

TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES AND COMMITMENT TO MISSIONS AT THE MT.
EMMANUEL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH IN GREENVILLE, SOUTH
CAROLINA

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TRANSFORMING ATTITUDES AND COMMITMENT TO MISSIONS AT THE MT.
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This Doctor of Ministry project is dedicated to both my wife Schevelle and our newborn daughter Jillian Anise Boyce. I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for bringing them into my life. They have been a tremendous blessing to my personal growth and ministry. Schevelle has helped me to understand the importance of developing empathy in pastoral leadership, and Jillian has helped me to understand the importance of finding time to laugh and enjoy life.

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ABSTRACT

This ministry project's goal was to seek transformation in attitudes and commitment to missions at the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. The goal of transformation was to guide the congregation's mission practices to be exemplary of its 'Missionary' name and the overall mission of the church as discovered in Luke-Acts and in the Abrahamic Covenant.

The project tested the attitudes and commitment to missions from the Missionary Society in comparison to the general congregation. The project revealed both strengths and weaknesses in the attitudes and commitments of the Missionary Society and the congregation about missions. The research from the project revealed that there were strong contradictions between the findings from the surveys completed by the project participants and the content from the discussions during the training exercises. One of the three primary goals was achieved outright, and several secondary goals emerged as a result of the project; particularly the creation of a strategic plan to assess and evaluate the future mission practices of the church.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The focus of the project was to transform attitudes and commitment to missions at the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church through mission education in order to meet the needs of the Greenline-Spartanburg community. My primary role in the project was as a participant-observer in the process of understanding the attitudes concerning missions from two groups within the congregation: the Missionary Society and the general congregation. The project had three goals: 1) to increase attendance and participation in Wednesday night Bible study from 40 to 65, 2) to increase financial contributions for the mission offering from \$75.00 to \$125.00 per week, and 3) to increase the number of members in the Missionary Society from 9 to 30. The Bible study attendance did not show any significant increase during the project. The missions offering increased to an average of \$163.00 per week for the month of November, and to an overall average of \$131.12 per week respectively. The Missionary Society membership increased from 9 to 26 members during the project. The overall outcomes of the project were successful because we were able to gather enough information to develop a mission education model and a strategic plan for missions and outreach in our community.

Project Setting and Statement of Problem

Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist church is a predominately African-American church organized in 1896 located in the Greenline-Spartanburg community in Greenville, South Carolina. I served our congregation as an interim pastor for approximately one year

before being elected as pastor on February 28, 2009. I attended an annual Missionary Society ministry program at our church on November 15, 2008. During this service, I noticed that our church lacked a broader understanding of missions as it relates to the biblical and theological importance of missions. I also noticed that we had a limited commitment to missions from the majority of our congregation's members. This is not to say that commitment to missions is best measured by attendance to Missionary Society programs, but the low attendance sparked my pastoral curiosity to look further into the issue. During last year's Missionary Society service, Mt. Emmanuel had an average weekly worship attendance of approximately 125 members, yet only about 25 of our church members attended the Missionary Society program. I also observed that there was limited involvement from the youth of the congregation within the Missionary Society ministry. Consequently, a secondary outcome of this ministry project included the development of a mission education model that is inclusive of the learning needs for both the youth and adults of the congregation.

Since being elected as the twenty-first pastor of Mt. Emmanuel, I have sought to provide passionate leadership for our congregation in order to focus on the role of mission education in serving the needs of the Greenline-Spartanburg community. I observed that approximately one-third of the members of Mt. Emmanuel live within a one mile radius of the church, but that the other two-thirds of our congregation live as many as eight miles from the church. I observed that there was an obvious geographical dislocation between the residences of members of the congregation and the residents of the Greenline-Spartanburg community where our church is located. This ministry project

is the development of a comprehensive mission education plan to address the cultural and geographical gaps between our congregation and the community.

My interest in conducting this project developed through research and observation of the sharp contrast between the ethnicity of the congregation (predominately African-American), and the rapidly changing ethnicity of the community (about thirty per cent Hispanic). There was a large culture gap between our two communities. During my service as interim pastor, I often observed small groups of Hispanic families in attendance at our worship services. I observed that there was no direct communication between the members of the congregation and these families. I assumed that the lack of communication was primarily due to the obvious English/Spanish language barrier. The development and implementation of this project led to one Hispanic family joining our congregation. God had sent our congregation new people to help us close the culture gap with the Hispanic community.

One objective of this project was to make a genuine attempt to connect our congregation to serving the needs of the Hispanic families and un-churched African-American families in the Greenline-Spartanburg community. I began making contacts with Greenville community leaders to inform them of the ministry project that would soon take place in our church.

The development of the ministry project led our congregation to hiring a full time administrative assistant. We hired a bi-lingual administrative assistant to help accommodate the significant language gap between the church and the members of the

Hispanic community. The project would not have been a success without the contributions of Mrs. Mary Garces and her family.

I also experienced some unexpected benefits during the ministry project. I was awarded a scholarship for the Diversity Leaders Initiative (DLI) at the Riley Institute at Furman University for the fall semester of 2009. The DLI seminars featured diversity training for religious and corporate leaders in upstate South Carolina. I was able to engage with other leaders about the greater need for cultural sensitivity in response to the increase in the Hispanic population in Greenville, South Carolina.

A community leadership breakfast was held on Saturday, April 4, 2009, between Mt. Emmanuel church leadership and Greenville area political leaders to discuss the changing community needs and our upcoming doctor of ministry project. There was mutual excitement during the dialogue about seeing transformation through missions take place within the congregation. The City of Greenville produced a community revitalization plan to address some of the serious needs for the community in 2001. While efforts to activate the plan are incomplete at this time, I see the activation and implementation of our congregation's mission project as playing a major role in helping objectives of the revitalization plan becoming a reality.

This mission education project taught the three basic of missions, which I identify as the "ABC's": advocacy, benevolence, and commitment through volunteerism. My assumption was that there were three different concepts of community existing within our congregation: symbolic, ethnic/cultural, and geographic. The symbolic community relates to the historical and traditional values emphasized by the long term members of

the congregation. The ethnic/cultural community relates to the two diverse ethnic groups, African-American and Hispanic who live in the Greenline-Spartanburg community. The geographic community relates to the political neighborhood boundaries for Greenline-Spartanburg as specified by the city of Greenville.

The problem is that Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church is actually “non-missional” as it relates to meeting needs of both the geographic and ethnic/cultural communities. Our mission focus does not follow the biblical model of showing mercy and justice to fallen humanity.¹ Moreover, our church “mission” offering has primarily had been used to pay the utility bills of financially distressed church members and for the relatives/friends of our church members. Historically, there were not any funds allocated for mission education or mission programs in our church budget. It appeared that the attitudes toward missions were focused on small participation in existing in-reach activities instead of developing new relationships through an intentional and effective outreach ministry.

While mission is a broad and complex term used in Christianity, the general focus is on sending forth messengers to affirm God’s presence through Christ in the world. Craig van Gelder, in *The Missional Church in Context*, offers a functional definition of missions stating,

¹ Gospel of Luke 10:34, records the parable of the Good Samaritan, unless otherwise notated all biblical references are taken from the NRSV.

“The church of Jesus Christ, and particularly churches within this worldwide church, has always been involved in conveying the message of the good news to others, and engaging in the developments of congregations as communities of faith.”²

The Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions provides the following definition concerning missions:

The term mission derived from the Latin *mitto*, which in turn is a translation of the Greek *apostellein*, which means ‘I send.’ The term mission as an English term with no direct biblical equivalent. The contemporary secular definition of missions is simply sending someone forth with a specific purpose, to represent the interests of the sender or to hand-deliver a message written by the sender. The concept of the mission of the church will often depend on theological orientation rather than etymological analysis.³

Mt. Emmanuel is one of two community churches located within Greenline-Spartanburg. The other is New Beginnings United Methodist Church (formerly Bethel United Methodist Church). The Greenline-Spartanburg community has had a long history of alcohol, drug abuse, prostitution, adult illiteracy, physical violence, and high unemployment. There are serious social needs in our community and within our congregation. Note the following description of the Greenline-Spartanburg community according to the Greenline-Spartanburg Neighborhood Revitalization Master Plan Report,

“Located northeast of the urban center of Greenville, South Carolina, the neighborhoods of Green line and Spartanburg currently exist in a state of disrepair and ruin. Among many ailments, homes lie in disrepair; many abandoned, circulation is dangerous for public safety officials, and the perimeter of the neighborhood is gated from the remainder of the city by means of an un-kept wall of vegetation. Aside from long-time residents, most of the neighborhood residents are transient and many are unemployed. Beneath the

²Craig van Gelder, *The Missional Church in Context: Helping Develop Contextual Ministry*, (Grand Rapids: WilliamB. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007), 13.

³A. Scott Moreau, *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*, “Mission and Missions,” (Baker Academic, 2001), 636.

rough, overgrown image of the existing neighborhood is the potential for a neighborhood that can become a prime, mixed income, single urban residential community; one community together, no longer separated by a large, steep drainage swale that has parted the neighborhoods for over 100 years.”⁴

The ministry project introduced strategies for our congregation to resolve some of these community problems. The strategy we used for outreach in our community was initiative was target group evangelism. Target group evangelism reaches out to a particular population or group, often at an off-site location.⁵ We hosted a worship service at the David Hellams Community Center with the intention of ministering and witnessing to the un churchd residents of Greenline-Spartanburg. Our FOCUS celebration created opportunities for transformation in attitudes and behavior toward missions to occur within our congregation. Our community needs to see our church express God’s compassion and care for suffering humanity. This project was designed to create an opportunity for genuine church growth and Mt. Emmanuel will have an opportunity to be a viable entity for positive social change in Greenville, South Carolina.

