. I had come as a speaker to this august body. Many were expecting me to address this issue. The morning before my speech was to be given, I got down on my knees. "Lord, some of my brothers and sisters are urging me to tell everyone to help the poor. This is "Your PRIORITY," they say. Some are saying, "E V, you know that the simple gospel is primary and everything else is secondary to that." Others have little time for evangelism. They believe their task is limited to saving society. Others want to just love, love, love and do nothing else. They're looking to me for some kind of answer. What am I to say?

That afternoon I was introduced as a distinguished speaker. I stepped up to the mic and looked out upon my audience-dignified theologians, many of them eminent in their field, renown Christians and esteemed delegates from around the globe. The idea the Holy Spirit

had given me seemed too mundane for such an intelligent and thoughtful crowd.

“Life,” I began, “is like a baseball game. My audience became silent, looking at me as if I had lost my marbles. We have first base, second base, third base and home plate. And for a Christian to do the word of God, every base must be covered.”

Even though my audience was confused I knew I had them. There’s something universally of interest about the game of baseball.

“When you play baseball,” I continued, “there are some fundamental RULES of the game that must be adhered to, if you are going to win! For example, you don’t hit the ball and run to third base. You must go to first base, then to second base, then third base and on to home plate. To run in any other order would exclude you from the game.”

“So, what is first base?” I asked them. “First base for the church must be the same as it was for Jesus,” I answered. “Luke recorded His priority succinctly in Luke 19: 10. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to SAVE that which was lost. IF JESUS' primary goal in His coming was to provide and preach salvation for every man, woman, and child, then wouldn’t it follow that OUR primary calling is to assist Him in this effort? Indeed, He has made that responsibility clear to us. The Great Commission states: “Go therefore and make DISCIPLES of all the nations”. To accomplish this we are told to preach, teach and baptize in His name! (Matthew 28:18, 19, Mark 16:15-16).

“Now, whether or not we feed the hungry as we carry out our most important task is up to the individual leading of the Holy Spirit. Whether we confront social issues - drugs, pornography, abortion and other pressing matters, may be a matter of individual leading and conscience. However, to substitute feeding the hungry or social action or helping the poor or

love spreading, for articulating the gospel is to MISS THE PURPOSE of Jesus' coming.

I could easily talk about the importance of evangelism-and from my own experience. I was most fortunate to have been raised in Guadeloupe County, a south central area of Texas, consisting of San Antonio and Austin, where reasoning, understanding and negotiation were possible among races. As a black man in a predominately white society, this was critical to me. Sweet Home/Elm Creek was the community I lived in. In the 1940s Sweet Home was the black community; Elm Creek was the white. Each had its own school, its own stores, and its own recreational outlets.

My early home was situated out in the country with a woman who took me in. Back in those days people in town did not live as comfortably as those in the country. Town folks would go to the country on weekends to get fresh greens, eggs and milk. I had once lived in the town with my real mother who worked as a domestic to try to support us six children. One of Mother's neighbors had a sister who lived in the country. One day when the sister came into town, she saw us all running around. She apparently felt sorry for us as she invited my sister and me to spend the summer with her.

I went home with her, stayed the summer, stayed the fall, and when they tried to bring me back to town to go to school, I ran away. I purposely stayed lost a month, until Mother finally agreed that I could stay with Mrs. Moore, whom I was calling Mama by then There was a " Papa" Moore also. They both loved me dearly. But " Papa" died when I was only eleven, and this left "Mama" and me to cope with the heavy responsibilities of life.

But we were not alone." Mama" and I made it in that log cabin because a loving God was caring for His "saved" ones. We received no financial aid whatsoever, no welfare. I

milked cows for Hicks Thomas for \$1.25 a week. I made fires for the teachers at our schools for 50 cents a week. And in the summers, I picked cotton and shelled peanuts. The Lord always showed us a way.

Up until my college days my education consisted of several teachers: my agricultural teacher, who was also my principal, my coach and my English teacher. We had no science labs, no typewriters, no counselors, no experts, little or no teaching equipment, second-hand books, a wood stove-a combination of few essential and no extras! Yet the Lord saw to it that my education was adequate to one day address senators, congressman and presidents,

From the rural areas of Texas to the ghettos of Watts, I understand what it is to be POOR-but I understand something else. In spite of the worst kind of difficulties, the Lord takes care of His OWN. Paul experienced this: "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4: 19). David witnessed this: "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not lack." (Psalm 1: 1)

I have witnessed this provision of God for His children. I have lived by it. I know it to be true. I'm just grateful that at an early age someone told me how I could have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, because knowing Christ as Savior precedes and opens the door to every other blessing.

THE GOOD NEWS

For the most part the gospel message has INFILTRATED OUR WORLD BY THE EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS OF A SMALL GROUP OF CHRISTIANS. It has NOT been a large majority of Christians laying down their lives for the effort to effect change. It has not been because every Christian is reporting for duty; but because a relatively

small minority of Christians are giving their all, and then some, to make known the good news of Jesus Christ. That is, they are opening their mouths and lovingly sharing what Christ has done. However, more and more people are making “first base” the gospel message-their priority.

Many Christians can rightfully be labeled, “Ambassadors for Christ.” That is their daily eighteen-hour-a-day, full-time job is reaching the lost. I'd put myself in this category. Many of our phone calls are requests to help this person or that person, to speak to the unsaved, to pray or to pay so that some other person can speak to the unsaved, or to deal with the fruit of evangelistic work we've already done. Daily, we stretch our nerves, sinews and muscles to go further than they can go. In fact, many of us go on long after our bodies have stopped working well for us.

However, there are those among us who have stopped singing the Lord's song. To secure material blessing, fame, comfort and rest, some have left to sing the music of the world. People who were on fire for the Lord just a few years ago who couldn't be stopped and who fearlessly went everywhere with the good news of Christ have quit. I noticed one of them in downtown Los Angeles; we used to worship together.

“Are you still witnessing out on the streets for our Lord?” I asked him.

“No.”

“Well what are you doing now?”

“I have a well-paying job and live out in the suburbs.”

“What church are you attending?”

“Well you know it's difficult to get everything done and still go to church these days.”

Spiritual apathy? Looking for a more comfortable life? This is what some, even many, Christians are doing today. A woman who was president of one of our woman's circles came to me one afternoon. "Pastor," she said, "I wish to resign."

"Why?" I asked her.

"Because I'm tired, Pastor."

"No," I said "I cannot accept your resignation. It is of the devil."

"I will stay under one condition," she said, "If these people will do what I say, with no back and no trouble, I will remain."

"Well, I wouldn't even need you then," I said. "It's because they need a leader, one who can help give them direction and provide opportunities to produce for the Lord and reach our area for Christ, that I need you in the first place."

Others have quit winning people to Christ because they are absorbed in programs, causes, self-help groups and personal growth classes. As important as these groups are, salvation is still the primary need of friends and loved ones. Our own personal growth should help us reach out even more with the good news of forgiveness and hope.

CART BEFORE THE HORSE

Should I place evangelism BASIC and revolutionary in a church program as opposed to being just one more program? Let's say that a church has a Sunday school program and a youth program. Further, the church desires to assist the needy. EVANGELISTIC EFFORTS MUST LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL OTHER PROGRAMS. I stated this clearly to my distinguished

audience of the World Conference on Evangelism and I'm saying it now. Evangelism is a matter of putting the horse in front of the cart.

How does this work? When Christians make evangelism their priority, they will become proficient at leading others to Christ. This will bring more people into the church who can lead others to Christ and serve in other ways. This creates an ongoing circle. The more saved, the more who can serve.

In the process of church-related evangelism many positive results ensued; Christians fortify themselves in their Christian beliefs. This brings stability to the church.

- Christians develop extra motivation to live righteously and honor Christ for the sake of others. This serves as a purifier to the church.

-Christians gain confidence in their ability to be used effectively by God. This brings production to the church.

-Christians grow in faith as they see others coming into the Kingdom. This brings vitality to the church.

With these positive effects derived from an emphasis on evangelism, a church can launch other programs with confidence knowing that individuals are prepared to share their faith, work positively with others and assist the church more fully in all its endeavors. At Mount Zion, after many members understood how to evangelize and disciple; they would then work in prisons, hospitals, work programs as personal counselors, Sunday school teachers, deacons and elders. They could participate in wife abuse centers, childcare centers, twelve step programs, political involvement, fighting pornography and abortion. We knew that they were prepared in sharing the gospel and saw evangelism as the primary need. They were effective in

their efforts.

That's first base. Getting people saved and preparing them to serve others. We can feed, clothe, find employment, and counsel a person from now until doomsday; but if that person doesn't know the Lord, he or she is going to spend eternity in hell. As Jesus so aptly put it, "For what will a man (or woman) be profited, if he (or she) gains the whole world and forfeits his (or her) soul?" (Matthew 16: 26).

If we lead people to Christ, God is going to care for them, His children. And when the emphasis and priority is on first base--evangelism--the church can successfully pursue second and third base. Winning souls is first base. What are second and third base?

CHAPTER TEN
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED
(SECOND BASE)

There are some who believe that after hitting the ball and running to first base, it's time to turn right, head for the dugout and wait for the rapture. There's even been an emphasis on "Christ's coming is just around the corner" and "things are just going to get worse; "Many Christians have hung up their uniform leaving the bulk and burden of sharing and fighting the good fight on the shoulders of the few. Making our jobs more difficult. They may not believe this passive theology outright, but practically speaking, they are living that theology. In reality, anybody knows you can't score from first base. In order to get home, you must go from first, to second, to third and then home.

What then is second base for the Christian? The disciple John quotes Jesus as saying: "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13: 35). In other words, we, the church, demonstrate to the world God's great phenomena. We are His visible body, His called-out ones, His fellowship. And the world will know this BY OUR LOVE.

Recently I met a young man who had had a great salvation experience which he enthusiastically described.

"Where do you fellowship?" I asked him finally.

"Oh, Pastor, I don't need a church," he replied. "I talk with God as I walk by the ocean or out in the fields." Then he hastened to add that if he could find a perfect church, he would join it.

“What if you could find a church that was TRYING to be perfect?” I asked.

“Wouldn't you want to join and help them become all they should be?”

But he didn't want to be bothered. His love was not adequate to share and minister with others.

RECEIVING SINNERS

One reason the church is not winning souls today, is that it is not prepared to receive SINNERS. The average gutter sinner would not be welcome. Secular institutions may seek out members who have integrity and a successful track record. But the church is to be in the wrecking business, looking for those who are willing to acknowledge that they're failures. Then the church should rejoice when they repent of the mess they are in.

The world needs individuals who have been to first and second base, who possess the unconditional love of Christ. We need Christians who are controlled by the Spirit, and who are fully able to have the same tender compassion toward one another as God has toward us. We need churches that reach out to others, encourage, uplift, give to, sacrifice for, and agape others, churches that receive sinners into their halls.

As an example of a Christian who had to get from first to second base, I offer exhibit A: E V. Hill. As a young man, I hated white folk.

LOVE NOT HATE

“Stop that, you're acting like white folk!” If you are white you may never have heard those words. But if you are black you may have heard them many times, particularly as a child. As a young man I believed implicitly that the white man was a selfish, heartless individual. He was out to fill his own egocentric lusts, whether or not he had to step on other human beings to get there. “You're acting like white folk!” When it was hollered at you, you could be sure you were behaving like a scoundrel, a thief, but whatever it was. it was bad!

I hated the whites. Among generalities, there were specifics for my rage. First, I felt the white man to be a hypocrite. He spoke of equality in the Declaration of Independence but lived with partialities in his daily life.

Second, he had designed and perpetuated a system that favored his skin color and short circuited mine. I resented the white people’s belief that the black was just trying to become white. Such self centeredness on the part of the white man was detestable to me.

Third and most important, I hated the white man because the position he gave me was beneath my capabilities. The frustrating road-blocks: “You can’t eat in my kitchen”; “You can’t drink from my fountain”; “You can’t go to my school”; You can’t have my job”; even “You can't urinate in my pot” they were constantly there to remind me of my white people-imposed position.

As for their philanthropy, the generosity of the white man, I knew a little of it. If on occasion a white man would do something for a black, in our opinion it was for a number of unacceptable motives.

Maybe his father had slaves.

He'd been stealing from blacks all his life.

He had a black child somewhere.

At election time we always knew his motive. He'd come down, buy up the barbeque and beer, and give it away to the blacks. This was the white man and his operation!

While still in my teens I went into partial partnership with Hicks Thomas. I raised hogs at his place. I grew peanuts on his farm. He had about seventy or eighty acres, tractors and all. Together we raised some of the finest hogs this country has ever seen. My first competing hog was a "Sears and Roebuck hog." Now a Sears and Roebuck hog is one which the boy is given free. He must raise it, breed it, then give someone else the pick of the litter. I was thirteen years old with no money. The pig spelled O-P-P-O-R-T-U-N-I-T-Y!

To be considered for a pig, a boy had to write a paper telling what he'd do if he had the opportunity to raise the pig. I spent a month on that paper. And I'll never forget the morning they told me I was to be awarded a pig. I was over at the church just across the road from the school, when the black county agent came by to announce it. I had only five days to prepare for the pig. I had to build a pen and a trough, and a feeder. And I had to haul water a mile every day for that pig. No boy worked harder.

When the pig arrived, I set out to make him "Grand Champion" of the state. I would exhibit him in the next county fair. And I would win! This was no easy task. For in the state of Texas, this was the aspiration and challenge of many young boys my age. I had great hopes!

I soon found that the county fair had two worlds. Blacks were not allowed to show in the calf division, only in the hogs. And with our hogs, we were not allowed to compete against the whites. We could only win the Grand Champion of the Black section. There was another problem at the county fair. My beautiful hog paid far below the white boy's hog. The white boy's

hog sold for \$ 3.00 a pound. My hog sold for 50 cents a pound. And I had a better hog!

This incident made me take a good look at possible achievements of my future mayor, governor, senator, president, successful businessman. These, I had been told were limited to the white world. But I earnestly desired a chance to prove myself in these vocations. I wasn't satisfied to be just the outstanding black. I wanted to be the outstanding man.

We were taught we could become BETTER blacks, but we were never to forget that we would ALWAYS BE BLACKS. If we went to school, remained in school, and made good grades, they told us, one day we might even see New York City. This was a great aspiration! And then there was the slight possibility that if we were "exceptional", we might become part of the small percentage of blacks who are "accepted" among the whites.

I had felt I was inferior to the white man. I had felt he was superior to me. But, more and more, I was beginning to see that I was just as human as he was. And what's more, the white man couldn't raise the quality hogs that I could.

What about the white church? Were they different?

Far from seeing the white Christians as God's representatives, blacks viewed white Christians as people disobeying God, transgressing against God, and in need of God's Spirit within. The white man's religion? To us it was purely a fob, worn like the decoration that hangs from his watch chain. It knew nothing of God's forgiveness and empowering love. The real Christians were the black people. We prayed for the white man, took care of his children, raising them in the spirit of the Lord. We shared the White man's secrets with him, yet a number of blacks carried their Christianity with them to the tar pits. To us there wasn't any such thing as a white Christian. And I had never once seen a Christian white man take a stand

with a Christian black man.

I felt I never would... until my freshmen year at Prairie View (a part of Texas A & M University). I had been actively involved in the Baptist Student Union, which held a National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, each year. Much to my pleasure, I was one of the two Prairie View students selected to go. White students raised the money for the trip, and I accepted it as if it were their act of pity to a lesser human being, or as their chance to ease their guilty consciences.

The trip across the South was by car, three whites and two blacks traveling together. With nothing but segregated motels and restaurants along the way, I had visualized the white people eating in a restaurant while we blacks ate in the kitchen; the white people sleeping one place and we blacks sleeping another place. My anxiety and resentment over the trip was so great that I almost backed out entirely.

Right before we left, Dr. Howard, the director of our trip, said, "We'll be traveling together. If there isn't a place where we can all eat, none of us will eat. If there's not a place where we can all sleep, none of us will sleep."

That was all he said, but it was enough! For the first time in my life, I had met a white man who was Christian enough to take a stand with a Christian black man.

The trip across the country was tense for me. The white people had the right attitude. But in the midst of their love and concern, their impartiality and total acceptance, my hate and "I'll show you" attitude stuck out like a sore thumb.

I had thought it was ONLY the white folk that needed a change of heart. But now I saw myself in the same condition in which I had seen the white community: active in church,

speaking of God, but justifying my own unChristlike attitudes. I was a Christian. Jesus Christ was my personal Savior. I was an involved Christian, yet I dishonored Christ with an attitude born and bred on earth, not in heaven. This time the finger wasn't pointed at the prejudiced white man, but at a bitter black man—me!

At this point of discovery, I committed my entire life to Jesus Christ. I invited Him, for the first time in my Christian experience to take COMPLETE control. "Change my selfish attitudes into ones which glorify You," I prayed. And then I determined to study God's Word and live accordingly as long as I remained on this earth.

So, on the trip and at the meetings I discovered there were three, not two, worlds. There was the white world. There was the black world. And there was the Christian world.

The Christian world, which is Spirit empowered, is a place in which men of every color, every race and every language love one another, stand by one another, and sacrifice for one another whatever the cost. It is the love of God produced in a man or woman to the extent that the color of a person's skin makes no difference; that the depth of a person's sin is not too repugnant to reach out with the message of redemption; where forgiveness and restoration is the norm, where unselfish giving is readily displayed. It is the result of allowing Jesus Christ to be the center and controller of a person's life.

The first proof that I had moved to second base came shortly after my return from the BSU conference. I began having fellowship over the Scriptures with some white boys at the University of Houston. It was truly a new world opening to me as I could look into their eyes and see that they were my brothers and friends.

Another vivid proof came a number of years later when I was running for the city

council in Houston, Texas. A political meeting was being held at which they let it be known they did not wish my presence. Only the other candidate was invited to come. But since the meeting was held in a public building there was no legal way they could keep me from coming.

There was a time I would have raised a lot of "hell" about the situation. I would have insisted on "not going." I would have protested the meeting or barged in on the meeting. But now that I was on second base, I was not going to let resentments adjudicate rule in my mind as it did in their minds. I decided to go.

They were rather amazed when I showed up with a gracious attitude in hand. They were probably more amazed when they told me I would have to stand outside until it was my turn to speak, and I thanked them and waited patiently.

Once in the meeting, I intelligently addressed the crowd and heartily thanked them for giving me the privilege of coming in. "In spite of the fact that I have to leave right away," I told them (as I was only allowed a few minutes), "and am unable to personally shake your hands, I hope that some of you might support me in the election."

And some of them did!

The evidence for the fact that I was standing on second base, is that I meant what I said. It was genuine. I didn't hate. I wasn't prejudiced. I looked them straight in the eye with LOVE. Only God can give love like that!

Today, one race hates another; one social status group feels superior to another social group; career women and mothers are suspicious of one another; those with refined sins snub their noses at those struggling with blatant sins; those less gifted are jealous of those more gifted; the down and out despise the up and coming; the comely are angered at the

beautiful people.

But God has a different plan, a better way! On second base, He reaches deeper and deeper into our souls to produce the life of Christ. On second base God produces an atmosphere with a life where love and Christian growth blossom; where the superficial is replaced with the genuine, where unbridled generosity is the rule.

Without love in our churches, we cannot open our hearts to the unsaved. Nor can we move on to third base

CHAPTER ELEVEN
SPORTS ILLUSTRATED
(THIRD BASE AND HOME)

We're born again. We're reaching out to the lost. We love everybody. Now let's go Home!

This is the philosophy of many Christians. They want a comfortable, loving Church.

And to prove they are really working for the Lord, they occasionally practice soul winning. But we can't stop at first base. And we can't stop at second base. We've got to touch third base, before we go home.

What is third base? Most of the world is hurting, hungry, hostile, lonely, and hopeless. Many people are victims of ruthless men and godless laws. And Christians who have been to first and second base may be the only ones in this world who are able to bring about lasting help. The Department of Resources can't. They try. With their thousands of employees and billion-dollar budgets, they try. But come take a look in my community. Governmental and public help are just touching the surface issues. The deeper problems remain.

James addressed third base clearly in his epistle: "What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith deliver him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to him or her, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled;' and yet you don't give them what is necessary to their body; what use is that? Even so, faith, if it has not works, is dead, being by itself" (James 2:14-1).

Do we work to be saved? Of course not. Salvation is a gift, based on what God

has done for us. We got that when we hit the ball. We are now at third base. Why then do we work?... to live out the life of Christ!

Several years ago, the mayor of Los Angeles called me. We didn't see eye to eye on many things. But he was considering running for governor and wanted my support. Is there anything I can do for you?" He wanted to know.

"Yes, there is," I responded. "I need \$ 400,000 to carry out a work program in my community, with no strings attached from City Hall." (God had given me this idea and I didn't want the government interfering and ruining it.)

"That's a hard one." he said

"Well, Mayor, that's why I am asking you. You're quite a mayor!" Surprisingly, the council voted our community \$ 342,000 with which I organized our work programs. Simultaneously, the Urban League was doing a similar program. We enrolled 107 and placed 103 of them in full-time work, school or in the army. The Urban League had 89 enrolled and placed only 17. The government was so impressed, we held a congressional meeting in my office. They interviewed those who had enrolled.

"Did they make you pray?" they wanted to know.

"No", our applicants responded. "That would be illegal. But they made appointments with us later, and all of us are now born-again Christians."

Most churches offer their members two positions, singers or ushers. Under challenged!

There is no such thing as an over-challenged church. One of the greatest needs in the church today, is to take people who are WILLING TO SERVE and prepare them and plug them

into a place where they can minister. At Mount Zion we prepare our members. And once they are prepared, we can place them (and since they ARE prepared most are eager to be placed) all over the community. Instead of leaving the burdens of this world in the hands of the sinners, we challenge the saints to go marching in.

“Who knows anything about cooking?” I ask on Sunday morning. Several hands raise. “Very well!” I reply. “Would you be so kind as to sign up for the Lord’s kitchen? We need your help.”

“Who knows how to tutor an elementary student in math?” One hand is raised. “Fine. Would you be willing to join our tutoring committee? We need you.”

And since our members are now trained to share their faith, naturally evangelizing is part of their serving.

At Mt. Zion, and I believe this could be worthwhile in all churches, we have a “What for?” survey. You have a cradle committee. What for? You have a deacon's committee. What for? You have a woman’s auxiliary. What for? You have a mission committee. What for? At Mt. Zion we always ask, “what for?” so that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

And along with that we consider prayer for the Lord's guidance as the one unalterable plan at Mt. Zion. You may get ideas from reading of our victories and failures at Mt. Zion; but ultimately the Lord must show each and every church and its members God’s plan in your own community. It may not be as extensive as we have developed; or you may break through in areas which we never considered. Only the Lord can give us the final direction to a church body. If a church is whole heartedly seeking the face of the Lord and carrying out his revealed will, that is the MOST IMPORTANT THING A CHURCH CAN DO.

At Mt. Zion we sponsor over fifty different organizations that directly work with underprivileged and needy individuals in our church and community. Our members have made it their personal responsibility to meet the needs of our community. We have had our share of defeats in this endeavor. I have worried over not being able to visit all of our sick and sometimes my travel schedule has been so busy I have wondered if I personally have failed my church in this regard. But the Lord has been gracious. Many of our ideas and programs are just an evidence of the goodness of God in enabling a church that seeks to do the will of God.

My people take seriously the many Biblical commands in Scripture regarding the poor, the sick, and the needy. Here are a few that, Lord willing, we are attempting to follow:

“I want you to share your food with the hungry and bring right into your own homes those who are helpless, poor and destitute. Clothe those who are cold and don't hide from relatives who need your help” (Isaiah 58: 7).

One of the programs we have instituted at Mt. Zion is an open “pantry,” supplying immediate needs for food in our community. Members buy the food. Deacons and deaconesses distribute the food. We do this in the name of Jesus.

Also, the folks at Mt. Zion made a decision a number of years ago. We decided that Christmas was Jesus birthday--not ours. Each year now we have willingly done away with Christmas presents for ourselves. There are no gift exchanges at Mt. Zion in families or between members. Instead, with worshipful hearts for the Savior we take the money we would have spent on our family and friends, the children gather up their nickels and dimes--and together we deliver hundreds of Christmas baskets filled with food and new clothes to the needy of our community. Happy Birthday Jesus!

An outreach fund is also kept on hand for immediate needs for individuals or groups needing assistance.

“In as much as you have given to one of these you have given to me” (Matthew 25:40). Another project our church has taken on is building Senior Citizen homes, a great need in our community. E-Victor Villa, our first, now houses sixty-five senior citizens on a low-rental basis. Mt. Zion Towers came only two years later with 118 suites in a twelve-story building. Here qualified senior citizens enjoy well-designed housing on a low-rental basis, regardless of race, creed, or religious affiliation. It is a dream come true for many who could not have afforded any such comfort or provision in their golden years. And it was established in the name of Jesus.

“And as God gives us opportunity, let us do good unto all men, but especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6: 10).

When one portion of the church is exploited, we all feel the pain. The United Benevolent Society was established in 1967 to aid the Christian, the brethren—the members of the “family.” It now represents 72 churches in 15 cities in California, providing counsel and economic help to its membership. It has its own group purchasing, group counseling, and insurance programs.

“I was sick and you visited me” (Matthew 25: 36).

Here at Mount Zion our many sick and elderly are not neglected. We keep a rotating system of our deacons and women deaconesses plus lay member teams of three visiting our sick and aged. They receive a minimum of one visit per week, a letter from the pastor each week, prayer (by name each Lord's day in the service), transportation to doctors, a nurse on duty during church services and a dial-a-prayer phone service providing encouragement. Only

faithful members and a team spirit, which has been built up over the years, keep our sick ministered to in the Lord.

At Mt. Zion we have a credit union which charges no interest. We also have the Lord's kitchen where we serve coffee, tea, oatmeal and cookies at breakfast. Soup and cornbread at night, so no one need to be without a meal in our community. And we have bought a post office and turned it into a used-clothing store. Now, after a year, I can take off my nice suit and make it available to someone else in the community that has less than I.

Yet, I don't mean to make this sound easy. What we have been able to do has not been produced overnight. But I do believe that it has been the result of encouraging church members to first base, second base, and third base-in that order AND in accordance with the leading and empowering of the Lord.