The project appealed for participation from the congregation in hearing sermons, engaging in training exercises, and actively committing to social justice in the Greenline-Spartanburg community through careful volunteerism. The primary project goal was designed to seek change in the congregations’ overall attitude and commitment to missions in the community from non-missional to missional. After all, we are Mt. Emmanuel “Missionary” Baptist Church. The attitudinal and behavioral transformation

⁴ Woolpert LLP, “Greenline-Spartanburg Neighborhood Revitalization,” City of Greenville, SC, http://www.greenvillesc.gov/neighborhoods/Greenline/grline1_intro.pdf, 2001. (Accessed March 1, 2010).

⁵ Heidi Roland Unruh and Ronald J. Sider, *Saving Souls, Serving Society*, Oxford University Press, 2005, 36.

emerged from the participants hearing of my sermons, participating in training exercises, and actively engagement as committed volunteers during our Faithful Outreaching Christians United to Serve (FOCUS) in community celebration ceremony at the end of the project.

Project Statement

A foundational aspect of this project's development was to create a working definition of "mission" as it relates to the current understanding of missions within our congregation. What does mission mean to the members at the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church? How does our congregation's attitude about missions relate to our current commitment of what it means to be Christian in our community? Jesus was committed to justice for the poor and liberating the oppressed (Luke 4:14-21). This project was about developing a Christian learning community that guided our congregation's collective actions toward resolving social injustices in our ethnically diverse community.

CHAPTER TWO

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

I lived at 396 Sunset Avenue NW #7, about two blocks from the home of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during my Master's of Divinity studies at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) in Atlanta, Georgia. I passed by his former home each day as I went to class. I always respected Dr. King's role as an advocate for social justice and racial equality. But, I had an even greater respect for his role as a Baptist preacher and theologian. Dr. King believed that the church could be both intellectually respectful and emotionally satisfying.¹ King believed that the church should produce living witnesses to the power of God in human experience and to commit to action. This project was about redirecting our congregation's focus to fulfilling God's mission and our commitment to putting love in action in the Greenline-Spartanburg community. This project was about creating a congregation that demonstrates passion about fulfilling God's mission to care for suffering humanity. I strongly believe that God's mission for the church is to help suffering people for the sake of advancing God's kingdom on earth. Dr. King's legacy has had a convincing impact on my life and ministry, and his commitment to social justice inspired my strategy towards changing the way our church serves the needs of our community.

Peter Steinke, author of "Leadership for Mission: the Key", describes missions with the following statement:

¹ James B. Scofield, "King's God: The Unknown Faith of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," *Tikkun* (Nov/Dec 2009), 414.

Mission literally connotes "sentness." Every baptized person is called to be a disciple, which is accomplished by a responsibility to share in the church's mission. Both by nature and practice, the church is missionary.²

During this project, I faced several challenges as new pastor as I desired to create change within the traditional practices of our church from non-missional to missional. R.L. Gorsuch, in the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, defines attitude as "a predisposition to respond positively or negatively to a psychological object."³ These psychological objects include ideas, people, symbols, and concepts. The attitudes about meeting needs among the leadership and membership play a significant role in the actions and interactions carried out by the congregation toward the community.

Our community is suffering from serious issues such as abject poverty, poor health care, and violent crime. Our church can no longer afford to ignore the needs of the hurting people in our community. There seemed to be a genuine attitude of apathy within our congregation about the nature and extent of the social problems. There seemed to be an even greater apathy about our ability to effectively resolve the problems. This project was about restructuring and reeducating our congregation to meet our obligation to God's mission and our responsibility to answer the needs of the community.

This project followed the basic assumption that our congregation was generally ignorant of the nature and function of how to follow the Biblical mandate of God's mission. In Acts 1:8 Jesus declared to his disciples, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea

² Peter Steinke, "Leadership for Mission: The Key," *Clergy Journal* 83 (July/August, 2007): 9.

³ R.L. Gorsuch, "Attitude," *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, IPreach, <http://www.cokesburylibraries.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/auth/default.aspx?libraryid=6>, (Accessed March 1, 2010).

and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”(NRSV) I had initially thought that a 113 year old congregation would be well versed and competent with the concept and practices of missions. Throughout my ten years in ministry, I have observed how churches in decline often spend more time recalling the accomplishments of their past, instead of addressing the need for relevance and competency toward resolving social problems. I had observed that our practices were primarily non-missional, particularly because our ‘missionary’ funds were used to pay utility or medical bills of financially distressed members within the congregation. I observed very little engagement or interfaith dialogues between the congregation and the community residents. We needed to develop a missional intent for the purposes of leading lost souls to a living faith in Jesus Christ.

According to Heidi Unruh, in *Saving Souls, Serving Society*, “A congregation’s mission orientation is reflected in both what it does and how it interprets and values its activities.”⁴ Historically, Mt. Emmanuel was not growing according to God’s mission mandate through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:6). Church records reflected that only 171 people joined the church from 1985 until 2002 (approximately ten people per year), however 2000 census data reported that there were over 700 residents in the community.⁵ I understand that evangelism is a core component of mission. Mission implies the identity of the church: God sent Jesus to reconcile the world from sin and oppression. Evangelism is the work of the church to proclaim the good news of Jesus particularly to people outside of the existing Christian community. Unruh defines

⁴ Heidi Unruh and Ronald J. Sider. *Saving Souls, Serving Society*, (Oxford University Press, 2005), 130.

⁵ US Census, Greenville, SC, Greenline-Spartanburg, 2000.

evangelism stating, “Sharing the gospel by word and deed with people not actively affiliated with the Christian faith, with the intention that they will choose to accept and follow Jesus Christ and join a church community for ongoing discipleship.”⁶ Our commitment was to share the good news of Jesus Christ to the unchurched residents of the Greenline-Spartanburg community.

This project developed an educational model to teach the ABCs of missions: advocacy, benevolence, and commitment. We needed to make disciples for Christ and become advocates for social justice in our community. Our congregation needed to understand the basic principles of missions before fulfilling Christ’s command to witness in the world. Stan Toler, author of *ABCs of Evangelism: An Easy Plan for Training Anyone to Witness*, emphasizes the importance the need for a personal experience with Jesus Christ in witnessing to others. Toler states,

“As soul winners we must have a clear testimony of our faith in Christ. Your testimony should include your acceptance of Christ, the freedom from guilt, your faithfulness to God, the change in your life, your deliverance from sin, and your assurance of eternal life.”⁷

While members of our congregation may have had a previous faith experience with Jesus Christ, we had yet to demonstrate any practical skills of sharing these core principles outside the walls of our church. We had been unsuccessful in accepting and sustaining new membership within the congregation. Over 90 percent of our active

⁶ Heidi Unruh and Ronald J. Sider, 132.

⁷ Stan Toler, *ABCs of Evangelism: An Easy Plan for Training Anyone to Witness*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 2002), 15.

membership had attended our church for over ten years. Our community had shifted demographically from a largely African-American community to about one-third Hispanic. We needed to develop a mission education model that is sensitive to racial and ethnic diversity.

Dr. King dreamed of a day that his four little children would one day live in a nation where they would not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.⁸ Both leaders and members within our congregation often referred to the Hispanics in our community as “those Mexicans,” even though many of the Hispanics in our community are from Central and South America (we rent one of our church properties to a young family from Colombia, South America). Our congregation still has to become more sensitive toward racial and ethnic diversity. This project intentionally addressed the resident attitudes within our congregation about racial and ethnic diversity in the Greenline-Spartanburg community.

This project used the action research to observe and record the attitudes and past mission practices of the church. This project explores the concept of transformation in the attitudes about missions from the members of our congregation. The principles of pro-active (or action) research were used to begin the process of discovering our congregation’s understanding of missions. William R. Myers, author of *Research in Ministry*, describes pro-active research as “a research method that intentionally engages

⁸ Martin Luther King, Jr., “I Have A Dream” speech, <http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>, (Accessed March 1, 2010).

in research while pro-actively working toward transformation.”⁹ I began the research with three basic assumptions about missions within our congregation:

- 1) Our congregation lacked sufficient information about the social problems and needs of our community.
- 2) Our congregation was unaware of its full economic and stewardship potential for contributing to missions.
- 3) Our congregation lacked a genuine commitment to the transformative power of the gospel in becoming servants for social justice in our ethnically diverse community.

A meaningful transformation in attitudes and commitment were needed in order for our church to be a relevant voice for positive social change in our community. Our congregation needed to be restructured in order to meet the mandates of God’s mission and to reduce the reoccurring contradictions relative our ‘missionary’ Baptist church brand. We needed to transition from a church that was thinking about the gospel to a church that acts out the principles of the gospel through a living faith in Jesus Christ.

My role as pastor was as a participant-observer in evaluating both verbal and non-verbal communication of the project participants as we actively engaged in the process of mission education. I interviewed a variety of groups in order to engage in the understanding of missions relative to meeting the needs of our community. I also interviewed two local pastors, Rev. Brenda Washington of the New Beginnings United Methodist Church, and Rev. Dale Sutton of the Overbrook Baptist Church. These pastors

⁹ William Myers, *Research in Ministry: A Primer for the Doctor of Ministry Program*, (Chicago: Exploration Press, 2000), 25.

were interviewed specifically because of the close proximity of their churches to Mt. Emmanuel, and to gather information about the ministries that their congregations were developing to actively answer community needs.

According to the oral history of Mt. Emmanuel Baptist Church, the Missionary Society was organized in 1964 to serve poor and needy families of the Greenline-Spartanburg community. The Missionary Society has been served by several presidents (primarily female) and the recent focus within the last few years has been directed towards nursing home visitations of elderly church members. During the project, I interviewed the Missionary Society members within our congregation, as well as several leaders within the church (primarily from the deacon and trustee ministries). The purpose of these interviews was to find out if there was an interest or non-interest in increasing mission involvement from Mt. Emmanuel in the Greenline-Spartanburg community. Our community was not short of a list of very urgent needs. We had recently experienced a boisterous pattern of violent crime over the last two years. A seven year old boy was murdered by his father and his dead body was thrown into the kudzu just two blocks from our church in August of 2007.¹⁰ A drive by shooting occurred on May 30, 2009 less than a block away from our church. (See Appendix B.5) A man was beaten and robbed in his home at a nearby 54 Spartanburg Street residence on July 6, 2009 (see appendix B.6). These cases and other community issues were explored during very intense discussions in the Bible study training exercises during the project. The high levels of emotional intensity during these discussions exposed the following problems:

¹⁰ News Channel 4 WYFF Greenville, SC, "Missing Boy Found Dead, Father Charged," <http://www.wyff4.com/news/13865934/detail.html>, (Accessed April 1, 2010).