At the same time, it hasn't been without its frustrations. The need today is so overwhelming! Caring for people inside and outside the family of God is more than a full-time job. Every day we wake up there is so much to be done that we thought was already done, or we were not even aware needed doing. The sheer weight, might and quantity of our efforts in dealing with human spirits and human souls can be taxing beyond reason.

For the most part no one just calls and drops by to ask us how WE are. Few come by to bring us a blessing. Every telephone call, every mail delivery, every drop-in, every person we rub shoulders with and everyone who speaks to us seems to have some problem, some burden or some difficulty in their lives. And they need and expect those of us who know Jesus to help.

Day after day, the task of many Christians is like emptying the Pacific Ocean with

a teaspoon. No matter how much we give, that which we haven't started on is overwhelming. Our families are under attack. WE are concerned about the kinds of schools our children are attending. We are disturbed by those who break commitment, thus adding to our own burdens; by those who cheat us, who talk about us behind our backs; who are untrustworthy.

Today those individuals who ARE responsible are carrying the load for those who are not, those who want to do what's right, who want to witness for our Lord, who want to pay bills on time, who want to do the godly thing—we are carrying the load of those who do not care. And so, added to our task is making up for everyone who said they would do a job or carry a responsibility but never do.

Is it worth it? One might consider. How many people would have taken the suicide leap if they had not crossed the path of a committed turned-on child of God? How many more people would be dead from drugs if Christians weren't doing their job? How many more women would face the guilt of aborting their own child without Christian 24-hour hot lines? How many more people would be without shelter, without food, without love or purpose, if the average Christian were not being obediently led by the Spirit of God?

In every hotel there might be a massage parlor and prostitution ring if evangelicals had not said “No.” By now, empty humanism might be our national faith, if Christians had not said “No.” There might be a drug pusher on every corner if believing Christians had not stood up to be counted. And morally, spiritually, and politically this country would have been gone twenty years ago if it would not have been for the Bible believing, God-fearing evangelicals who stood up and said, “That’s far enough.”

If it were not for believing Christians, much of this world would not be fit to live in and those who are afraid and say, "You've gone too far," Baby, you ain't seen nothing yet.

When Jesus comes, I want him to find us all working. If we've been to first base, we will naturally want to get others saved. If we've been to second, we will be filled with love for others. And if we have love we will want to go on to third base--doing the Lord's work of meeting the needs of people in Jesus' name before we go home.

Let's hope that when we go on to glory, we'll be well-pleasing to the Lord, having touched all three bases.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MOTIVATING THE FLOCK

As hesitant but responsive members of Mount Zion became trained in how to be filled with the Holy Spirit and how to share their faith, they began to witness; their faith was challenged and expanded. They were drawing on the power of the Holy Spirit. They were newly motivated to search the scriptures. Their prayer life became other-centered. They gained a new confidence, a new dynamic self-image, as they became Christ's ambassadors. My congregation was experiencing the true meaning of the church of Jesus Christ.

However, not too far down the road I encountered some new problems. The church had made witnessing a priority. I had sent many of our congregation to institutes to learn how to share their faith. A large percentage wouldn't go no matter how diligently I prodded and many of those who did attend lost their enthusiasm after a time. They had won their families, a few friends and neighbors; now what?

We had made a breakthrough in the area of evangelism. Yet it seemed that, although the steps into personal witnessing were difficult, the continuation of it until it became a "way of life" was even more difficult. Furthermore, the uninterested part of the congregation needed to see excited models of evangelism in order to gain an interest in it themselves. It didn't take long to realize that the effort to engage my members in "way of life" evangelism would take more than one week of training and cracking the whip every week.

One of the greatest disappointments to a Christian leader is getting a poor response when he is trying to involve others in ministry. For example, you challenge an entire group to

get on board and you do it with enthusiasm and expectancy that everyone will be interested. But then you are unprepared for the small handful that show up. What do you do? You take that handful, no matter who they are and train them, teach them and motivate them.

One pastor came to me very upset.

“Pastor Hill,” he said, “I preached to my congregation and I encouraged and exhorted them to get involved in soul winning. But only four people came to be trained. I was never so disgusted in all my life. I'm going to get on my deacons and members about this.”

“No, no, no,” I told him. “What if you had four committed people you knew were really behind you in soul-winning in your church? Wouldn't that be great? Now, take those four members and train them. Work with them. In a year's time, they will each bring in four others and in another year's time you will have 64 on-fire Christians in your church. Perfect, those that God brings to you, and God will bring you more. You may just be amazed what God can do with a few that really mean business for the Lord. And be sure to motivate them in a way that will help them maintain their witness over the long haul.”

What did I mean about motivation? The greatest challenge to any Christian is motivating the people with whom you minister! How do we get fellow Christians (even ourselves) out of the pews and onto the streets?

I have had to face this challenge. When I started at the church, I used traditional methods: banquets, mail outs, extra meetings, special meetings and strong exhortation.

However, with the aid of Christian research and experience, my church is developing a more effective and long-lasting approach.

My first insight into the concept of motivation was understanding what the word

“motive” means. Simply, it can be defined as that within an individual which incites him to action. There are two kinds of motivation: extrinsic (motivation from the outside), and intrinsic (motivation from the inside). It was pointed out to me how much of Christian effort is motivated extrinsically, that is, we offer rewards or punishment for good or bad behavior. When the reward is removed, the good behavior stops, and when we stop exhorting, the bad or unacceptable behavior thrives.

So how can we motivate Christians effectively?

First, we must show them that a life lived fully for Christ is the one which is most satisfying. They will receive much of this, in fact, most of this, from their leaders and instructors. If their leaders show enthusiasm and a positive attitude, they will seek to reproduce their lifestyle in order to gain such happiness.

Second, teach fellow Christians how to rely on the Holy Spirit. Teach them that God is their source and that they are responsible to Him.

TELL THE TRUTH

Third, tell them the truth, especially about the needs around them. I asked a lady in our church how her children were getting along.

“They’re just fine,” she said. “My son is working for the Federal Government; he’s making sixty thousand a year. His wife is an executive secretary; she is making around thirty thousand. They have a split-level home and two cars. They are just fine.

“What church do they attend?” I asked.

“Oh, you know Reverend, as soon as these young people get up, they don't go to any church.”

“Then wipe the smile off your face. Get some tears in your eyes. Your children aren't doing well. Don't brag and smile over the process of wickedness. Cry over that.”

Fourth, the Christian needs to feel competent in what he or she is doing. That is why we must train the Christian and STICK WITH that Christian until he feels confident and prepared for the task.

SEEING LIVES CHANGED

Fifth, Christians must be seeing lives changed. There is a need for both evangelism and discipleship among Christians, because we need to see the END result of our efforts. Watching a life reborn AND living triumphantly is one of the greatest motivations for continuing. Conversely, if a worker only sees people come to Christ but lacks opportunity to see them mature, he is more likely to get tired of his task.

One of the greatest opportunities to see lives changed at Mount Zion, is that every fourth Sunday new Christians testify of their new relationship with Christ. And every single Sunday, we baptize those who have been saved. Constantly Mount Zion members are exposed to the results of their efforts.

But the highlight of the year is the last Sunday in our church calendar. We call it New Members Sunday. On this special day, no person can participate in the service except for new members who have received Christ as Savior and joined with us. So, if we have no one in the

choir, it means that no singers joined Mount Zion. If we have no workers in the church that morning, none of them joined either.

We started the morning with a breakfast which new members buy, prepare and serve to the pastor and his cabinet. All 125 of us! During a recent New Members day, there were 110 in the choir, 35 ushers and 75 people fixing breakfast. This is always an encouragement to our new members, not only that they have won individuals to Christ, but that the new members are continuing through the programs we've set up at Mount Zion.

Sixth, each Christian should realize that he or she is part of a team effort of reaching the world for Christ. He must not lose vision that his small effort on his block is part of fulfilling the Great Commission around the world. This can be accomplished by continually pointing out the importance of block evangelism.

Seventh, a Christian must see how ministering fits in with his own life objectives. We must train men and women to think relationally. That is, how is what I am doing right now glorifying God, fulfilling God's plan for MY life?

In answer to this, a Christian whose objective is to please God, is going to have no trouble realizing how ministry fits into his life. The fact is that God has so constructed the believer that witnessing is a vital part of his or her joy in life. When witnessing removed, much of the Christian's enthusiasm goes with it. That is why we need to encourage Christians to please God in all that they do.

I must confess that most of my witnessing is done in the pulpit. I do personal evangelism and find immense joy in it. But due to my busy schedule, much of my life is spent preparing for sermons, giving sermons, or getting rest so that I can prepare and present sermons. If no one comes

to Christ on a particular Sunday I get physically depressed.

Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4: 34). Witnessing is as natural for the Christian as eating or breathing. Further, as natural man is programmed to bear natural children, even God has programmed the Christian to bear spiritual children. To not do so is unnatural for the Christian.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Eighth, a Christian needs personal and positive feedback on his efforts from a fellow Christian. There should be a source of continual encouragement, prayer support and friendship, aiding every Christian in his work for the Lord. When it comes to motivation, there is no substitute for this personal interaction of one Christian with another Christian. We have learned this from experience.

During one period of our training, we had staff to personally motivate one-tenth of those who had been trained in evangelism. Those Christians produced far better than the other nine-tenths who were also trained. Yet, if you train your entire church, how can you be sure that each trained Christian will get individual attention? Perhaps the following suggestions might help in how to go about it.

First, select a leader to be in charge of coordinating trained Christians. This will need to be someone of maturity and vision. This leader will have the task of duplicating his or her life in others. Remember, the quality of an effort is in direct proportion to the quality of its

leaders.

For personal models, nothing beats the deliberate interaction between teacher and pupil. So, who is chosen to teach others is a very important decision. (The opinion of those who have been involved in evangelism training is that 85 percent of successful training depends on the personal model, their maturity and Christian leadership.) If you cannot think of anyone who is qualified for this task, seek out someone who is interested, and begin to train him or her or seek outside help via a nearby seminary, or a Christian worker with a Christian organization. To coordinate evangelism, this leader has two choices: A, He can take each trainee and personally work with him; B, he can work with some of the trainees, and develop them to the point where they can work with other trainees. The second (Plan b) is the best use of time and effort.

There is a Biblical precedent for this division of labor. In Exodus 18, Moses was in charge of two million people. He was settling disputes from morning to night. When Moses father-in-law saw him, he said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone." Then Jethro told Moses to teach the people and select able workers who fear God, people of truth, "and you shall place these over them, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens... so it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you."

How would a leader go about developing other leaders who can coordinate, and sustain the motivational level among all the trainees? As you begin the program, watch and pray for leadership to emerge among the trainees. This can be done as you observe them in class, during field training, and as you get to know them on a personal level. From every ten

that are being trained, there should be at least one who is capable (with additional training and direction) to become a leader.

Watching for leaders reminds me of a young man who indicated he wanted to join our church. As I generally do, I asked, "Why do you want to join this church?"

"Because it's on fire," he said. So, I asked him why he didn't just stay where he was. He replied, "Because my pastor is dead, the missionary society is dead, the Sunday school is dead, the choir is dead, and the young people are dead."

"How are you?" I asked.

"Oh, I am on fire."

"I sensed God's Spirit leading me to challenge this particular man. Well, I can't take you in here then."

"But what do you expect me to do?"

"Take our training in how to evangelize and disciple, then go back to your church," I told him. "Go back where the pastor is dead, the missionary society is dead, the Sunday School is dead, the young people are dead, and the choir is dead. If you are really on fire like you say, you can light up everyone else."

He got mad at me but went back to his church. Many months later, he came into my office smiling.

"Thank you, Reverend Hill," he said. "I got trained and went back to my church Last Sunday, twenty-six folks walked down the aisle."

"How did that happen?"

"Well, I took those training courses you offered me and went back, and I won one,

then two, then three, we had prayer with the preacher; we started praying with him as he preached, and things are just glowing.”

“Is it really glowing? I asked. “Is it really on fire?”

“Yes, yes,” he shouted.

“Now,” I said, “I want you to leave that church.”

“Leave it? For what?”

“Well, I know a church where the pastor is dead, the missionary society is dead, the Sunday School is dead, the choir is dead, and the young people are dead. They need you!”

CHALLENGE TO LEADERSHIP

When you are reasonably confident of who wants to develop into a leader and who has a heart for God and a teachable attitude, challenge five or six people to be part of a core group to develop leadership. Point out, to those you invite to be in the core group, the benefits to their personal lives such as having a closer walk with God, developing a greater ministry for Christ and being able to influence and help others. Also, show them the cost in terms of time and energy. Be specific as to how many meetings a week and additional study are required.

The purpose of the core group is four-fold: to give instruction, to model your life, to give on the job training and to evaluate and correct problem areas. The instruction is given in the Scripture and in principles of discipleship and leadership. Particular areas to develop will include faith, the Spirit - filled life, stewardship, prayer, obedience, relationships, family, love, and vision. The leader can service his core group by recommending books, conferences,

seminars and other tools.

Along with the content presented to this group, the leader will model these principles before them. Inwardly it means throwing himself or herself upon the Lord for His direction and strength. Outwardly this involves spending time with the group in study, witnessing and fun times. It is important that the leader be real and transparent, able to admit his or her shortcomings yet demonstrating a Christlike character.

For example: one such leader was Henrietta Mears at Hollywood Presbyterian Church. She helped to spawn the ministries of Bill Bright, founder and Director of Campus Crusade for Christ, and Dawson Trotman, President of InterVarsity, as well as Billy Graham. Her influence affected an entire generation of Christians, both here and abroad.

A third thing a leader will do, is to involve the group progressively in ministering to other workers. After some time (which may differ with each potential leader), the job training begins. The overall leader encourages the leader to be, to find five trainees to encourage and guide. He or she should be given small assignments with his or her new group, and his or her leader should go along to assist as long as is needed. The mentality transmitted should be, "We're doing this as a team."

The philosophy transmitted to a potential leader is one of "multiplying" disciples as opposed to "adding" disciples. That is, the leader is not training men or women just to help others; the leader should train others to train others and on and on. As II Timothy 2: 2states, "These things commit to faithful persons who are able to teach others also." Finally, the leader should evaluate those on his core group, and continue to serve them by instruction and encouragement in the areas where they have need.

As the number of trained Christians grow, it may be advisable to divide into regions and then into areas within regions. A leader would take a region and train other leaders to handle areas. In so doing, the church is not only producing work for Christ, but leadership for Christ within the community.

A plan such as I have outlined will not come about overnight. In the beginning, you may want to hire additional staff to help or enlist volunteer staff (pastors, Campus Crusade for Christ workers, seminary students) to launch initial core groups.

A FINAL WORD

All that I said about motivating others is important. We must model that a life lived fully for Christ is satisfying. We must teach others to rely on the Holy Spirit. We must help Christians feel competent in what they are doing. We must let them see lives being changed; that they are part of a team; that their ministering fits in with their life objectives and we must provide them with positive feedback.

But there is an element of motivating fellow Christians that may surpass all the rest... show them God. Show them how great He is; how loving He is: how He is able to provide their every need. Show them and keep showing them what they have when they have Jesus!

MOTIVATION IS THE KEY

Shortly after we said our "I dos" Jane and I were off on our honeymoon. That first

week was a crash course for Jane on how our marriage would be lived. She shared her first seven days of blissful matrimony with the Baptists at a convention. I don't think she ever forgave me for that!

My lovely wife is a dual personality. On the one hand she is a very intelligent woman, up to date on all affairs. She presented herself very intelligently to churches and woman's groups. She possessed a bachelor's, masters and a Ph. D degree. A very capable woman!

On the other hand, one could think she is just a little dumb country girl. This is what I like most about her. She's intelligent where she needs to be intelligent, but ninety percent of the time she's just this little helpless lamb that needs somebody to rescue her, me! One night in a pelting storm, I sat with Jane until the wee hours of the morning, assuring her that we would be safe through it all. How I love rainy nights!

Like every couple we've had our spats. One troubled evening, I can't even remember what we were fighting about, I took Jane to the Ice Capades. It was an attempt to clear out a few cobwebs of life between us.

As we paused at the refreshment, stand Jane said coldly, "Do you want a hot dog?" I could feel her shiver and responded curtly, "No, do you?" Neither of us was about to give in.

Somehow with the beauty and color of the Ice Capades, something began to happen inside of us. A ray of light hit Jane in such a way that as I looked down at her I thought, "She is the most beautiful woman in the world." Then, as though the whole event were planned months before as part of the thrilling ice show, she tilted her head, lifted her eyes to mine, let out a sigh, and melted into my arms.

One thing we've never done. We have never been apart on our anniversary. On one

occasion it was necessary to fly more than 2,000 miles to be with her, then fly back the following day to resume a conference I was speaking at. It was well worth the effort! Another habit we picked up was minute vacations. Even if it is a trip just 30 miles out of town, Jane and I will pack up, leave home and ignore the pressure of the world together!

Of course, we have had a 'golden rule' in marriage: never go to bed angry. The issues of life that come and go should never squelch the permanency and glory of married love.

In all relationships, as in evangelism, motive and motivation are key.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SET A GOAL

In our junior year in high school, Jane and I were both delegates to the Future Farmers and Homemakers Convention. Jane's escort for the assemblage was a friend of mine. Later on, that first evening I told him my plans.

"I don't mean to be rude, but I'm going to marry your girl."

Two years later Jane and I met again; this time as freshmen at Prairie View.

A & M. I painstakingly wrote Jane her first love poem.

"I love you VIP.

I love you, VOP.

I love you more than a pig loves slop."

None of us communicate perfectly nor under the best of conditions.

Margaret Rhodes lives in the thirteen hundred block of 47th Street in South Central Los Angeles. Margaret was part of the first group of people from her church who received training in how to reach her block for Christ. She is a petite attractive widow with a smile that can illuminate your day. A woman of prayer, Margaret for many years importuned the Lord for greater opportunity to serve Him. This yieldedness and devotion to Christ preceded and was the foundation for the ministry with which God now blessed her. Her block, for which she has become responsible in terms of evangelism and discipleship is surrounded by 47th street, Ascot, Hooper and 48th Street. There are about thirty houses on her block.

Let me take you with Margaret as she participates in training and then step-by step seeks to win her block to our matchless Savior.

The first thing Margaret did was receive training. She literally saturated herself in our twenty-four-hour witnessing course using our Basic Training Manual (see section following book). Our course material included:

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. How to Accept Christ
3. How to Lead Others to Accept Christ (Personal preparation)
- 4 How to Lead Others to Accept Christ (Training)
5. How to Reach Your Block for Christ
6. How to Lead Your Church in Soul-winning

As part of the course Margaret participated in field work. During this “on-the-job” instruction trainees TEAM UP with “experienced” soul-winners and wend their way into the community together. We all know the importance of a personal model. One big league player is a model for another would be player. A parent is a model for a child. In the Christian community we have models who teach by their lives how to triumph in suffering; how to successfully run a Sunday school; or how to be a dedicated missionary. One church models for another church and one person for another. And in the area of evangelism and discipleship we need effective personal models of who we can be and what we can accomplish as witnesses of/for Jesus Christ.

One of the biggest realizations of my Christian life was learning that much of Christianity is caught, not taught. Observing an effective soul-winner is one of the best

ways to “catch” soul winning.

It is one thing to put people in a classroom and fill their minds with material. It is another to take them with you and let them catch your vision and assimilate your know-how. Even developing teaching material into methods that guarantee maximum recall is no substitute for the contagious effect of personal involvement or the incentive provided from viewing a tangible model of what an individual can accomplish.

On-the-job-training is Biblical. Jesus didn't just teach the disciples. He showed them what to do. He instructed them until they were able to produce a replica of their Teachers ministry and lifestyle. The disciples later practiced this concept with others, as when Paul took Mark, Silas and Timothy with him on his journeys.

One of the failures of modern-day Christianity is that we teach our sheep, then leave them to fare for themselves. Unfortunately, this may account for the little that gets done. Only the rare Christian can run with the ball without on-the-job shepherding and training.

When the Red Cross trains a lifeguard, a personal worker stays with him at all times, providing instruction by evaluating performance and correcting it. Air traffic controllers in this country require three years of supervision before they qualify to run our airports.

When it comes to training our people to share their faith with their neighbors, we send experienced and successful “evangelists” and “disciples” with them. Sometimes we have to look outside our church initially, as we did to Campus Crusade (CRU) staff and others, to find these experts. The benefits of this strategy are many.

First, church members see how a seasoned “expert” does the job.

Second, church members have a resident specialist who can answer questions and give “on-the-job” instruction.

Third, the experienced personal worker lends confidence to the newcomer.

Fourth, a proficient disciple can encourage and pray wisely for the new evangelizer.

I am absolutely convinced that to be an effective personal witness for Jesus Christ there must be on-the-job training. This is still a new concept to much of the church of Jesus Christ evidenced by the fact that many churches have a large auditorium, but few educational facilities; a preacher, but not many teachers, church attendance, but no training meetings. But it is mostly evidenced by the fact that we’re not getting the job done.

But let me get back to Margaret, who told me that having someone with her as she did her field training provided her with confidence that she could reach her block for Christ.

When Margaret and her trainer knock on a door, they introduce a survey that helps them find out where a person is in his or her thinking about Christ. The answers provided by the survey expose trainees to the individual’s world view. It also serves to expedite the conversation to spiritual things. Some of those who take the training are flustered and nervous as they make this initial attempt. But they get through. We ALL get through!

At the completion of the survey, if a person seemed interested in spiritual things, Margaret, as trainee, would then relate what she learned in class, “This completes the survey. By the way have you heard of the four Spiritual Laws?” Margaret would then share how the individual could know Christ by giving a presentation of the Four Spiritual Laws.

During field training, Margaret also would be given the opportunity to give a new

believer assurance of salvation (using specially prepared hand-outs), share the Spirit-filled life booklet with the carnal Christian, and practice following up a new convert using basic Christian material. All this was taught in the training class using the Basic Training Manual. But it “came alive” when practiced with an “expert” evangelizer and discipler at her side.

When Margaret graduated from training, she was commissioned as an official block worker. She was to report back to the church on persons with whom she had talked, decisions for Christ, and how her nucleus of Christians was progressing; she was also asked to cooperate with our church, as I sought to lead the church in soul-winning. This was done by Margaret enlisting other church members into the training classes, sharing the results of her witnessing with others, and being available to go with new block workers who were learning to share their faith.

“I couldn't wait to get started,” Margaret told me. For years she had such burden from the Lord to reach people for Christ. She had done what she could with some results. But now she was trained. She had the Spirit of God, a life of prayer, and now a strategy. And she was fired up to put it into practice in the neighborhood.

After much intercession for those on her block, Margaret surveyed every person within that large concrete battered square. In her effervescent way she expressed warmth and concern to each man, woman, and child, winning a further hearing for our Savior. As she knocked on doors, she kept careful notes of who was a Christian and who needed to learn about Christ, who had been saved from Hell, who needed to be saved.

In Margaret's block 60 percent were already Christians. They represented a number of denominations and churches in the area. These people were invited to her home to begin a

block nucleus of prayer, Bible study and living fellowship.

Over the months this group grew until Margaret had people hanging out her windows. Friendships developed as they prayed for others in their block. During chats around cups of hot chocolate, cookies, potluck dinners, fried chicken, and corn bread, many for the first time developed a real desire to see their neighbors, family and friends reached for Christ. As time went on Margaret ordered additional tapes and teaching material from various Christian publishers to help feed and nurture her block's Bible study. Margaret finds that not only does she minister to her block, they minister to her. The block outreach and fellowship has become the highlight of her life.

Margaret's strategy for reaching the non-Christians on her block varied. For those who seemed interested in spiritual things, she lost no time in sharing a presentation of the gospel.

With others, she gradually won their friendship and a hearing for Christ. Of course, South Central Los Angeles is very transient. That means that new neighbors frequently come and go. Over the years Margaret's block has been surveyed a number of times.

Let Margaret tell you how she feels about this venture in her own words: "One of the things I have loved best about reaching my block is that I have come to love my neighbors. I visit the sick and try to meet needs of those about me. Though I have never tried to take a person from one church and get them to go to mine, I have rejoiced that some who have found Christ have become active members in our church as well as in other churches. One man I remember well was an alcoholic. He came to Christ, joined our congregation, and then died suddenly. I didn't have to lie awake nights wondering if I should have shared Christ with him. I HAD! And fortunately, he responded in faith."

Margaret is typical of the trained and dedicated block workers in our church. For over 20 years now, she has been stationed on her block, commissioned by Christ to reach her neighbors, and trained by others to do the job as well.

And, by the way, if you're wondering whether you can do as good a job as Margaret, consider this: Margaret Rhodes is BLIND!

One thing I've learned is not to categorize my members as to who will and who will not be effective in an area. When God selected David to be king of Israel over his handsome and obviously able brother Eliab, even Samuel was surprised. So the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his (Eliab's) appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (I Samuel 16: 7).

Probably the greatest soul-winner I have ever had at Mount Zion was Baby D. Tutt. I would never in a million years have picked her to be on a team. I wouldn't have picked her to teach Sunday School or be a member of a woman's group or a soul-winning class. But am I glad I left the door open to her. When I would have a week of evangelistic meetings at my church, every night Baby D. Tutt would be there with two or three unsaved people who would get saved. The head of my deacons wouldn't even be there, but Baby had people coming to the altar right and left.

I have another member of my church, Daniel Williams. He has a speech impediment. Trying to communicate is a major problem for Daniel, yet he is one of the most effective soul winners I know.

And Margaret Rhodes?

One day after several years of working with her block, she came to me all excited.

“Pastor,” she said, “out of 162 people on my block, 161 of them are saved.”

“But Margaret,” I returned, “what about the one who is still lost? You're not going to give up on him, are you?”

“Pastor, I've tried and tried to reach him. For years all of his neighbors have loved him and prayed for him and shared with him. He's not interested. In fact, he can't stand hearing about God's love no more.”

“Well, don't give up on him, you hear?” I said.

A month passed and Margaret burst into my office just beaming.

“You know the one man on my block who wasn't a Christian? I've got great news.”

“What is it?” I asked, excited to hear that he too, has been saved.

“He moved!”

“Now Margaret, that's not how this is supposed to work. We want to get him saved. Where did he move to?”

“He moved just a few blocks away. But Pastor, he said he was moving to get away from all us Christians. He said he never wanted to hear the Four Spiritual Laws again.”

“Fine, we'll see who is a trained worker on his block.