- 1) The geographic dislocation of our membership hindered our overall sensitivity to the dangers, suffering, and moral decline of our community.
- 2) The overall moral reasoning of our church concluded that people who commit and who are victims of crimes in our community are deserving of the consequences.
(Luke 10:30)
- 3) Our church had attempted to evangelize out in the community previously (at least twice within the last forty years) and our unsuccessful efforts created apathy about the possibility of transformation.

The project consisted of the delivery of six sermons, creating and implementing six Bible study lessons, and the soliciting of volunteers from both inside and outside our congregation for a community celebration called Faithful Outreaching Christians United to Serve (FOCUS). The acronym is based on the third stage of moral development concept of Lawrence Kohlberg, in which moral reasoning among adolescents shifts from ethical thinking to ethical focus. Kohlberg argued that there are three levels and six stages to moral reasoning.¹¹ The first level (pre-conventional) consists of obedience and punishment orientation and individualism and exchange. ‘Good’ behavior at this level is demonstrated toward in order to receive some type of tangible reward. The second level (conventional) consists of an emphasis on establishing good relationships and maintaining social order. ‘Good’ behavior at this level is demonstrated and based on the premise of being a law-abiding citizen. The third level (post-conventional) consists of social contract and individual rights as well as an adoption of universal principles.

¹¹ William C. Crain, *Theories of Development*, (Prentice Hall, 2005), 118.

Racial segregation was a social reality in America up until the early 1970s. Many whites felt that segregation was not sinful because it was legal in most of the southern states. Dr. King argued that racial segregation was a social injustice, and injustice anywhere was a threat to justice everywhere. Our congregation seemed to be at a struggling halt with the second level of moral reasoning (individualism and exchange). ‘Good’ behavior was historically demonstrated toward missions insofar as the mission activity was initiated by the pastor. Our members had generally reached out to the community because of the initiative of the two former pastors, and not because they felt a genuine need to expand the gospel. Our project was structured to guide our congregation to a higher level of moral reasoning in hopes of creating a collective consciousness toward the universal principles of our faith. Mature Christians faithfully respond the needs of suffering people because of the desire for them to experience the power of the salvation through Jesus Christ.

Developing a Plan, Preaching, and Teaching Calendar

The project consisted of the delivery of six sermons and six training sessions focusing on improving our congregation’s knowledge about missions. Data was also collected in the form of field notes and surveys in order to record the attitudes and comments from the project participants about our mission to serve in the Greenline-Spartanburg community. Each appendix corresponds to sermon outlines, lesson plans, and surveys used as pre-test and post test during the project.

Project Introduction Letter

Appendix A.1

Session 1: Missions pre-test survey with Missionary Society

Appendix A.2

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Pre-test survey	Appendix A.4
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Session 4: Second Project Sermon: We Need to Pray: Luke 11:1-4	Appendix A.9
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CHAPTER THREE

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

The African-American (or Black) church has historically been the primary vehicle for facilitating unity and justice for African-Americans.¹ African-Americans, who have endured and overcome the atrocities of the Middle Passage, the humiliation of chattel slavery, and the misery of racial segregation are rediscovering the role of Black church focusing on empowerment toward social justice. This chapter will use both historical theology and narrative criticism as methods for theological reflection. Historical theology involves the descriptive task of telling how previous generations interpreted the Bible and applied it to their context.² The theology of Martin Luther King, Jr. will also be used to explain our rationale for the necessity of our church's commitment to social justice. This project is significant for our church's theological reflection because the espousal of black theology helped to bring black clergy and black churches to the forefront of social activism.³ Black theology clearly articulates how God helped the African-American church overcome struggle oppression through personal and communal faith. This theological understanding is instrumental to our ability to interpret the gospel as a guide for bringing God's liberation to our people who can then bring liberation to the community.

¹ Emmanuel L. McCall, *Black Church Life-styles*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 16.

² M. James Sawyer, *The Survivor's Guide to Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 207.

³ Dennis C. Dickerson, "A History of the Black Church," *Holy Bible Jubilee Edition*, (New York: American Bible Society, 1999), 187.

This chapter will explore the following five areas in developing biblical and theological rationale for transformation and missions: historical theology and social justice in the African-American church, advocacy and missions, benevolence and missions, commitment and missions, becoming the beloved community, and conclusion. The biblical characters of Abraham, Jesus, and parabolic figures throughout Luke-Acts will be examined in order to recover a liberating witness for the 21st century church. Radical mission theology in the African-American church leads to social justice and liberation in the community⁴. The analysis of the biblical characters of Abraham, Jesus, and parabolic characters in Luke contribute to the biblical and theological rationale for the African-American church to become a catalyst for social justice and liberation.

Historical Theology and Social Justice in the African-American Church

As I reflect on the historical theology for social justice in the African-American church, I want to share a personal story in order to illustrate the urgent need for our church to teach the history of our struggle for liberation. On October 17, 2008, I led a group of African-American youth and youth advisors from various churches in our association on a field trip to Charleston, South Carolina. I had previously led other youth groups on similar field trips, but I was excited about this trip particularly because many of the participants had never been to Charleston before. The focal point of the trip was a visit to the Avery Research Center on the Campus of the College of Charleston.⁵ One of the exhibits at Avery featured a collection of artifacts from the antebellum slave period:

⁴ Larry Murphy, "Piety and Liberation," *Blow the Trumpet in Zion*, Iva E. Carruthers, ed., (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 55.

⁵ College of Charleston, Charleston, South Carolina. www.cofc.edu/avery. The Avery Research Institute is a repository for African-American history and culture, (Accessed February 1, 2010).

slave badges, shackles, and harnesses. I had seen these items many times before, but something significant happened to me when I heard a young teenaged black female with our group ask the tour guide (referring to the shackles), “Is that for real?” I discovered that she was missing important knowledge about her black heritage. It is the responsibility of those who know the way in the church to guide others who do not know, especially our youth.

The shackles were used as instruments of bondage and restraint for our African ancestors. The tour guide simply explained to her that the shackles were real, and then the young woman began to gaze at them with a sense of sadness. It was clear to me how each generation within the African American church has continued to lose the connection between the origins of our church and our experiences with oppression during slavery. While I was saddened at the young woman’s lack of knowledge about her African heritage, I was glad that I was able to expose the young woman to a vital piece of her history during the field trip to Charleston. The visit to Avery became a teachable moment for many of the teenagers because they were able to see real examples of the struggles of their African ancestors.

Slaves first encountered the dogma of Christianity through the colonial revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The slave owners permitted conversion primarily to create a docile temperament among the slaves.⁶ Black theology, however, created a radical consciousness among the slaves. The theology of the black church did

⁶ Riggins Earl, Jr., “A critique of slave conversion consciousness : its implications for black theology and ethics,” *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center*, 17 (Fall-Spring 1989-1990): 2.

more than affirm the slaves' humanity and their worth before God: it envisioned a day of judgment, a 'settling-up time' accompanied by a rebalancing of the moral scales.⁷ The civil religion of the white slave owners was a striking contradiction to the liberation mandate of the gospel. They heard a message that proclaimed that the blind would see and freedom for the oppressed, but their Christian white slave owners had yet to grant them freedom from slavery.

Black men were granted a temporal right to vote in 1865 with the passage of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments.⁸ These events began the process toward liberation of African-Americans. Our ancestors taught us that it was appropriate to interpret the Bible in line with our religious experiences. The notions of fundamentalist reading of the biblical text were foreign to what our people understood as a way to read the Bible.⁹ Furthermore, fundamentalism should be of concern for the African-American church because it runs concurrent with the denial of social and political opportunities for African-Americans and Hispanics.¹⁰

For example, the Greenville County Public School system has not historically nor does it currently teach curriculum specifically on African-American history or culture. However, it does continue to teach that in 1492 that Columbus discovered the New

⁷ Ira Berlin, ed., *Remembering Slavery*, (New York: The New Press, 1998), xli.

⁸ Jonathan Earle, ed., "Radical Reconstruction 1866-77," *The Routledge Atlas of African-American History*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 66.

⁹ Randall C. Bailey, "The Biblical Basis for a Political Theology of Liberation," *Blow the Trumpet in Zion*, Iva E. Carruthers, ed., (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 93.

¹⁰ Delman L. Coates, "And the Bible Says," *Blow the Trumpet in Zion*, Iva E. Carruthers, ed., (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 98.

World (that happened to already be inhabited by the Carib Indians). These contradictions make it imperative that Mt. Emmanuel develops a culturally sensitive theological education within the African-American church. Our community deserves to hear a broader understanding of history beyond the conventional teachings of Western civilization.

It is the responsibility of our church to teach our youth and adults about the struggles for African-Americans to experience liberation in America. Our teaching about the experiences with oppression during slavery and Civil Rights helps to decrease the probability that our youth will enter into high school without knowing the tragedies and triumphs of their people. George Santayana once stated, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”¹¹ Learning African American history also increases the probability of the present generation to overcome its own struggles. Knowing that God acted as liberator on the behalf of their enslaved ancestors helps our church to revisit the attitudes about our present challenges. The passing on of knowledge about our struggles empowers generations of youth and adults with the courage to overcome racism, poverty, and prejudice.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a significant leader in the fight for social justice for African-Americans and all people. While a student at Crozier Theological Seminary, he was introduced to the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), and embraced it, combined with a Christian philosophy of love, as the strategy of

¹¹ Richard John Neuhaus, “Santayana lately revisited,” *First Things* 150, (Fall 2005): 28-33. This quote has been used to emphasize that we should learn from history.

choice for the struggle against racial oppression.¹² Dr. King was known foremost for his efforts as a civil rights leader, but he also served as a Baptist minister during the struggle for racial equality. Dr. King once stated,

“We know through painful experience that freedom is never given by the oppressor; It must be demanded by the oppressed...For years now I have heard the word ‘wait!’ It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This ‘Wait’ has almost always meant ‘Never.’” (1963)¹³

Dr. King’s leadership in the struggle for equality led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (one hundred years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation).¹⁴ These actions gave African-Americans, for the first time, the opportunity to participate as full-fledge citizens in America. Furthermore, the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts would not have been successful without the marches, sit-ins, and town hall meetings held in scores of African-American churches throughout the country.

It must be further noted that Dr. King’s efforts for racial equality were not without opposition from both black and white clergy of his day. In 1963, in response to his demand for civil rights, eight white Birmingham, eight conservative Alabama clergy issued two statements in Birmingham newspapers, one in January and one in April on the very day of King’s arrest, in which they accused ‘outsiders’ of ‘unwise and untimely’

¹² “King, Martin Luther, Jr.,” *Encyclopedia of African-American Religions*, Larry G. Murphy, ed., (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.), 428.

¹³ Johnathan Earle, “Part V: The Struggle for Equality,” *The Routledge Atlas of African-American History*, (New York, Routledge, 2000), 94.

¹⁴ “King, Martin Luther, Jr.,” *The Encyclopedia of African-American Heritage*, Susan Altman, ed., (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997), 136.

protests that ‘incite violence.’ These white clergymen believed the fight against injustice should be waged exclusively in the courts.¹⁵

The work of Dr. James Cone helped to further articulate the nature and essence of Black Theology. Cone, a former professor at Union Theological Seminary, reached into the past of black America’s rich theological and spiritual heritage to highlight the role of African-American religious life. Cone visited South Africa to study the writings of Africans and the African understanding of God and social empowerment. According to Cone, in *Christian Theology and Scripture as the Expression of God’s Liberating Activity for the Poor*, “Theology derived from the black experience must reflect the rhythm and the mood, the passion and ecstasy, the joy and sorrow of a people in a struggle to free themselves from the shackles of oppression.”¹⁶ For Cone, it is un-Christian to exclude the needs of the poor and oppressed. The Biblical story consistently emphasizes that God was involved in the liberation of the Israelites during the first exodus from Egypt and the second exodus in Babylon. Cone stated, “There can be no comprehension of the gospel apart from God’s solidarity with the liberation struggles of the poor, because the freedom of the victims on earth is the eschatological sign of God’s intention to redeem the whole creation.”¹⁷

¹⁵ “Letter from the Birmingham Jail,” *Encyclopedia of Black Studies*, Molefi Kete Asante, ed., (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 308.

¹⁶ James Cone, *Speaking the Truth*, (Grand Rapids: MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1986), 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, vii.

It must be further stated that African-American preaching and worship as essential truths of black religious life.¹⁸ The singing of hymns and spirituals such as, ‘Go Down, Moses’, ‘Ezekiel Saw De Wheel’, and ‘Certainly Lord!’ empowered blacks with courage and strength to bear witness to their experiences with oppression. The Holy Spirit created cohesion and solidarity to both individuals and communities that struggled for equality and validation in a racially polarized society. African-Americans were able to balance their spiritual and political needs through the uniqueness of the black worship experience. This helped to reinforce the belief in the God who delivered the Israelites from Egypt, Daniel from the lion’s den, and Jesus from the grave would deliver them from racial and political oppression.

It is understandable why African-Americans embraced the premise of liberation theology (God is on the side of the oppressed), after being assimilated into conservative versions of Christianity and still experiencing the social hypocrisies and contradictions of human oppression. Throughout American history, blacks have been regarded as three-fifths human, denied the right to vote, had no rights that whites had to obey (Dred Scott Case). Blacks were denied the rights to read and to receive a decent education (Brown vs. Board of Education). The gospel of liberation appealed to the need for transformation of the moral and social conditions that were impeding the progress of our people. Blacks deserved to be viewed as whole persons and not as mere objects of pity from the dominant white culture.

¹⁸ Ibid, 18.

It is through the eyes and ears of experiencing the atrocities of racial segregation and oppressions that African-Americans have interpreted the gospel. Our theological interpretation is rooted in our historical experiences with racial and economic oppression. Our church is still facing similar struggles today. During the 2008 presidential election, a racially negative campaign ad emerged against Senator Barack Obama as a nebulous danger to white and Latino children.¹⁹ Racial propaganda against our nations' first African-American president and his family remind us that after forty years of integration, racism in America has not been eradicated. Liberation theology helps us find a deeper meaning of oppression beyond the oppression of racism. Dr. King helped us to understand that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.²⁰ Oppression in any form is a failure of humanity to receive the love and liberating power of the gospel.

Our church must develop a closer reading of the Bible in order to recover a liberating witness for God in the community. Many scholars have argued that the African-American church exists only as an entity unto itself. However, Michael Battle, author of *The Black Church in America*, states the following, "The Black Church constitutes a communal spirituality of conversation, cooperation, and common witness based on the common recognition of the community of God."²¹ African-Americans have had a unique experience with suffering as victims of lynching, extortion, and economic oppression in America. These experiences have been points of departure for deep theological reflection. God, for African-Americans, delivered the children of Israel from

¹⁹ David R. Roediger, *How Race Survived U.S. History*, (London: Verso, 2008), 214.

²⁰ Martin Luther King, Jr. *Letter from the Birmingham Jail*, 1963.

²¹ Michael Battle, *The Black Church in America*, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 174.

slavery and oppression in Egypt, and he would deliver them from the atrocities of racial segregation and discrimination.

The Black church has been the primary vehicle for social cohesion and social justice for the African-American community. The Jesus of the Black church is one who stands beside and with his people, who suffered himself and therefore can enter into our concrete suffering and lead us to freedom.²² Stephanie Y. Mitchem, in *Introducing Womanist Theology*, argues the following, “if theology includes discussion of God in human life, then exploration of God in the lives of African-American women is necessary.”²³ It is from these points of departure: race, social class, and gender that begin our examination of the aforementioned biblical characters as mission models for our church in the Greenline-Spartanburg community.

In order to provide a biblical and theological foundation for this project, it was important to give a closer examination of the following four terms: theology, missions, neighbor, and community. The foundational theological question for the project was, “How does Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church create and follow the model for God’s missional church?” Jean-Yves Lacoste in the *Encyclopedia of Christian Theology* defines the theology as, “explaining Christian faith, speaking coherently of God whom the Scriptures bear witness, or speaking of all things in their relation to God.”²⁴ Lacoste,

²² M. James Sawyer, *The Survivor’s Guide to Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006), 457.

²³ Stephanie Y. Mitchem, *Introducing Womanist Theology*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 5.

²⁴ “Theology”, *The Encyclopedia of Christian Theology* 3, Jean-Yves Lacoste, ed., (New York: Routledge, 2005), 1554-1555.

furthermore, stated that is a pre-Christian term that first appeared in Plato (Republic, 379 a), in a passage that poses the question of the pedagogical use of mythology.

According to G.E. Mendenhall, in the *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, mission is the sending of representatives of a deity for the purpose of conveying a message or carrying out a task. Mission refers to the activities of a religious community dedicated to the propagation of its faith in other communities.²⁵ However, research in *Nelson's Complete RSV Concordance* reveals that the word mission is only found three times in the New Testament (Acts 12:25; 2 Cor 11:12; Gal 2:8 RSV).²⁶

The New Testament Greek word for neighbor (*plesion*) can be translated as “near to, or the one who is not my brother by blood, but whose associate or companion one wishes to become.”²⁷ *Plesion* is a general term for “neighbor,” expressing the idea of one’s fellow human being. In addition, for Jews, the term indicates any member of the Hebrew race; and for Christians, it refers to fellow believers.²⁸

Stephen C. Barton in *The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies* defines community as, “1) a group of people living in a locality and sharing a culture (geographic/ethnic), 2) interdependence within a society (symbolic), 3) participation in love of God and neighbor

²⁵ *Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*, “Missions,” G.W. Mendenhall, IPreach, 2007. <http://www.cokesburylibraries.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/auth/default.aspx?libraryid=6> (Accessed February 1, 2010).

²⁶ “Mission,” *Nelson's Complete Concordance RSV*, (New York, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1957), 1295.

²⁷ “Neighbor,” *Dictionary of the New Testament*, 303.

²⁸ “Plesion,” *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Stephen D. Renn, ed. (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 672.

(symbolic).”²⁹ In theological perspective, however, community is that participation in the triune life of God which make truth possible, just enduring encounter between human beings in all their diversity.³⁰ There were some obvious differences between our congregation and our Hispanic neighbors: race, ethnicity, and language. Dr. King’s legacy teaches us that God’s liberation extends beyond racial, gender, and cultural boundaries.

The narrative critical approach was a method of biblical interpretation used to help explain the meaning of the Luke-Acts scriptures used for the project. Mark Allan Powell, in *Interpretation*, argues, “Narrative criticism challenges the dichotomy between literary or aesthetic appreciation and historical or theological understanding.”³¹ Powell claims that both methods of interpretation are meaningful, but have very different intentions and results. Historical criticism is primarily concerned with establishing authorship, date, context, and the recipients of the earliest manuscripts of the gospel texts. The historical-critical method was useful in establishing the pre-text, text, and context of Luke-Acts. The narrative critical method was useful in asking the question, "How does our congregation respond as readers of Luke-Acts?" Will our church hear Jesus when he tells us, “Yes, now go and do the same” (Luke 10:37 NLT)?

According to Luke's understanding, the ultimate purpose of God is to bring salvation to all people, beginning with Israel. God's dealings with humanity, focused

²⁹ “Community,” *The New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies*, Wesley Carr, ed., (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 61.