Within a week the man opened his door.

“Hi, I'm your neighbor from down the block. I just wanted to meet you and tell you about something that has made a difference in my life.”

The man almost lost his mind. But someday, by God's grace, and the love of Christians around him, we hope to see this man SAVED.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
THE TRAINED CHURCH
(CHURCH ON FIRE)

I was speaking some time ago at a convention. One of the pastors in attendance got really excited about the concept of block-by-block evangelism. He came up to me with determination in his eyes and announced that he was going to train his church how to evangelize block-by-block.

True to his word, he went back to his church and challenged his congregation to reach their blocks for Christ. Within weeks the church was set on fire with this new vision. Within months the community was ablaze with new converts and block nucleus groups. Within six months the program was the talk of the town. Within a year the program died!

DEATH OF A PROGRAM

Now you may be wondering why, with so many success stories in my book, I have started a chapter with the story of a failure. The reason is this: I've tested the block-by-block program. I know that it works. A successful model in South Central Los Angeles is hard for anyone to dispute. Block-by-block has worked successfully in other communities as well. The reason, therefore, that I believe that a block-by-block strategy would fail is (in most cases) due not to the inadequacy of the program, but with problems in leadership and organization. These problems need to be carefully examined.

As a pastor for many years and at the risk of beating a horse to death (you may need to read through these chapters many times), permit me to explain to pastors and Christian leaders (now in detail) how I think Christians will best succeed at establishing block-by-block evangelism or any type of ongoing evangelism. Let's get down to basics.

First, examine your church carefully. Where are the church members in regard to their relationship with Christ? their relationship to one another? their knowledge of the Word? their understanding of the Spirit-filled life? If you're not sure, may I suggest surveying your church. This will tell you a lot about your congregation that you may not know.

Second, evaluate the survey. You may find that you need to secure your members better in the Christian basics before you launch into a program of evangelism. It took me several years as pastor of Mount Zion before my congregation was ready for evangelistic outreach. I had to discern between the church's spiritual problems to be met with Bible teaching, prayer, exhortation, engaging in Spiritual battle and etc. and the church's ministry-oriented problems, to be met with strategy, training, organization.

If you think your church is ready for evangelism, your first step will be to orient YOURSELF to the task of motivating and training your church in evangelism. Let me give you several suggestions to help you prepare personally for the task.

First, commit yourself to the CAUSE of evangelism, not the program of evangelism. What am I saying? Why do I stress this? Let God speak personally to you about the need of evangelism and your commitment to it. A commitment to God concerning evangelism is flexible, motivational, even invigorating. But commitment to a program, especially one with a

lot of technicalities can be the opposite-draining, boring and lacking the vigor necessary to motivate others. Let God have deep access to your heart on this matter.

Second, establish your goal of evangelism (not your plans, but your goal). There should be a long-range goal and a short-range goal. Your long-range goal should answer the question: Where do I want my church to be in terms of evangelism in five years? in ten years? Be as specific as you can.

A long-range goal may be to have every member trained and actively involved in evangelism within five to seven years. (It takes a minimum of six months to train, launch and establish an individual church member in personal evangelism.) In assessing your short-range goals, you should determine a chronological sequence of bringing your members to maturity in evangelism. And you should establish somewhat of a time frame (two-five years) in which to bring this about. Among the specific questions you should ask are: What steps are necessary to motivate the church to evangelism? What is the most effective means of training the congregation? How will the church go about establishing a model of evangelism? What evangelistic opportunities will the church provide for members of the congregation? How will new converts be incorporated into the church life? What form of discipleship material will be used? It is best to think through these ahead of time and seek God for solutions.

A short-range plan may include setting up training classes in evangelism for members; orienting the congregation to personal soul-winning through sermons, films, Sunday school lessons, retreats, special gatherings, special speakers, new member classes and missionary groups; as well as motivating church leadership to evangelism; and establishing a model of evangelism.

Third, commit yourself to the members of your congregation. Your goal is to help the church members reach others for Christ. The pastor must become personally involved in assisting his congregation in evangelism. That is, rather than just administrating a program for the church, the pastor should be actively involved alongside his congregation in terms of field work. This approach is different than pumping out a program, causing the congregation to sometimes feel used by their pastor. Commit yourself to personal involvement in the program (But if this is not possible, turn this program over to able members in your congregation).

Fourth, pastors should free themselves from excess programs and ministerial activities. We often replace the best attainment with an assortment of lesser pursuits. The average pastor today is inundated with so many programs, books and activities that he has a hard time setting his priorities in order. Many efforts fail in our churches, because we overextend ourselves and end up accomplishing little of importance. Free yourself from administrative details in the church or unnecessary activity so that your time and energy is available for making evangelism work in your church.

To counteract this tendency to overextend one self and lose sight of the goal, schedule ahead of time the chunks of uninterrupted periods where you can focus on evangelism. Then make a decision that you will stick to it no matter what. Be sure to take advantage of volunteer help to handle such things as mailings, secretarial work, folding bulletins and phoning. Even areas such as visiting the sick and other responsibilities of this nature could and often should be delegated to other members of the congregation.

Fifth, assess what a program of evangelism will cost you in terms of time, energy and money. Be specific as to the exact amount of time you can give to launching evangelism in

your church. It helps to set aside a certain amount of time EACH WEEK to devote to this effort.

WHERE YOUR HEART IS

Finances are an important issue in church planning. Yet, the big question is, "Are we spending our money as the Lord would have us? Is our money going to His agenda or our own?" To illustrate, let me cite the experience I had with one of our church missionaries.

Agusta Mauwee is our church missionary to Liberia. Gus had organized over 150 interior churches, four elementary schools and two high schools in that country. Gus was back with us a number of years ago giving a report on his fruitful labors. As is customary after his talk I took him into my office, assured him of our church's continued financial and prayerful support, then asked if he had any special need.

"Yes, pastor!" Gus replied. "I would like you to pray for a well at the mission station."

"Oh." I said. "You need another well?"

"No. we do not have a well at all."

"Well, where do you get drinking water?"

"From the creek," Gus told me.

"And where do you get your bathing water?"

"We bathe in the creek."

"And where do you wash?"

"In the creek."

“You mean you drink from a creek that has been bathed in and washed in and in which animals swim?” My heart was broken. “Well, Gus, how much would it cost for you to get a well?”

“About \$7, 000, pastor.”

I explained to Gus that our church did not presently have \$7, 000 to give but that I was president of the State Convention and I would tell the pastors at our next meeting and see if I could get him some money. And I really meant to do that. But the first day passed at our state convention and I didn't think about it. And the second day passed, and I didn't think about it. On the third day we finished our business and the money was allspent.

On the last day of the Convention, I was scheduled to give my annual address; this is when the president is given a special love offering for his services to the denomination. And that was the first time I remembered the well. Right while I was standing in the pulpit the Spirit of the Lord said to me, “What about the well?” I said, “Lawd, Lawd, I forgot it and you didn't remind me. You didn't remind me Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday. And here it is Thursday night and there's nothing left but my love offering to take.”

“Well,” the Spirit of the Lord said to me, “what about your love offering? You told Gus you didn't have it in August, but now you'll have this love offering.”

I put the Lord straight on that matter immediately. “Number one, I told him the love offering won't be no \$7, 000. I mean people haven't gone crazy and they don't think I'm Jim Jones. Second, it's My love offering. And my wife wants to go on this cruise. You know I don't care anything about cruises, but my wife is sitting there so pretty on the front row just waiting to go on that cruise.”

And the Spirit of the Lord said, "If you had it would you give it? Suppose your love offering was \$ 7, 000?"

So, I looked over the audience and I was certain that there was not a \$ 7,000 love offering out there.

"All right," I said confidently, "if you want to do a miracle, go ahead and raise it. And if it is \$7, 000 I'll give it to Gus. But if it's \$6, 999 or less, it goes to my wife."

So, I gave my annual address and the people rejoiced. When I got through one preacher stood and said, "May I have a word? What I might say tonight is that Pastor Hill has been our president for eight years and this is his last year. Let's really do something special for him tonight."

"Oh, Lawd, you're up to something," I said.

"I'm going to give \$ 50 and I want 100 individuals who will stand and give \$ 50."

"Well. That's a whole \$2, 000 short." I inwardly sighed with relief.

Finally, they collected all of the money. I glanced down at my wife who was getting happier and happier. She could just see those waves. Then the preacher presented the gifts. "I'm happy to announce that we have raised \$ 7, 200 here tonight for your love offering."

Then I had to tell the men about my conversation with the Lord. "A bet's a bet. Make a check out for \$7. 000 to Gus and give the \$200 to my wife," I told them.

The Lord gave me that burden for a well, because the Lord knew He could raise the money through me. I was His channel. And so, the great problem of the church today is getting the attention of the church on the things that are a burden TO THE LORD.

Yes, we want our blessings. We want this and we want that. We have our agendas and our plans already laid. But the Christian must be consumed with what God wants? What is His burden? What is His agenda? And then give our money accordingly.

Sixth, evaluate obstacles along the way and correct. DONT GIVE UP!

Seventh, devise a plan step-by-step in how to lead your church in evangelism.

Following are some suggested ideas for accomplishing this.

CHURCHES AFLAME STEP-BY-STEP

After you have personally assessed your church and your personal commitment to evangelism and decided to launch evangelistic outreach in your church, you will want to begin by motivating a few key men and women to share the burden with you (This is different from picking a team of church leadership or trainees. You want to begin to interest key people in a vision for what you want to do, so that when you launch the program you already have some support. You may also want to seek emotional and spiritual support from outside your church). Loads are lighter if they are shared. You may ask fellow Christians to read WAR ON THE CITIES and any other motivational books on evangelism. Also, there are a number of excellent evangelistic seminars hopefully that you might send some of your lay people to. Better yet, take them.

Next you want to involve these individuals in planning the evangelism strategy of the church. Although you should have thought through a general idea of the direction you want to head, several strategy sessions with your team, exploring other ideas and options, may help

to formulate the best plan for your particular church. Out of these sessions you will want to discover which members of the team can best lead with aspects of the evangelistic block-by-block strategy. You will need someone to handle classroom training, field training, establishing a block model, establishing how to motivate the congregation to evangelism, gather material, etc. Your team itself can best decide what committees are necessary.

The next step is to motivate and train church leadership in evangelism. This would include elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, youth workers, counselors and others who are visible to the congregation as leaders. This is one of the best ways to set the tone of evangelism in the church. Remember that you want these leaders, as well as your team, to focus on the goal of evangelism. You want to motivate them as you also want to motivate the entire congregation.

Next, from the pulpit and in smaller church sessions, begin to give your members a vision for evangelism. Provide them with a mental picture of what can happen to a city when it is reached for Christ. Urge each member of the congregation to read WAR ON THE CITIES. Provide them with additional reading, films and speakers to establish a vision for evangelism. If the congregation is used to letting the pastor do the job of evangelism, instruct them that your job is to “equip the saints” for evangelism, not carry the entire burden yourself. After stressing that we are all “ambassadors for Christ,” present witnessing for Christ as a “priceless opportunity,” not as a “demanding duty.” One of the best ways to communicate this emphasis is to share your own personal experiences of soul-winning and discipleship.

Now that you have laid the foundation for evangelism, you can begin to train the congregation. The training that we use is reproduced for your help in THE BASIC TRAINING MANUAL at the end of this book. You may print these manuals AT NO COST for your

church members.

One plus with our material is that we have gone to great pains to keep it simple. For the average believer it is usually "just right" in terms of workload. Listen to one of our members, Rail George, relate his story: "The pastor announced that a class would be starting soon at the World Training Center. As a four-year-old Christian I had never shared my faith. I had a desire but also a tremendous fear about what people would think of me."

"The first Saturday morning of witnessing, I secretly hoped no one would come to the door. Yet once they did, I had been prepared to simply read the book, "The Four Spiritual Laws" to them. At the end of the training I felt more confident. The training gave me the road to travel on. I didn't have to go off that road."

"When my wife and I surveyed, we found a few Christians, people involved in cults, and many unsaved. We began praying and sharing as we had been trained to do. Within a year we had won 13 members of our block to the Lord, had established a weekly meeting in our home for prayer and Bible study, and seen many men and women become involved in the church."

"In addition, now that my wife and I are trained to share our faith, we participate in our church's weekly neighborhood evangelism program, which began as a result of several members attending the training. The most important thing the training did for me was give me a VISION for how God could use my life.

"Because of the training I received something strategic in my life. It was confided to me that to overcome my fear I should pray for more love. The Bible verse that states that perfect

love casts out fear motivated me. I found that as I prayed and the more I loved the more I wanted to reach individuals so much that fear took a back place in my life. I recommend this prayer to all who, like me, feared people's opinion."

The training material could be used in a variety of ways. It is simple enough to be flexible and, therefore can be intermingled, if necessary with other training. I encourage you, however, not to overload your sheep. The material can be presented once a weeks or in a week-long series of seminars or in a long weekend session, I invite you to use the materials to suit the needs of your church.

For training purposes, you will want to recruit not only able teachers of evangelism, but those teachers who also have a lifestyle of evangelism. At-first, you may have to go outside of your church to find qualified teachers. Possible teachers could include seminary professors or students, interdenominational staff members, Navigators, or staff.