³⁰ Ibid, 61.

³¹ Mark Allan Powell, “Toward a Narrative-Critical Understanding of Luke.” *Interpretation* 48 (1994): 341-347.

previously in the Law and the prophets, entered a new stage with the ministry of Jesus. A new era of God's saving act began with Jesus, who in his acceptance, forgiveness, and healing of people embodied God's salvation. Luke alone among the Synoptic writers calls Jesus "Savior" (2:11) and describes his mission as being "to seek out and to save the lost" (19:10). In his words and his actions Jesus brought forgiveness, healing, and salvation to a broken world. The work of proclaiming the good news to all people that was begun by Jesus is to be carried out by his disciples. They are to go "to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem," preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus (24:47).³²

Advocacy and Missions: Abraham, Jesus, the disciples

Advocacy is about supporting or helping someone to further a cause.³³ God called Abraham to leave his father's country and kindred. God told Abraham that he would bless him and make him a great nation, and that all of the people of the world would be blessed through him. This project proceeded from the theological premise that God's word of blessing is not restricted to Abraham's contemporaries, but extends to all people. Through Abraham, God reaches out to bless "all the families of the earth" (J: vs. 3b; 18:18; 28:14; E: 22:18; 26:4). The initiative lies with God, for Israel enjoys the favored position of an elect nation (Exod. 19:5-6a; cf. I Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10), not

³² "The Gospel of Luke," *Introduction to the Bible*, IPreach, 2007.

<http://www.cokesburylibraries.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/auth/default.aspx?libraryid=6> (Accessed February 1, 2010).

³³ "Advocate," *The New International Webster's Thesaurus*, (USA: Trident Referencing, 2006), 3.

because of merit (Deut. 7:6-8), but that through her God's saving grace might flow to all peoples. To this vocation Abraham and Israel must respond with faith.³⁴

The Hebrew word for 'blessing' (*barak*) occurs about three hundred times in the Old Testament. The idea of blessing is the invocation of special favor on a person or object that is held in high esteem. The object of blessing in the Old Testament may be either divine or human, or that which belongs to either God or human beings.³⁵ The promise of "blessing those who bless you" brings Abraham into relationship with those outside the chosen community (Gen 12:3). Those who treat Israel with life-sustaining ways will receive a response of blessing from God.³⁶ It is understandable to reason Abraham's desire to receive a blessing from God, but it is confusing to the African-American reader to observe that while he is to be a 'blessing' to others, he is still an owner of slaves (15:2, 16:2, 24:2). This contradiction resembles the contradictions of white slave owners who sought to convert their slaves into Christianity, but failed to set them free. According to the narrative, Abraham was by no means an ordinary person. Abraham was also a man of great wealth and high social status. He has many servants, slaves, and livestock (Gen 18:7). His high social status warranted him the privilege of blessing others. Our blessing of humanity must follow the order of first knowing that true

³⁴ "Abraham, *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, IPreach, 2007.

<http://www.cokesburylibraries.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/auth/default.aspx?libraryid=6> (Accessed February 1, 2010).

³⁵ "Bless, Blessed, Blessing," *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Stephen D. Renn, ed., (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 118-119.

³⁶ "Genesis 11:27-12:9 Commentary," *The New Interpreter's Bible I*, Leander E. Keck, ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 424.

blessings come from God and then our church should help others to live in a manner that reflects full equality for all people.

God has blessed our church with the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. Our church has been blessed by God and therefore our church is called to be a blessing to our community. The theological significance of Abraham extends beyond God's blessing to him, but also required a response on behalf of Abraham. A.R. Millard, in the *New Bible Dictionary*, makes the following claim stating, "the oath (Luke 1:73), covenant (Acts 3:13), promise (Rom 4:13) and blessing (Gal 3:14) granted Abraham by God's free choice are inherited by his children by faith."³⁷ God's blessings to Abraham were not based upon a religious pedigree, personal piety, race, or social class. God's blessings to Abraham were based upon Abraham's ability to proceed in faith to God's command. Furthermore, according to *The NRSV Concordance*, Abraham is mentioned no fewer than seventeen times in Luke's gospel.³⁸ Luke was making the connection that God's blessings to Abraham were to be extended to his Gentile audience through Jesus Christ. Mt. Emmanuel can be a blessing by being faithful to the needs unto our community because of a commitment to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Our response to God's favor is important because God's blessings are not limited to the work of our church, but are to be distributed through the faithful witness of the universal church (Acts 2:44-45).

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are significant events relative to the witness of the Christian church. Jesus' first century followers agreed that his death

³⁷ A.R. Millard, "Abraham," *The New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed., (England: Inter-varsity Press, 1996), 8.

³⁸ John R. Kollenberger III, "Abraham," *The NRSV Concordance Unabridged*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 10.

was not a mere tragedy but an act of power overcoming the forces of evil, and a sacrifice atoning for the sins of the nation, or even the world, reconciling people to God.³⁹ Jesus Christ commanded his followers to be his witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The three stages Judea, Samaria, the end of the world, are at the same time geographical and religious stages. Preaching must reach all people where they live; it must also reach all men, whatever may be their position as regards God, whether they are Jews, Samaritans, or Gentiles.⁴⁰

James H. Evans, Jr., in *We Have Been Believers*, comments on the how historically the gospel of Luke has inspired the struggle for liberation in the African-American church. He states, “Luke 4:16-30 is the missiological declaration of Jesus, and reflects the inherent connection between God’s self-disclosure and the manifestation between God’s liberating intentions in the context of a people who suffer under the yoke of oppression.”⁴¹ There was a direct correlation between Jesus’ declaration to set free the captives and the slave experiences of bondage and exploitation. Furthermore, Evans argues that to formulate God’s revelation through Jesus apart from human experiences with social injustice is harmful to the significance of revelation and those who struggle

³⁹ Stephen Tomkins, *A Short History of Christianity*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005), 14.

⁴⁰ “Church, Life and Organization of.” *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, IPreach, 2007. <http://www.cokesburylibraries.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/auth/default.aspx?libraryid=6> (Accessed February 1, 2010).

⁴¹ James H. Evans, Jr., *We Have Been Believers*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 11.

with injustice. God's nature is transcendent is liberating for all people who long for freedom and justice.⁴²

Jesus' followers helped people who were suffering, gave kindly to others from their own resources, and believed it was their duty to remain faithful to Jesus until his eminent return (Acts 1:11). This project was about bringing the gospel to where people live, to the heart of the community. The "where" is the crime and poverty-stricken Greenline-Spartanburg community near downtown Greenville, South Carolina. God has called our church to share the liberating message of the gospel to our community. These sacred texts direct our church to the same faithfulness to the gospel ministry as with the early apostles in order to meet effectively the challenges facing our community and world.

The historical critical and narrative critical research methods were both appropriate for interpreting the biblical texts used in our project. There has been significant debate among scholars about the validity of Luke-Acts to be read as one volume or as two separate volumes. Paul Borgman argues that Luke-Acts was intended to be heard (not read) as a single coherent story. Borgman further argues that the intent of the story of Luke-Acts is to reveal the Way of God, a phrase synonymous with the Way of salvation or kingdom of God.⁴³ This project, however, did not debate the claim that Luke-Acts should be read as a single volume of literature. Luke-Acts was primarily used

⁴² Ibid, 12.

⁴³ Sheila Klassen-Weibe, review of Paul Borgman, *The Way According to Luke: Hearing the Whole Story of Luke-Acts*, Interpretation (2008): 100-101.

to emphasize the preaching, teaching, and life of Jesus Christ as mission models for our Missionary Society and congregation.

Jesus was as an advocate for social justice during his call of the first disciples. The call of the disciples was a moment of religious and social transformation. Jesus called his first disciples to be fishers of people (Luke 5:9-11). Fishermen do not wait for fish to jump into their boats in order to make a living. However, fishermen are proactive in the business of catching the fish. Fishing was difficult work, and those who engaged in it were considered uncultured. The occupation of fisherman was one of the “most shameful occupations” according to Cicero (cf. Acts 2:7).⁴⁴ Jesus’ call of his first disciples was a liberating act of socially oppressed fishermen to become revolutionaries as disciples in the Kingdom of God.

Beverly C. Johnson-Miller, in the *Encyclopedia of Religious and Spiritual Development*, defines religious transformation as “a change in the form or structures of one’s religious being. This could include changes in a person’s religious worldview, beliefs, practices, and/or lifestyle.”⁴⁵ The teaching ministry of Jesus is an integral part of the transformation process for the believer. The gospel of Luke illustrates a radical change in beliefs and lifestyle for those who chose to follow Jesus. The disciples were compelled to leave everything and follow Jesus (Luke 5:11). Jesus calls us to leave the familiar places of our lives and to follow him to become revolutionaries in the Kingdom of God.

⁴⁴ “Fishing,” *Eerdman’s Dictionary of the Bible*, David N. Freedman ed., (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman’s Publishing, 2000), 463.

⁴⁵ “Transformation, Religious,” *The Encyclopedia of Religious and Spiritual Development*, Elizabeth M. Dowling, ed., (London, Sage Publications, 2006), 455.

According to Michael R. Russell in the *New Interpreter's Bible*, Jesus' call of his first disciples is described stating, "to this point Jesus has acted alone, unaccompanied by disciples. In the next major section (5:1–6:16), however, Jesus begins to call others to leave everything and join him in the work of the kingdom."⁴⁶ Multiple advocates are needed to balance the burden of missions and the tremendous task sharing the gospel message. Mission requires the cooperation of the entire congregation, and is not limited to the efforts of one person. The text highlights the importance of teamwork and collaboration in order to accomplish a great task. Our church needs to view evangelism as a team effort in order to improve the effectiveness of our witness to the community.⁴⁷

John L. Berquist, in *Interpretation*, argues that the key point of Luke 5:1-11 is on Jesus' teaching and not on the call of the disciples. Berquist states, "the calling of disciples is secondary. In other words, discipleship is not an end in itself; it is a means to further the teaching of Jesus."⁴⁸ Luke 5:1-11 also reinforces the importance of the teaching ministry to prepare our congregation for missions. Jesus' disciples could not be effective in their witness to others without hearing his teaching.