"ON THE JOB" TRAINING

You may have to recruit additional help to shepherd your members on the field. As far as field training goes, you will want to think seriously about having a neighborhood model. This does not have to be a large section, maybe just a few blocks or maybe just one. But you should concentrate your initial effort within this model where later the rest of the church can observe.

Early on in Mount Zion's block-by-block ministry, we established such a neighborhood model, called "Operation Asia." We were in the beginning stages of training the church when a

friend and I decided to go out witnessing. We walked less than a block from Mount Zion and with smiling faces we stepped on the porch of a house and knocked. A gentleman came to the door and said, "Yes, who are you?" Now I thought he would say, "Oh, yes, Reverend Hill, how are you? Come on in." After all, it was just a few houses from a church that boasted several thousand members. Although the house was just eight doors from my church, he did not know me.

"I'm Pastor Hill," I then said.

"Yeah, you got a church?"

"Yes, I am pastor of Mount Zion." Now at last I knew that things would get cleared up. If he didn't know the pastor who had spoken all over the world, surely, he would know Mount Zion.

"Where's that?"

Now on a sunny day the shadow of our church building would fall right on his house. Yet he asked. "Is that 'round here?"

This gentleman was nearly eighty. He had not ever accepted Christ as his Savior, but he lived a stone's throw from Mount Zion.

The encounter was instrumental in our developing our block-by-block ministry model. We decided to develop a miniature pilot project that could be used to fine tune our work as well as provide an example to others that it could be done. We set apart a 110-block miniature "Asia" around our church. Not only did we walk our members through the area, but we had a large map of the area which showed every bit of advancement into the area.

We developed a block ministry in each block using our training and starting it

with members of our church. Since the area was close to our church, we sometimes had several church members in each block.

Over several years we poured our energies into this small section of South Central until we had a flourishing ministry of soul-winning and discipleship. We then could point to it as a model of what each church member could accomplish in their own block.

Nothing is so invigorating and motivating as taking members of our congregation or members of other churches and having them meet the new converts face to face or having them attend a meeting of neighbors as they pray together for other unsaved members of their block. Then as they are able to talk with their block workers over a cup of coffee and hear of their prayers and labors for their neighbors, they can survey the rewards of their efforts. This makes a big difference in motivating others.

In developing a ministry model, don't expect overnight success. It takes TIME to cultivate a model. After all, Jesus spent three full and intense years with his disciples. This is not intended to discourage an individual from the possibility of seeing fruit sooner. But most long-term, lasting efforts take time to build, test and refine. When a model is complete, as when a life has matured, it will reap a full harvest.

Building a ministry model will be difficult. This shouldn't be a surprise nor a barrier. Wherever Christians are laboring right now it is hard.

When a few church members complete the training, HELP THEM launch their block ministry. Have someone go with them as they survey and as they begin their Christian block group. Encourage and pray for those who are involved.

Magnolia Williams, one of our elder members shares:

“In 1921 at age nine, I received Christ as my personal Savior. I have been serving the Lord ever since. When I came to Los Angeles in 1947, I joined a church the very next day. For many years I taught Sunday School, but I would often come home with a longing to do more for the Lord. But I didn’t know how.

“When I was trained, my church supported and encouraged me. The first time I went on a day of witnessing I was so frightened. My trainer, who faithfully helped me for the beginning months of my block ministry, urged me to pray for the Lord to take over and speak through me. To my surprise as I began to share about Christianity with others, the fright faded away. Each succeeding Saturday, as my instructor and I witnessed, my faith and confidence continued to grow.

“When I was commissioned as a block worker, it was one of the most important days of my life. I began surveying and witnessing to my block right away. It is obvious something has happened in our block simply because we now love one another.”

Devise a system whereby block workers can report back to church on their progress.

Now that you have block-by-block evangelism, you will want to establish a prayer network to undergird the block workers and new converts and continue to motivate, by example and exhortation, your congregation to evangelism. But you'll also want to provide additional evangelistic opportunities for your trained members.

Now that so many of our Mount Zion membership are trained and experienced at witnessing, they only need direction in where to exercise their gifts and put their training to work. Several years ago, Mount Zion took on the biggest project we had ever encountered. I

probably spent more than ten years getting our people primed for “Operation Everything.”

An article by Russ Chandler, religion editor for the Los Angeles Times, best explains this.

“At Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in South Central Los Angeles, ‘Operation Everything’ is living up to its name. The 90-DAY SUMMER PROGRAM OF SOUL-WINNING and social ministry involves 54 committees and is reaching just about every segment of society and using nearly every means of communication.”

I made sure that there were so many committees for “Operation Everything” that the church couldn't carry off the project unless every member participated. Once they participate and see that the Lord can use them, they usually get the bug and can't wait for the next opportunity to sign up.

Today I can place our people in work programs, youth programs, prison programs, etc. They are prepared; I just look for where they are needed and challenge them personally to get involved. That's what I mean by providing evangelistic opportunities.

In my church we have no less than 490 committees. The system of committees works well for us at Mount Zion. However, God's Spirit works differently in different churches. The important thing is for a church to seek the Lord for what “program” or direction they follow. We have committees for every type of event, activity and interest you can imagine. But my top 60 committees, the ones that have my undivided attention are my soul winning committees. The budget committee, the deacons committee, the legal committees are all important committees in my church, but they can call and I will not answer. What I answer is the call of the soul-winning committees. Because that is our priority at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church (The word “missionary” is not just taking up space in our church's name).

Let me give you a few examples of how our soul winning committees function. We have many Jehovah's Witnesses in my community. And so, it is not unusual to frequently have a Jehovah's Witness knock at the door one of my members' homes. It just so happens that one of the members of Mt. Zion is an ex-Jehovah's Witness who was responsible for training other Jehovah's Witnesses in how to witness door-to-door. So, when one of our members gets a knock on their door, they cordially invite the Witnesses in and eagerly accept an invitation to get together. And, of course, they add, "May I bring you some friends when we meet?" As soon as the Witnesses leave, my members are on the phone to our church and to the head of the Jehovah's Witness Soul-Winning Committee. What a time we have when the Jehovah's Witnesses arrive. We are ready! We have been so ready the past years now in our community, that when a Jehovah's Witness knocks on a door the first question they ask is, do you belong to Mt. Zion? They don't want to mess with us anymore. They were losing too many of their people to Jesus.

Recently a very attractive young woman came to our church and I knew right off the bat why she was there. Mt. Zion has an excess of fine eligible young men and since her trade was prostitution, she would find Mt. Zion a challenge, she thought. After confronting her, I asked her to see Barbara. Barbara is the chairman of our prostitute soul-winning committee. An ex-prostitute herself, she and her other women on the committee, also ex-prostitutes, have learned to testify of what Christ has done for them.

Now we all have things in our lives about which we can testify, as to the Lord's saving grace, but many are unwilling to expose themselves and testify for the sake of the gospel. At Mt. Zion we teach our members TO TESTIFY ABOUT WHAT THEY PERSONALLY KNOW.

Barbara testified and led this young prostitute to Christ.

“Now, I'm really worried, Pastor Hill,” the new convert told me. “My pimp will want his \$300 a day from me. If I don't get it for him, he'll have me in a ditch somewhere with my throat cut.”

“Wait just a minute,” I assured her. I got on the church intercom. “Send me Len,” I told them.

Then I turned to her. “You won't have any more troubles. Len is the head of our pimp committee. He was a pimp himself once and he knows how to deal with situations like this.” And so, Len and several other ex-pimps who had been led to the Lord at Mt. Zion got some money together and smuggled this girl out of town where she, according to the letters we receive, has continued to grow in the Lord.

This committee work provides challenges to trained Christians who are fired up and need additional evangelistic opportunities.

Of course, your evangelism plan isn't complete without a way to incorporate new believers into your church.

After almost 15 years of effective soul-winning in my church, God implanted in my mind a short-range plan to deal more effectively with new Christians. By now my membership was mature enough to do the job better than many pastors and Christian leaders. We had so many converts we didn't know what to do with them all.

Matilda Cooley's ministry is a case in point:

“When I was commissioned as a block worker, I talked with the parents in my block first, then to the children. The initial response came mostly from the young people. For our

first meeting we had 42 in our home. To maintain the interest of the children and to broaden our witness we began a weekly adult Bible Study. Twenty-five were attending regularly.

“After receiving Christ, one woman in my block was eager to do something to show her love for Christ. She began working with the young people on the block. Eleven children prayed to receive Christ because of her influence. An entire family became active in a nearby church. In our adult Bible study, one couple who were living together are now married because they want to obey the Lord.”

What were we going to do with all these new believers coming into the church? Very specifically, the Lord gave me a plan whereby new members were bathed in love and teaching. The first part of that plan was the fisherman's group. These were trained and mature believers who could personally love and nurture a new believer. At this time, I had about 84 members who could faithfully watch over the souls of new believers. The plan was that when a person got saved, they would be assigned to a fisherman, male or female--whatever the case. This fisherman would then write that convert's name down in his or her blackboard and proceed to call and encourage the new convert, see that the convert was growing, have fellowship and fun with him or her and talk through personal problems with the convert. The fishermen were responsible to give assurance of salvation and the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The second plan the Lord gave me was to assign groups of ten new converts to a group of three of my trained members. For approximately one year, the new convert would be taught the Christian basics, be prepared for baptism, encouraged to get training in sharing their faith and advised to read Christian books and attend conferences, retreats, etc., that could aid their growth.

This plan was one of the greatest ideas God had ever given me; but I didn't do it! For one year, I procrastinated with what God had clearly put on my heart to do. And by the end of the year, our outreach had slowed almost to a complete stop. No one was winning anyone. And no one was being saved at church services.

Finally, I repented and implemented the plan God had given me. Since that time God has given us new converts every week (except for a few Sundays) and a high of 111 new converts on one particular Easter Sunday.

Our church membership remains in the thousands even through our community is quite transient. Usually two to 32 are saved each week as our membership shares. Most years we take in several hundred new members. And lasting spiritual growth is evident throughout the congregation.

This chapter has contained many ideas. For your benefit, here is a recap of the key points:

HOW TO LAUNCH AN EVANGELISTIC TRAINING CENTER IN YOUR CHURCH

1. Survey your church.
2. Evaluate survey.
3. Commit yourself to the cause of evangelism.
4. Establish long-term and short-term goals of evangelism.
5. Commit yourself to the members of your congregation to assist them in Evangelism.
6. Free yourself from unnecessary programs, administrative details and activities.
7. Assess what a program of evangelism and discipleship will cost you in-terms of time and energy.

8. Devise a plan step-by-step in how to lead your church in evangelism.
9. Evaluate and correct through implementation. Don't quit!

STEP-BY-STEP EVANGELISM

1. Pick a team.
2. Motivate the team.
3. Train the team.
4. Plan evangelistic church strategy.
5. Train leadership in your church.
6. Motivate congregation in evangelism.
7. Prepare training materials for church.
8. Decide when and how the training material will be used.
9. Recruit teachers.
10. Provide "on the job" trainers for evangelism.
11. Establish an evangelistic model.
12. Help church members launch their block ministry.
13. Devise a system for keeping in contact with block workers' progress and problems.
14. Continue to lead the church in evangelism by establishing prayer, motivating the flock, providing additional evangelistic opportunities and planning ways to incorporate new believers into the church.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BLOCK BY BLOCK IN EVERY COMMUNITY

“We can't do a thing!” This is a frequent statement I hear from Christians when they look at the problems in their cities. The overwhelming difficulties that confront both Christians and non-Christians present many challenges.

I have a growing and now a tested, conviction that Christians can be trained to be block workers and that a city can be taken for Christ. Cities have been taken for the Lord before.

The prophet Jonah saw the entire city of Nineveh repent (Jonah 3: 5). In the new Testament, the Christians went from “house to house” (Acts 2: 46-47, 5: 2, 20. 20) until all Asia heard the gospel (Acts 19: 10). “They turned the world” upside down with the good news of Christ (Acts 17. 6).

A CITY CAN BE TAKEN FOR CHRIST!

We are told to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creation. Foremost, we must preach the NECESSITY of new birth, it is not an option, but an imperative! As Jesus said in John 3: 3, “verily verily” or as appears in some translations, Truly-or as we might put it where I come from “Sure enough, sure enough, you must be born again.” And except an individual IS born again, he cannot and WILL NOT see the kingdom of God.

We must TELL THE MESSAGE WITHOUT COMPROMISE. One birth is not

enough. After one birth an individual may receive high degrees or may have millions of

dollars. But it is not enough. Our message is the indispensability of the new birth. The person who is born once will die twice. But the person who is born twice will only die once! It is not sufficient to be born once.

WE MUST HAVE A PLAN.

After observing the success of soul-winning at Mount Zion for a number of years, a desire came to me to establish the World Christian Training Center, a coordinated effort by the evangelical churches in the city to place a trained block worker on every block in South Central Los Angeles.

For a year and a half, my heart was burdened for this work. This filled my waking and sleeping hours. But nothing was happening! My prayers had no wings. My feet couldn't move. Everyone I talked to about my vision was excited; but no one had any money to contribute and no one knew where I could get staff to help me.

One night, entirely frustrated and in a desperate state, I threw my head into my hands and cried out to God. "Why do you give me a burning heart, but feet that can't move? If you're going to pull this thing together, then please take it off my mind. If you're not going to establish a World Christian Training Center, then show me what else I should do."

PRAYER OF DESPERATION

This final prayer of desperation seemed to be just what the Lord was waiting for.

The next week I attended a meeting in which Bill Bright, the founder and president of Campus Crusade for Christ, was speaking. After the meeting he approached me.

“Ed,” he said, “we’ve just got to get going on the World Christian Training Center.” “But I don’t have any money,” I replied. “And I don’t have any staff.”

“I can’t give you any staff right now,” he replied, “but Campus Crusade would like to invest some money in this vision.”

Two weeks later, I had the privilege of sitting with Reverend Billy Graham on the platform during his Anaheim Crusade. The Spirit of God was moving on my heart. “Go speak with Billy Graham about the World Christian Training Center”, the Spirit prompted.

“He gets 500 calls a day,” Satan insisted. “His appointments are scheduled five months ahead. Don’t be a fool.” the devil sneered.

“Go speak with Billy Graham.” the Spirit insisted.

“It won’t do you any good.” Satan badgered.

“Okay, Satan, you win!”

The Crusade ended and I turned to leave... and walked right into Billy Graham “I need to see you,” I blurted out.

“And I want to see you.” He said. And off he walked into the crowd.

“What do I do now, Lord?” I asked.

Four days passed before I received a phone call. “Billy Graham would like to see you,” the secretary said. “Can you come to the Grand Hotel?”

Two hours later, I was escorted in to see Billy.

“How is the World Christian Training Center coming?” he asked.

“Well, the burden is still there, but I need money and staff.”

“I don't think I can give you any staff right now, but I believe I can get you some money,” Billy offered.

Two weeks later on the golf course in Florida, as I was cleaning out the sand pits, Stanley Mooneyham, President of World Vision, approached me. He was crying.

“I've been a sweet potato too long,” he confessed. “I've given to every mission in the world, but have neglected the ghettos in America. I want to make it all right. How can I help you?”

“Well, I need STAFF and I need money.” I said.

“I don't know about money, but I believe that I have your head staff man. But the only thing about him is that he isn't black.”

“Is he blue?” I asked. “That'll do. Is he white? That's all right.” God sent staff.

God sent necessary funds.

A NEW BIRTH

The World Christian Training Center was born, a dream of mine that would potentially bring the gospel of Jesus Christ quickly and effectively to many thousands of people. Within weeks, the vision for the World Christian Training center had taken form. The goal: to have a trained Christian on every block in the South-Central Los Angeles area sharing the message of Christ.

Before too many years, some leading Christians in the area of evangelism discipleship were taking note.

Dr. Lloyd Dwast, Chairman of Missions Department at Talbot Seminary since 1972, missionary to West Africa 1963-1971, volunteer faculty at the World Christian Training Center, teacher of urban renewal at Talbot, wrote: "Sixty-four percent of the United States population live in moderate to large cities. We need a strategy for reaching those people. We've done a lot of talking and theorizing about it, but the World Christian Training Center has DONE something about it.

"Churches preach the need to be soul winners, but it makes people only become more frustrated when they don't know how to do it. The training Center is the logical answer to train them to do it.

"The block plan takes responsibility for winning people in a given area. It is one of the few viable plans that gives people responsibility for an area. I would like to see a Training Center in every community."

Bill Bright, president of Campus Crusade for Christ relates: "It is my belief that the World Christian Training Center vision of establishing and training a nucleus of Christians in every block and commissioning them to take that block for Christ is an urgent work."

Billy Graham, evangelist shares: "The World Christian Training Center has within it the necessary strategy to train men, so they can reach others block by block in America's cities."

Bob Harrison, evangelist: "I can say one of the greatest needs is a training program for

soul winning at block level. I commend the World Christian Training Center for this vision.”

Stanley Mooneyham, former president of World Vision: “I am tremendously excited about the work of the World Christian Training Center and we at World Vision are thrilled to share in making this dream of Dr E.V. Hill, of reaching the world block by block, a reality.”

It was an idea that caught on. And it has continued, but not without its ups and downs. It works only as God provides funds and personnel.

Our strategy was developed. The strategy was to recruit out of every congregation in the community to attend the center. Every church was welcome. It made no difference whether they were liberal or conservative, because we figured that when we got through with them, they'd be teaching the Bible. And it made no difference what denomination they were. We have the Church of God in Christ, Pentecostal, Methodist, Baptist and others. Of the five hundred churches in South Central, 70% are Baptist. You know the old saying, if a black man is not a Methodist, Baptist or Pentecostal, he is being influenced by white folk.

Recruiting was done by sending volunteers from our church into other churches in the area to give their testimonies and seek out trainees. In every case the pastor was assured that those responding from his church would be stronger church workers, through the training they would receive at the Training Center.

When we first started the World Christian Training Center, the devil tried to label this program as E.V. Hill's plan to fill up Mount Zion. But since that time, we have 150 churches involved. As pastors can testify.

Reverend Felton Simpson, Pastor of New Testament Baptist Church, South Central Los Angeles relates: “Prior to the training, I received at the World Christian Training

Center, my witnessing involved inviting people to church and testifying from my own life experience.

“At the Center I saw that the issue was to present practically the message of Christ.

“Witnessing went from a word here or there to direct contact and involvement with others. Now I really care whether people are saved or lost and can constructively do something about it.

“The training has changed my ministry to an emphasis on evangelism. Today, my members are using homes to draw neighbors together to present Christ. The Training Center has brought Christians together to reach beyond the boundaries of their local church.”

Reverend William Brant, Evening Star Missionary Baptist Church, South Central Los Angeles shares:

“One year after the Training Center opened, I took the course. Immediately I sensed that this was something my church should be involved in. Many in our church participated in block-by-block training. Today our church has a nucleus of soul winners who have faithfully continued to win people to the Lord.

“In my opinion, it is better to have a hundred disciples than 500 members. The training has helped deepen my membership spiritually.

“Every pastor I know who has sent his members to the World Christian Training Center or led his church in block-by-block training, has praise for the program. I feel all pastors and churches would benefit from the course.”

At the Center the trainees were thoroughly taught and trained by seminary professors, pastors and experienced soul-winners in the following areas:

1. Who Jesus Christ is.
2. How to accept Christ.
3. How to lead others to accept Christ (personal preparation).
4. How to lead others to accept Christ (Training).
5. How to reach your block for Christ.
6. How to lead your church in soul winning.

You may wonder where we get the teaching faculty for the World Christian Training Center. There is no seminary that has a comparable staff to the World Christian Training Center. We have 135 teachers who have included Dr. Richard Chase, former president of Biola University, Dr. Charles Feinburg, of Talbot Theological Seminary and Dr Harold Fickett.

Our budget for teachers is zero. We do not pay anyone anything, not even travel expenses.

We send a prospective teacher copies of the lessons. We say to them, "We need your services. We are a deprived, underprivileged ghetto, an unfinancially able people. He that shuts his ear to this special need the Lord will not hear him pray." So, we have 135 teachers, all volunteers and happy to be with us.

When we get ready to have a class, we have on file the names of people who have said, "If you need a class taught, call me." So, when we get ready to have a class, we just start calling. And if you cannot make it in January, fine, we have another class coming up in February. If you cannot make it in February, wonderful, we understand, there's March. If not April, May, no Problem. June, I can understand a full schedule. July, I can understand. August, if you cannot come, I will

begin to wonder about you.

September, good you can come!

And that's how we staff our classes.

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

The training also involves practical experience with the trainees going out together with experienced soul-winners to knock on doors and do personal evangelism.

When the training was finished, the local church member was above all else, expected to be a full-time witness for Jesus Christ. He or she would do whatever work necessary to support himself or herself, but his or her main work would be that of sharing Jesus Christ.

Upon completion of training at the Center, the graduate received a double Commission.

First, he or she was commissioned to return to his or her church to put into practice the training he or she received. In the power of the Holy Spirit and with the blessing and cooperation of the pastor, he or she would seek to turn the church into a soul-winning church. This was done by sharing with the congregation the things learned at the Center.

Second, the graduate was commissioned as a worker for the Training Center as a block worker, reporting to it regularly what he or she had done to take the community for Jesus Christ. This included people talked with, decisions made and churches and homes visited, so that the campaign could be well coordinated.

One such block worker was James Perkins: "When I was commissioned as a block

worker, I did not know my neighbors. After surveying the block, I was pleasantly surprised to find that a minister and some committed Christians lived on by block. They were concerned about the lost. Thirteen of them decided to meet regularly for prayer. We began to befriend, help and share with our neighbors. Several people on our block have since become Christians; several have become more involved in Christian things; a number are now attending church who weren't previously and some are considering spiritual things who were not interested before.

“Of course, not all people contacted will respond, but a situation where there can be personal contact on a continuous basis lays a foundation upon which those who are hesitant may later respond. Block-by-block is ongoing evangelism. It provides for persistent love, prayer and sharing with an individual.”

How might James have accomplished this?

All trained, committed workers begin by surveying their block. When they survey, they are looking for several things:

First, they are just taking a religious census.

Second, they are looking for those enthusiastic, super-duper, on-fire believers who, when you knock on the door and say, “Jesus,” they reply, “Yes, brother, I know Him.” We put the name down for you need live coals to build a fire for wet logs.

Third, when we knock on doors and say, “Jesus Christ” and they slam the door, we put that name down too...for prayer!

After the survey, the first thing the block worker does is to go back and call on those three or four super-dupers and say, “I was at your house and I sensed you really love the Lord.

I saw it on your face and since we are in the same block, can we get together?"

In every block I know of, there are at least two or three Christians who really love the Lord. Their windows are closed, their shades are drawn, they are scared to come out, but inside that house they are on fire. So, we are getting them out of the house and letting them know that there are other folk in their block just like them.

If while witnessing, a person received Jesus Christ, the worker is to call the Training Center, giving the person's name, address and telephone number and time and place of the decision. With that phone call we give prayers of thanksgiving. The block worker also keeps a record of this decision and follows up the person who has received Jesus Christ.

FOLLOW UP

When the Training Center randomly receives information concerning a new believer, they locate the worker who lives nearest him. The secretary then contacts the worker and gives him the name, address and telephone number of the new convert.

If at all possible, on the same day, the worker contacts the person to assure the new convert of his salvation, acquaint them with the people who live around him who are also believers in Jesus Christ and invite him to have fellowship both in prayer and Bible study in his own neighborhood.

The secretary at the office immediately mails Bible helps to the new convert. Thus, shortly after a man or woman has accepted Jesus Christ, written materials are received, further explaining the decision that was made, giving assurance of salvation and explaining

the things he or she needs to do now, as a believer, to become a mature Christian.

The name also goes to the Billy Graham headquarters for their follow up material. I met a young boy on the street one day and he said, "Rev. Hill, you must have had something to do with it. I got a letter from Billy Graham. How did he know that I was saved?"

I told him that we got a thing going and we are all working together now.

From the Center, the secretary also contacts the trained nucleus of block workers within the church of the converts choice, notifying them of the persons decision to accept Christ and (if applicable) the person's desire to have church membership with them. They then contact him or her and personally take the individual to their worship service and introduce him or her to the pastor and the church.

A recruiting committee at the Training Center would also contact him to recruit him into the Centers program. Through this he would continue to grow, learn the program of the Training Center and become a worker himself. Hopefully, if everything went according to plan, within a matter of six weeks a non-believer would have received Christ, discovered people within his own neighborhood who were Christians, participated in prayer and Bible study groups with them and found a church. He would also be a student in the World Christian Training Center, learning how to become a trained soul-winner through study and practical work.

Such is the experience of Frank and Velma Bouie: "We had a desire to win others to Christ. But we did not have training or a strategy. After receiving training and a strategy we began. After several years our block ministry spread to other blocks.

"A middle-aged couple on one block said they had never allowed anyone into

their home. Later, because of our witness on that block, that same couple hosted a Bible study in their home.

“We were able to encourage many young and old believers to be trained at the Center.

“After years of trying to be effective for the Lord, we have found that the place to begin is your own block.”

PRACTICAL ORGANIZATION

We recruited staff. Besides the executive director, which World Vision supplied, we employed a secretary, a business administrator and a director of activities. Was this a paid staff? Yes, but the little we do pay I'm ashamed to admit. In addition, we began to enlist and organize volunteers. We needed plenty!

An old building in disrepair was transformed into usable office space with painting, carpeting, draperies and lighting. Classrooms were prepared and furnished. Then we put out the sign, “Jesus Christ’s Campaign Headquarters.” There wasn’t anything like it in all Los Angeles.

Next, a survey was taken of our community. With the assistance of churches Christian organizations and individuals, we discovered that there were 3, 100 blocks in our community and 500 churches which included houses in which small churches met. Next, our informational and motivational outreach was accomplished through concerned Christian speakers to churches and organizations of our community and surrounding communities. Luncheons were given for denominational executives, pastors and pastor’s wives.

Financial support was generated through churches and interested individuals. Yet this was and has continued to be our single greatest problem.

I have crossed the length and breadth of the country. I have gone everywhere. I have talked and I have preached; but from the beginning I have had trouble raising enough money to get adequate staff for this program.

I have begged, scraped and pleaded but unfortunately there is not enough money available from Christians for this program. It is a miracle that we have kept going. The fact that we are now in so many major cities in America and moving into other parts of the world is largely a miracle.

FACULTY, MANUAL, CLASSES

A faculty was recruited.