The phrase 'he taught' (*edidasken*) is used six times in the gospel of Luke (4:15, 5:3, 6:6, 6:40, 11:1, 13:26).⁴⁹ The root word is *didasko* which means 'I teach.' As in Luke 4:15 and 4:31, Jesus' early ministry is portrayed predominately in terms of

⁴⁶"Calling and Training Disciples," Luke, *New Interpreters Bible IX*, Michael R. Russell, ed., IPreach, 2007.

⁴⁷ Details of the increase in involvement will appear in our report and analysis in chapter four.

⁴⁸ John L. Berquist, "Luke 5:1-11," *Interpretation* 58 (2004): 62-64.

⁴⁹ "Taught," *Nelson's Complete Concordance of the Revised Standard Version Bible*, (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1957), 1880.

teaching.⁵⁰ Teaching was significantly important to the ministry of Jesus and should be significant to our church. The theological focus of the text is repentance. Peter experiences a theophany in the great catch of fish and begs Jesus to leave him. Peter's discipleship begins by repenting, and Jesus calls his first disciple by leading him to repent. The motifs of repentance and forgiveness frames Jesus' ministry; for Luke, this is how one begins to follow Jesus.⁵¹ The translation aims at the sense of *zogreo* as "capturing alive" in the sense of snaring.⁵²

Randall C. Bailey in "The Biblical Basis for a Political Theology for Liberation" states:

The text is more than a call to evangelize, but a call to a social revolution. In Amos 4, Amos tells the rich of Samaria, whom he calls the oppressor, "They shall take you away with hooks, even the last of you with fish hooks"(Amos 4:2). In this passage, fishing is used as a metaphor for the destruction of the oppressor.⁵³

Jesus' call of his first disciples was more than an evangelical appeal, but also a call to a revolutionary way of thinking and being. Jesus first disciples experienced a miraculous catch of fish in order to bring them to a radical point of belief about overcoming oppression.

The Lucan version of the Lord's Prayer (11:1-4) is theologically significant for the role of prayer in shaping community. It is important to establish the theological

⁵⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 87.

⁵¹ "Luke," *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary*, (Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys Publ, 2008), 134-135.

⁵² Luke Timothy Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1991), 88.

⁵³ Randall C. Bailey, "The Biblical Basis for a Political Theology of Liberation," *Blow the Trumpet in Zion*, Iva E. Carruthers, ed., (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 94.

importance of communal prayer as advocacy for social change. Most Christians are familiar with the Matthean form of the prayer (Matthew 6:9-15). The Greek word for kingdom (*basileia*) can be translated as royalty, rule, or a realm.⁵⁴ After he had finished praying, one of his disciples requested that Jesus teach the disciples to pray as John taught his disciples (Luke 11:1). It is plausible to conclude that John the Baptist taught his disciples to pray in a way that set them apart from other Jews, since both Mark and Q testify to how John and his disciples fasted in their own way (Mark 2:18/Luke 5:33; Luke 7:33/Matt 11:18).⁵⁵

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus is establishing the principle of that our prayers to God transcends time, place, and culture. God's kingdom does not have walls and castles as with earthly kingdoms. God's kingdom rules over the African-American, Hispanic, and White communities. The character of our church should reflect the belief in God's transcending power to transform attitudes about missions through prayer.

The familiar opening "Our Father" is recorded as "Father" in Luke's account. The address "Father" establishes the relationship that makes the rest of prayer possible.⁵⁶ The acknowledgement of God as Father establishes unity among the followers of Jesus. Prayer is a communal act. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in *Life Together*, made the following claim concerning prayer, "One who prays, never prays alone...Always there must be a second person, another, a member of the fellowship, the Body of Christ, indeed, Jesus

⁵⁴ "Basileia", Strong's Dictionary, 932.

⁵⁵ Richard B. Vinson, "On Prayer: Negative Reactions to Jesus," *Luke*, (Smyth and Helwys, 2008): 360.

⁵⁶ "Luke 11:1-4," *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary IX*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1994), 234.

Christ himself, praying with him, in order that the prayer of the individual may be true prayer.”⁵⁷ Moreover, prayer is what establishes a relationship between individuals and a spiritual power or divine.⁵⁸

Prayer has always been an important part of the African-American religious heritage. Some slaves believed that moaning, as well as shouting, was prerequisite for God’s redemption.⁵⁹ Shane White in *Sounds of Slavery*, recall the account of a prayer of Rev. Henry Ward in 1930 stating,

“Reverend Ward delivered his prayer as a chant, whose rhythmic cadences elicited voiced response from the congregation, and as he continued to pray, members of the congregation set up a supportive, collective moaning, bearing up their minister as he brought his and their supplications to their God.”⁶⁰

There has always been a strong correlation between the role of prayer and the struggle for liberation in the African-American community. Jesus’ teachings on prayer are more than mere religious ritual for our church. Jesus’ teachings on prayer also unite the community of faith together in order for the Kingdom of God become reality in the world.

Benevolence and Missions: A Watchtower and a Widow’s Offering

The term benevolence connotes altruism and kindness.⁶¹ Luke 14:25-35 illuminates the cost of discipleship in comparison to the church’s financial commitments

⁵⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (New York: Harper, 1954), 40.

⁵⁸ “Prayer,” *The Encyclopedia of Religious and Spiritual Development*, (London, Sage Publications, 2006), 349.

⁵⁹ Shane White and Graham White, *The Sounds of Slavery*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), 102.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 102.

⁶¹ “Benevolence,” *The New International Webster’s Thesaurus*, (USA: Trident Reference, 2006), 6.

to missions. This text illustrates planned giving as a theological foundation for Christian missions. Our giving should reflect God's merciful character and focus on meeting human needs. It is hazardous to take uncalculated risks in our spending toward missions and outreach efforts. Leander E. Keck, in the *Interpreter's Bible*, comments on the importance of Jesus' emphasis on wisdom and discipleship stating, "A wise man considers whether his resources are sufficient to complete a building before he lays its foundation. Otherwise he becomes an object of ridicule. A tower: the Greek word can mean an expensive building as well as a simple watchtower."⁶² Fred Craddock, in *Commentary on Luke* commented on this passage stating,

"The first parable is drawn from rural life and involves building a tower in a vineyard from which the farmer can stand watch against thieves and foraging animals. The second pictures the royal house where great issues of war and peace are settled. But rich and poor alike, royalty and peasants alike, have essentially the same decision to make when faced with a major expenditure of time, property, and life itself."⁶³

Giving your time and resources to Jesus are precious tenets of discipleship. Our discipleship must reflect the presence of God's wisdom in us as our church seeks to care for human needs, and not a selfish focus on satisfying our own desires.

The story of the widow's offering (Luke 21:1-4) demonstrates the power of sacrificial giving. Do you have to be wealthy in order to give to the church? Many people may make the simple conclusion that they cannot afford to give to missions. The widow's offering illustrates that our ability to give should not be based on financial

⁶² "On the Conditions of Discipleship," Luke, *Interpreter's Bible*, IPreach, 2007.
<http://www.cokesburylibraries.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/auth/default.aspx?libraryid=6> (Accessed February 1, 2010).

⁶³ Fred B. Craddock, "Luke 14:25-35: Teachings Concerning Discipleship," *Interpretation*, (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 182.

privilege, but a matter of knowing God will care for all of our needs because of our obedience to the principles of giving. Luke Timothy Johnson, in *The Gospel of Luke*, comments on Luke 21:4 stating, “Everything she had to live on is literally all the life (*bios*) that she had, with *bios* being understood as ‘means of subsistence as in 8:43, and 15:12.’⁶⁴ Addison G. Wright, in “The Widow’s Mites: Praise or Lament-a Matter of Context,” argues the following, “this story has received little critical attention from commentaries. The reader is left to wonder how Jesus could react so strangely to the economic condition of a widow. The story could mean that the true measure of gifts is not how much is given but in how much is left behind.”⁶⁵ Jesus honored the selflessness of the widow’s giving. Her giving was honorable because she gave out of her poverty, while others gave out of their abundance.

Other scholars have suggested that the story of the widow’s offering may be a collection of narratives of the role of women in the early church. Joel B. Green, in *New Testament Theology*, states the following

Luke portrays women as having accompanied Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem (8:1-3; 23:49, 55); why not as exercising leadership in way that break further out of expected norms? Why not a discipleship of equals? It has been suggested that Luke has thus closed the door on an earlier, more radical Jesus movement in which women were full leadership partners, unconstrained by any social mores.⁶⁶

Green, furthermore, states that such a thesis cannot be proven or disproven, but it is not unimaginable that women could have played a major leadership role in the ministry of

⁶⁴ Luke Timothy Johnson, “Debates with Leaders,” *The Gospel of Luke*, Liturgical Press, 1991, 316.

⁶⁵ Addison G. Wright, “The Widow’s Mites: Praise or Lament?-A Matter of Context,” *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 44 (1982): 256-265.

⁶⁶ Joel B. Green, *New Testament Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 143.

Jesus against the norms of the Greco-Roman world. The key action of the widow in the text is when she cast (*ebalen*) the coins into the temple treasury. According to the *Greek New Testament Dictionary*, the root word is *ballo*, and can be translated as invest or deposit (money).⁶⁷ The widow's offering was a teachable moment for anyone in the church who says that they are too poor to give anything. The widow was poor and gave everything she had to live on. Jesus' greater concern is with the quality of our faithfulness in giving and not the quantity the amount of our giving.