A training manual was prepared.

Eighteen began the first Training Center, which included 23 class hours plus door-to-door witnessing and follow-up experience. By the twenty-fifth class session, we had 500 from the community being trained and sharing the good news of Christ with their neighbors and friends.

At last count, members from more than 150 churches are participating with us in reaching South Central for Christ. Over 1,500 are trained and implementing the strategy of winning others to Christ in their block. And a conservative estimate of individuals won to Christ as a direct result of the World Christian Center is over 10,000.

What effect has the World Christian Training Center had on individual Christians, churches and the community? From experience I can relate that the impact is significant.

CHRISTIANS ARE BUILT UP

One of the exciting results from the Training Center is to see Christians break faith barriers in the area of personal evangelism. When they are part of a city-wide effort, they draw strength from other Christians participating with them. Their confidence soars.

CHURCHES ARE AIDED

The training center in Evangelism is not a super-church. It is rather an aid or a servant to the church. The purpose of a Training Center is to assist the church in training and coordinating evangelistic efforts.

The World Christian Training Center has provided participating churches with the following benefits according to interviews with the pastors:

1. Provides evangelistic opportunities.
2. Increase church membership.
3. Helps disciple and train converts.
4. Serves to install city-wide vision in church members.
5. Frees the pastor of primary evangelistic efforts to allow him more time for studying, teaching, etc.

6. Establishes a nucleus of soul-winners in the church.

7. Offers incentive and motivation for Christian living.

8. Develops leadership.

I continually emphasizes the importance of evangelism for pastors and Members.

Reverend Searcy Jackson, Ray of Light Missionary Baptist Church, South

Central Los Angeles says:

“Our church was a young church. We began with 11 people. We trained our membership and became block workers, seeking to win our neighbors. When those who found Christ realized the need for a church, they became part of our church. We now have over 400 members. But we didn't just increase our numbers; we are making new disciples with the help of the block-by-block training.”

THE COMMUNITY IS BENEFITTED

One of the mottoes of the World Christian Training Center is “A Saved City is a Safe City.”

In South Central Los Angeles there have been many changes as a result of the training Center. Crime is down. Church membership is up. One church went from 22 members to 700 members in three years. Another church that was dying is now one of the largest and most vital in Los Angeles. (They credit that growth to the Training Center.) Families are getting back together. We've seen whole families that weren't even speaking to one another begin to love and care for one another again. Bars are coming off windows. People are beginning to walk the streets safely.

Neighbors are meeting one another and helping one another. Trained workers are expanding their horizons entering prisons, hospitals, high schools, convalescent homes and the police force with the gospel and Bible Studies. Social interest groups are springing up, such as job training for young boys in trouble. (We have had one such group using the Training Center facilities.) We're beginning to love one another and work together as a community. Christians are uniting in our community for a common purpose of bringing Christ to our lost friends.

Supervisor Kenneth Hahn of the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors had this to say about the center:

"There is no doubt that the concept of a block-to-block ministry conducted by the World Christian Training Center performs a valuable contribution to the citizens of the community. It has helped to reduce crime and juvenile delinquency and has offered a more productive and meaningful life for individuals. I am very pleased with the work that the WCTC is doing in the heart of Los Angeles."

Dr Richard Rigsby, professor of Old Testament and Talbot Seminary, volunteer faculty at the World Christian Training Center states:

"I had almost given up on seeing the inner city ever won to Christ until I came in contact with the World Christian Training Center. If block-by-block strategy can work successfully in the midst of the difficulties of the inner city, it can work successfully anywhere."

WORLD VISION

Our vision for the block-by-block training and the World Christian Training Center does not stop with our own community. THE BLOCK-BY-BLOCK STRATEGY IN SOUTH

CENTRAL LOS ANGELES IS DESIGNED TO BE A MODEL FOR REACHING EVERY COMMUNITY, WHITE AND BLACK, IN AMERICA AND EVERY CITY IN THE WORLD.

In these pages and following, a step-by-step plan has been developed to aid you in developing your own block-by-block ministry. If you are interested, let me suggest to you how you might personally implement this strategy.

PRAY

The most important thing we must do is pray. One of the reasons why we do not see God in His fullness, is that people do not excite Him to action. It must be very dull for God to deal with us. There He is, sitting on His throne, and we get down on our knees and say:

“Bless us this day.”

And God says, “All right!”

“Help me to get to work.”

“Okay, go ahead, you'll be all right.”

“Help me to pay my bills.”

“All right. I told you whatever you need, I will supply it.”

“Bless my children.”

“I'll take care of them.”

God must be bored with the typical business as usual. He awaits for us to attempt unusual business. When our faith excites God, we can look for great answers to our prayers.

We need to pray for a vision for the great cities of the world, for its communities and for those

about us.

IN ADDITION, IF YOU ARE A LAY CHRISTIAN YOU COULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

Using the material provided, you could begin your own block-by-block ministry in your block or community.

You could take this information to your pastor and urge him to begin a block-by block program in your church.

You could take the material to Christian leaders in your community and urge them to consider a city-wide block-by-block effort.

IF YOU ARE A PASTOR YOU COULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

Begin block-by-block training in your church for your church members.

Begin a block-by-block training in your church for Christians in the community. Encourage various members of your church to independently begin their block by-block training.

Talk with other pastors about joining together for training.

Support an effort to begin a World Christian Training Center in your city.

IF YOU'RE A CHRISTIAN LEADER IN YOUR CITY YOU COULD DO THE FOLLOWING:

Begin an effort to establish a city-wide training center.

Solicit funds for the launching of a city-wide training center.

Encourage pastors and laymen to use the training in reaching their city.

ONE FINAL THOUGHT

To be perfectly honest, I have never suffered defeat or anguish at as many points as I have in working this program. The devil met us at every point. He has challenged my faith, so that a number of times I have tried to throw in the towel.

Then the Lord revealed to me why the opposition was so great. He asked me, "If you had a town, lock, stock and barrel and somebody came to take it away from you what would you do?" I'd do just what the devil was doing. He sees that we are going to take the town, so he does not want my community with thousands of trained leaders to prevail. He knows his end should this come to pass and he is out to defeat us.

Yet God has raised and will raise up many to fight the devil alongside us. For the last ten years I have encouraged many to start a block-by-block plan in their city. Many have begun. Now with this book, WAR ON THE CITIES and THE BASIC TRAINING MANUAL many more can join us. And even if every block isn't completely converted, our efforts will make a difference by seeing that no one is missed, no one is left out of a hearing of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My dream is that some day in every city of the world should the Lord delay His coming, we hope to not have any block (or its equivalent) without a prayer meeting and a spiritual leader equipped to share his faith, beseeching God for every soul that is lost.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

RENEW THE CONTRACT

Salvation costs you nothing. Full commitment to Christ and His worldwide plan will cost you everything!

If we got on this journey of Christian service, the type that is Spirit bred and led, thinking that the Christian life was going to be a bed roses, we misread the contract. If we got on this journey thinking that the Christian life is just give me, give me, give me and get, get, get, we signed with our eyes closed. If we think that we are "Saved and Safe" and that's all that matters, we are shirking personal responsibility with alarming consequences. And if we are content only with the fact that WE made it to first base, without being mindful of the need for others to run the course, we haven't understood the game.

When in line of serving our burdens are heavy and our battles are wearying, there is no need of crying and complaining. We signed the contract. We told Him, "I will follow you." The contract said nothing of ease. Rather God called us to be his personal ambassadors to a needy world with all that that entails.

We're not talking about sharing with a mass of people with nameless faces. People who need Jesus are parents, children, brothers, sisters, friends, co-workers. It's not unidentified groups we're seeking to win, but individual persons who are born into this world with one major purpose: TO DECIDE WHAT THEY WILL DO WITH CHRIST!

It all boils down to that. And every one of them deserves an opportunity to choose eternal life instead of eternal death.

Will you pay this price for the sake of others?

Some may truly not be interested in the gospel. But most are blind and confused. They need neighbors and friends to patiently explain the love of God, the sacrifice of the Savior, the promised abundant life. And forbearance and consistent care are all the more needed in a society whose very roots are being questioned.

When I was growing up, the possibility of a society's foundation being destroyed never occurred to me. I didn't dream that one day there would come a people and a philosophy, which would destroy that which upheld strong principles and dignified people.

Instead, my early experience consisted of solid rudiments: holy matrimony; children raised in the fear and adoration of God; and taught by upright teachers. Ethical behavior was expected and esteemed; fairness in business was the rule. Love for one another was praised. And these bedrock foundations of thinking and behavior were zealously guarded.

But I have lived long enough to see these foundations crumbling, even out in the country where I was raised. Today, not only in Sequin, Texas, but throughout the world we are called upon to share the message of Christ with an age that has witnessed crumbling foundations. Gone are the days of "Till death do us part"; when immorality was looked askance on; when reverence for God and respect for the sacredness of human life prevailed; and honesty, trust and integrity were standard modes of operation.

Ours is a day when God's perspective, the Bible, is discarded for untested notions from the fickle mind of man. Aggressive communism, worldwide organized crime, uncontrollable use of

drugs and alcohol, continuing discrimination and oppression, pornography, rape, prostitution, gangs, child abuse, wife abuse and deadly evil of every sort abounds.

The question is: what are we going to do about it? As David asked in the Old Testament, "What do the righteous do when the foundations have been destroyed" (Psalms 11:3)?

Some of the difficulties in the Christian life, are that we have been duped into believing that the Christian life is not a warfare, that we have no enemy. Yet this earth is a battleground. We are not yet in heaven. And the devil roams this world determined on our devouring and extinction.

If the world put the same amount of energy into a project that committed Christians do, they would have monumental results in the devil's world, you don't even need to plant and water. His work just grows by itself. But when a Christian lays down his life for the gospel, when he prays all night and studies and witnesses faithfully and disciples others and fights issue after issue in our world, and saves his pennies to invest in God's work, the resulting fruit seems so small. It seems that we can fast and pray and grind and fast and pray and grind and fast and pray and grind and it looks like results just trickle in. So, we become weary and tired. It is difficult to keep trying to take my OWN community for Christ when after years of Christian efforts, we have a weekend when there are twelve gang-related killings within twenty blocks of my church. And we have been out here. We have had the vacation Bible schools, block-by-block sharing, neighborhood Bible studies, prayer groups, and a church on every corner. It would just seem that after all we have done that, we wouldn't have killings and stabbings of our young people and drugs still being peddled and prostitutes still walking our streets and crime and divorce so prevalent.

A saved city is a safe city. We need more people saved!

We live on the battlefield. We cannot win this earthly war without soldiers ready to suffer. Men and women will not come to Christ without our pledge to endure for their sake. Immorality and evil which hide the gospel message under piles of twisted thinking will not be stopped without Christians willing to lay down their lives. Evangelism will not succeed without effort and personal denial.

Therefore, as trials assail in the normal course of duty, we don't give up, we don't leave the path, we just take what we signed for.

I know no other means of evangelism than PERSONAL evangelism, which is going to change the world. Do you? Praise to God that our salvation doesn't rest on our efforts, our victory, our level of commitment, but in simple belief in the finished and ongoing work of Christ on our behalf.

If you want to see the grace of God in action, come to Mount Zion. We don't work only with the respectable element of society. Those who are able to cloak their sin or whose sin is primarily mental and easily disguised pride, fear, jealousy, hate, worry critical attitude, uncooperative spirit. At Mount Zion we have a list of 83 sins which God records in Scripture. The worst sins and often the most damaging ones are characterized not as overt sins, but as a "sinful disposition." So, the person that looks at this neighbor and says, "You can't be saved. You're too far gone. You're not eligible" fails to see the sin that still resides in his or her own life. If we appropriate a doctrine that "saved people do not sin" or we must forsake sin, or turn fully from sin to be saved, we are all the victims, for none of us is free of sin.

Salvation is for all and needed by all. If you were lost in sin wouldn't you want someone to come and show you the way?

Thanks or no thanks, tired or not tired, I have no plans of quitting. We must all review our contract with God.

Of course, the good news is that parts of the contract are enough to make us shout. We have moments of victory, of reigning on this earth. But what the child of God wants is the “sure enough” reigning, the reigning which will one day be ours in heaven forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever.

Until then, we must review our victories. David announced “This uncircumcised Philistine shall fall,” because he had had other victories before. To ready us for the present, we must remember what God has done for us in the past. Our resources may all dry up. But don’t despair. Remember the small victories, the daily deliverance. The greatest victory has already been won. We are in Christ, heaven bound and forgiven. If God did the greatest thing for us when we were sinners, how much more will He do for us now that we are His children?

The devil cannot cause us despair, because we’ve had too many victories. What keeps me out of gloom today? I remember the two-room cabin from which I came. How can Satan get me to despair over the trials of this day? I’ve come too far. I remember God’s provision for me in school, in our church, when I’ve spoken before presidents and world leaders and even when I won the prize for the grand champion pig. The reason we despair is because we are mounting such a mountain, the task of world evangelism. It seems so overwhelming to us. Impossible to climb.

BUT, remember when they told us we couldn't, we wouldn't, we dare not? Remember what God did over and above what we dared to believe! However, God might lead, whatever strategy or plan He gives, may you prosper in the doing FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD and

with the enabling presence, power and comfort of the Holy Spirit, let's get everyone to first base!