Commitment and Missions: A Samaritan and Witness to the Ends of the Earth

R.J. Hunter, in *The Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, defines commitment as persistence in a course of action that is meaningful and important despite obstacles, costs, or alternative possibilities.⁶⁸ The Good Samaritan story (Luke 10:25-37) establishes the theological foundation of commitment and missions. Christians are members of God's universal family. Therefore, every human being is our neighbor. Jesus told this famous parable to teach a lesson about the dangers of prejudice and the hardness of the human heart.

Luke 10:25-37 records the story that is familiar to most Christians as the Good Samaritan story. *Webster's Dictionary* defines Good Samaritan as, "1) In a New Testament Parable, the only passer-by to aid a man who had been beaten and robbed. 2) a

⁶⁷ "Ballo," *The Greek New Testament Dictionary*, 2nd ed., Kurt Aland, ed., (New York: American Bible Society, 1968), 31.

⁶⁸ R.J. Hunter, "Commitment," *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, IPreach, 2007. <http://www.cokesburylibraries.com.ezproxy.gardner-webb.edu/auth/default.aspx?libraryid=6> (Accessed February 1, 2010).

compassionate person who unselfishly helps others.”⁶⁹ The parable is prompted by a question from a young lawyer to Jesus asking, “Who is my neighbor?” (Luke 10:29) The Greek word for neighbor (*plesion*) can be translated “near to, or the one who is not my brother by blood, but whose associate or companion one wishes to become.”⁷⁰ Jesus was telling this parable to an audience who did not consider the Samaritans as their fellow countrymen. The Samaritan was the least likely person to show mercy to the man who had been beaten and robbed. The Samaritan was from a different ethnic background, but was able to express God’s merciful character to someone who had been abused and whose needs had been ignored by his fellow countrymen. The principle of the story is that neighborliness involves anyone who you are in close proximity with, regardless of their religious pedigree, physical condition, or ethnic origin. This passage has the same meaning for our congregation today. Mt. Emmanuel must revisit its notions of community and neighborliness and build relationships with people in spite of the rigid cultural boundaries.

New Testament scholars offer a variety of interpretations on the meaning of neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Robert W. Funk in *Interpretation* states, “The question of the greatest commandment was not in question at the time, but the definition of “friend”-or “neighbor”-was. It was generally agreed then that “friend” embraced fellow Jews, including proselytes, but there was some disagreement about whether it included non-Pharisees.”⁷¹ Luke Timothy Johnson, in *Interpretation*, also

⁶⁹ *The Merriam-Webster English Dictionary*, s.v., “Good Samaritan.”

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 303.

⁷¹ Robert W. Funk, “How Do You Read?,” *Interpretation* 18, 1964, 56.

suggests the following stating, “Jesus was reversing the question from one of legal obligation (who deserves my love) to one of gift-giving (to whom can I show myself neighbor); and the despised Samaritan is the moral exemplar.”⁷² Our desire to express neighborliness is a result of our belief in the merciful character of God and not a matter of maintaining strict legal categories.

The text also calls our attention to the attitudinal tendency of apathy in our commitment to help fallen humankind. Apathy may be, and often is a symptom of depression, but the two states are not synonymous. It may be part of the natural rhythm of creativity, when considerable amount of energy is followed by a period of retraction and stasis.⁷³ Could the Levite and priest have failed to help the victim because of the lack of help they did not receive when experiencing a similar tragedy? The priest and Levite would have been ritually unclean for coming in to contact with a dead or presumably dead body. These details underlie the story’s basic contrast: the pity and kindness shown by a schismatic Samaritan to an unfortunate, mistreated human victim stands out vividly against the heartless, perhaps Law-inspired insouciance of two representatives of the official Jewish cult, who otherwise would have been expected by their roles and heritage to deal with the “purification” of physically afflicted persons (Leviticus 12, 13, 15).⁷⁴ The emphasis in this passage lies in the last injunction, “Go and do the same yourself,” and if it has an interest in the Samaritan, it is simply the Lucan stress on universalism

⁷² Luke Timothy Johnson, “Rejection and Acceptance Luke 10:25-42,” *The Gospel of Luke*, (Liturgical Press, 1991): 173.

⁷³ “Apathy,” *New Dictionary of Pastoral Studies*, (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002), 24.

⁷⁴ “The Parable of the Good Samaritan,” *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV, The Anchor Bible* (Garden City: Double Day, 1985), 884.

which makes him seek out those in Palestinian society who were not the most important.⁷⁵

Martin Luther King correlated the actions of the Samaritan with the need for the universal church to act positively to resolve racial discrimination. King imagined what might have been going on in the minds of the good people who failed to stop to help the victim on the Jericho road, suggesting that they were selfishly focused on the dangers to which they may still be subjected. King once stated,

‘If I stop to help this man in need what will happen to me? But then, he said, ‘the Good Samaritan came by’. And he reversed the question, ‘If I do not stop to help this man, what will happen to him?’⁷⁶

King pressed this story to the moment of aiding the Memphis sanitation workers on the eve of his assassination. King, like the Samaritan, was committed to the justice of another fellow human being even in the context of serious danger.

God is pleased when the church responds with compassion (*splanchnizomai*) (Luke 10:33). The word implies that the Samaritan responded with comfort and mercy for the victim.⁷⁷ Our compassion for the victims of crime should reflect the same comfort and mercy that God has shown us through Jesus Christ. The theological conclusions based on this parable establish that compassion and not apathy should be the response of God’s people. This parable teaches the modern church that our commitment to

⁷⁵ Ibid, 885.

⁷⁶ Vincent Harding, “The Anointed Ones,” *African Americans and the Bible*, Vincent L. Wimbush, ed., (New York: The Continuum International Publishing, 2003), 541.

⁷⁷ “Splanchnizomai,” *The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words*, Stephen D. Renn ed., (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005), 201.

neighborliness must extend beyond the boundaries of race, gender, and social class. Our commitment to neighborliness may lead to our becoming companions in the universal family of God.

Acts 1:6-11 illustrates the importance of advancing the Christian witness beginning in our homes and extending throughout the world. This text records the ascension of Jesus. Christians are most familiar with the Matthean ascension and Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20). Jesus gave final instructions to his disciples before ascending to the Holy Father in heaven. The Luke-Acts ascension version makes specific references to ethnic/geographic regions of Israel and the world. Verse 8b indicates the plan of the book: Jerusalem/Judea (chaps 1-7), Samaria (8-9) linked to the mission of the world (10-28). Things are not changed essentially if the movement is understood as twofold-first in Palestine, then beyond.⁷⁸ The Greek word for witnesses (*martures*) can be translated as a 'martyr' or 'record.' The principle of the passage is for the disciples to know that their witness or record of the gospel will transcend geographic, ethnic, and political boundaries. Witnessing for God is about recreating the world through divine love. God desires for the gospel to be witnessed by human beings around the world.

J. Bradley Chance, in *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary*, argues the following stating, "The focus of the passage is on the witness of the disciples. The 'second coming,' or parousia, brings ultimate closure to the story of the kingdom and the gospel.

⁷⁸ Hans Conzelmann, "Jesus Farewell Speech and the Ascension," *Acts of the Apostles*, (Augsburg: Fortress Press, 1987), 7.

But that is not to be the focus of the disciples' attention. Thus, Jesus redirects their attention to the mission of being worldwide witnesses of Jesus (v.8)."⁷⁹

The current question for our church is, "how will Mt. Emmanuel carry out Jesus' commission to witness?" Will Mt. Emmanuel continue to gaze into the clouds pondering his imminent return, or will our church demonstrate the transformative power of the gospel at work in our everyday life. Witnessing requires the commitment giving our entire being to the gospel. Our lives must reflect a commitment to liberation. There must be a balance of personal piety and a commitment to creating social justice. Moreover, Mt. Emmanuel cannot witness without the power of God at work in our ministry to others.

"Power" is a key word in Lucan theology, and indicator of its consistency and transparency no less than of its difficulties.⁸⁰ God's power is miraculous and also made evident through the faithful witness of the church. God's power in the African-American witness was demonstrated through resilience to racial tyranny and oppression. The powerful witness of God's liberation in the African-American church has transformed lives and communities. God initiates the transformation process through the power of love, and our love for God is demonstrated through our commitment to share love to all humankind.

Becoming the Beloved Community

⁷⁹ J. Bradley Chance, "Acts 1:1-26," *Smyth and Helwys Bible Commentary*, (Macon: Smyth and Helwys Publishing, 2007), 37.

⁸⁰ Richard I. Pervo, "Acts 1:6-14," *Acts, A Commentary*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 42.

The church's actions must be relevant toward meeting the needs of the community. The actions of the church should not be limited to the size of the risks and challenges of everyday life, but our actions should be guided by our commitment to become the beloved community. Noel Leo Erskine, in *King Among the Theologians*, complemented some congruency between the theologies of King and Paul Tillich. Erskine states, "King's commitment to do theology was concrete/historical, whereas Tillich's was ontological/universal."⁸¹ While Tillich was regarded as one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, he did not deal with the issues concerning racial prejudice and discrimination in America. Erskine attributed this silence to Tillich's method of correlating message with human existence, but failing to deal with concrete social issues such as racial segregation. Theology must deal with Black existence, white existence, Hispanic existence, racism, sexism, and the multiple forms of exploitation which victims of oppression face.⁸²

Our church becomes the beloved community of God when by learning from the struggles of our past and act out God's justice and mercy as illustrated in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Jesus was an advocate for helping people in need (Luke 5:1-11). Jesus was a teacher who emphasized the importance of both planned and sacrificial giving (Luke 14:25-35; 21:1-4). But most importantly, Jesus was a committed revolutionary who did not allow opposition from the religious status quo nor the fears of his own followers prevent him from fulfilling God's justice in the world (Luke 24:44-49/Acts 1:6-9). Jesus remained faithful to fulfilling God's justice in the world even in the face of death. God's

⁸¹ Noel Leo Erskine, *King Among the Theologians*, (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1995), 133-134.

⁸² Ibid, 134.

resurrection of Jesus allowed the church to model his commitment to fulfilling justice even in the face of death in order for us to become the beloved community.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a martyr for social justice. He gave his life for a cause from which he did not fully benefit. Our commitment to social justice in the community is a direct reflection of our faith in God who transformed the social injustices of our enslaved ancestors. Historically, the church has been a beacon of light for affirming God's presence and acts of love in the community. . Liberation begins with our commitment to loving people so much that there is nothing that will stop us from sharing with someone who is in need of experiencing God's love and forgiveness. Our church must continue to act both mercifully and just towards building the Kingdom of God in our community and throughout the world.⁸³

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to develop a broader view of the role of black theology and social justice in the history of the African-American church. The black church should not be viewed as a single institution, but as a race of people, who under the guidance of the church took collective action in response to racism and social injustice. The story God's liberation in the life of Abraham, Jesus, and the disciples has empowered the black church toward commitment to social justice. Moreover, it must also be noted that the diverse socio-economic and socio-political affiliations of African-Americans present diverse interpretations of the role of scripture in social justice issues. Vincent Wimbush, in *African Americans and the Bible*, states,

⁸³ Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina.
www.mtemmanuel.org/mission-vision, (Accessed February 1, 2010).

The persistence of flight, formation, reformation, existential lags that are the result of enslavement-as part of what defines African American existence does not so much privilege African Americans in any absolute sense in terms of claims about the Bible; but it makes compelling the focus upon African Americans as a window onto the Bible as both a cultural product and cultural signifier.⁸⁴

Historically, the Bible has inspired the African American church toward a commitment to social justice and liberation. Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church can continue to observe the principles of black theology in order to affirm our rich cultural heritage and create justice for African-Americans and all people in our community.

⁸⁴ Vincent L. Wimbush, "Introduction: Reading Darkness, Reading Scriptures," *African-Americans and the Bible*, Vincent L. Wimbush, ed., (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2003), 28.

CHAPTER FOUR

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF TRANSFORMATION OF ATTITUDES AND MISSIONS

This chapter will present the following four areas of critical evaluation to measure the outcomes of our ministry project: my role as pastor and facilitator, the overall participation of the Missionary Society, the overall participation of the general congregation, and evaluation of project goals. The methods of this project followed the conventions of action (or pro-active) research. Action research places a high priority on the power of knowledge production, social improvement, and participant involvement.¹ According to Peter Reason, in the *Handbook of Action Research*, action research is described in the following statement, “It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities.”² The focus of the project was to transform our church’s practices from non-missional to missional in order to empower our congregation to commit to social justice in our community (Greenline-Spartanburg).

Evaluation of My Role as Pastor and Facilitator

On April 16, 2010, I will celebrate ten years of service in the gospel ministry. I have often said to many friends and colleagues, “My best years in ministry have been

¹ Thomas A. Schwandt, “Participatory Action Research,” *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, 2nd edition, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 187.

² Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury, *Handbook of Action Research*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 1.

during enrollment in seminary.” My studies in the Doctor of Ministry program are commensurate with this belief. Each seminar I completed prior to the beginning of the project helped me to evaluate my personal strengths and weaknesses during the course of the project. The most important seminar I completed during the Doctor of Ministry program was on conflict resolution with Dr. Doug Dickens. During the seminar, I used an assessment instrument titled *The Power Base Inventory* by Kenneth W. Thomas. The *Power Base Inventory* assesses the techniques one uses to influence others. Influence is the ability to get others to do what you want them to do by altering their beliefs or behavior.³ Thomas identified the following six power bases: information, expertise, goodwill, authority, reward, and discipline. In this assessment, I discovered that my influential strengths were information and expertise (90% and 80% respectively).⁴ However, my weaknesses were goodwill and reward (20% and 15% respectively). Further assessments during the conflict seminar showed a strong correlation between my Myers-Briggs personality type (ENTJ) and my strong emphasis on the power of information to influence others. The *Power Base Inventory* helped me to develop a keen awareness of how our participants would respond to my biases toward the power of information during the course of the project.

My participation during the project consisted of three primary roles: preacher, teacher, and project director. I created survey tools that were designed to help me to gain a better understanding of my effectiveness as a pastor. I wanted to provide as much

³ Kenneth W. Thomas, *The Power Base Inventory*, (Tuxedo, NY: Xicom, 1991), 1.

⁴ Ibid, 9. Scores are graphed in relation to the scores of 317 managers from a variety of organizations.

information as possible for the congregation to influence our involvement toward resolving serious social problems that were affecting the community. My assumption was that our congregation lacked basic information about the nature of the issues affecting our community. The sermons and training exercises were designed to inform and evaluate the responses of our project participants concerning our proposed involvement in the resolution process. Our training exercises had specific concerns with addressing crime and ethnic diversity in the community.

The following analysis evaluates the influence of my preaching during the ministry project. The purpose of each sermon was to inspire our participants to learn more about missions and to motivate them toward community action through our congregation. (Note Table 4.1 that reflects responses from project participants from the project sermons).

Table 4.1 Were you inspired and motivated to learn more about missions by the preaching of this sermon?

Sermon Title	“Yes,” Sermon Inspiring	“No,” Not Inspiring	Total Responses
We Need Help	23	0	23
We Need to Pray	17	0	17
We Must Count the Cost	11	0	11
We Can Give	13	0	13
We Can Help	10	0	11; 1 did not answer

We Are God's Witnesses	4	1	6; 1 did not answer
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My sermons shared information to increase congregational awareness about social justice issues (such newspaper articles and police reports) affecting the Greenline-Spartanburg community. The intention of the sermons was to change their attitudes from negative to positive about practical mission involvement in our community. The sermons were based on the assumption that our congregation had little knowledge about the needs and issues of the residents of the community. Furthermore, these assumptions were based on my previous observations of low participation and commitment from the congregation to both Bible study and Missionary Society meetings. I wanted to encourage the Missionary Society and the overall congregation to develop a vibrant commitment to wider community care with special emphasis on social justice issues.

My role as preacher during the project was highly effective because 98.7 per cent of the participants said that the sermons motivated them to learn more about missions.

Table 4.2 indicates the responses of the survey participants.

DATE	SERMON TITLE	YES	NO
9/13/2009	WE NEED HELP	23	0
9/20/2009	WE NEED TO PRAY	19	0
9/27/2009	WE MUST COUNT THE COST	11	0

10/4/2009	WE CAN GIVE	13	0
10/11/2009	WE CAN HELP	11	0
10/18/2009	WE ARE GOD'S WITNESSES	5	1
	PERCENTAGE	98.7%	1.3%

On September 13, 2009, a total of eighteen participants completed the pre-test and twenty-three participants completed the post-tests. The objective of the sermons was to help our congregation to learn more about missions. On Wednesday, October 21, 2009, I conducted an interview with our church leadership, and I asked them to explain how the sermons had impacted their interests toward missions in the community. According to a conversation I had with seventeen members of our church leadership, the previous two pastors had not consistently addressed the crime and changing ethnic diversity of the community in their sermons. Social justice and cultural awareness were new concepts to the congregation insofar as being addressed from our pulpit. The sermons were successful because they introduced new information to our congregation about community issues that we had not previously addressed collectively as a congregation.

The sermon surveys were an insufficient resource for evaluating attitude changes in missions for three reasons: I discovered a high adult illiteracy rate within the congregation, low participation numbers in completing surveys, and I observed a lack of consistency between survey data and the oral comments made by project participants. The following table illustrates the adult education levels within our congregation.

Table 4.3 illustrates the adult education levels of our active membership (Total active adults: 146).

Gender	No HS Diploma	HS Diploma	Some college	At least bachelor's degree
Male	9	25	1	3
Female	24	75	3	4

Approximately 22 percent (33 of 146) of our adult population do not have at least a high school diploma. According to the *South Carolina Education Attainment Rankings*, Greenville County ranked 39th in the state with persons age twenty-five and older without a high school diploma (20.5%).⁵ According to the *US Bureau of the Census*, in 2006, African Americans scored 19.3 per cent compared to 13.9 percent for whites nationally.⁶ After discovering the high adult illiteracy issues within our congregation, I began to simplify the surveys to make them more reader friendly. However, this modification did not increase the participation or clarification of the participant responses on the surveys. I concluded that for future congregation surveys, I would need to proctor the distribution and read them orally in order to reduce the anxieties from our participants about reading capabilities and reading comprehension.

There was very low participation in completing the pre-tests and post-tests sermon evaluations from both the Missionary Society members and the general

⁵ www.ors2.state.sc.us/chapter1/countyrank6.php. This data came from the South Carolina Statistical Abstract and from the US Census dated April 1, 2000. (Accessed March 1, 2010).

⁶ Table 3.34, Educational Attainment, persons 25 years old and older, 2000 and 2006, *Black Americans: A Statistical Sourcebook 2008*, (Woodside: Information Publications, 2008), 157.

congregation. Table 4.4 notes the participation from the Missionary Society and the overall congregation during the sermon evaluations.

Date	Pre-test	Post-test	Missionary Society
9/13	18	23 (+5)	10 (-16)
9/20	37	17 (-20)	9 (-17)
9/27	12	10 (-2)	7 (-19)
10/4	8	13 (+5)	6 (-20)
10/11	13	12 (-1)	8 (-18)
10/18	8	5 (-3)	3 (-23)

The lack of survey participation limited the amount of necessary feedback that I needed to measure a change in attitudes. The intent was to pre-test and post-test the entire Missionary Society (twenty-six members) and test a random sample of five males and five females from the overall congregation. There was a negative variance of minus fourteen from the overall survey responses.

There were also strong contradictions between the data written on the surveys and oral data gathered from personal observation while the participants were completing the surveys. For example, in question #4 of each sermon evaluation, participants assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the preacher (1 being the lowest and 5 as the highest) in the following categories: presence of God in the preacher, purpose of the message, and passion to motivate the people. Our objective was to have each of the twenty-six Missionary Society members and a random sample of five male and five female non Missionary Society members complete the surveys. We never received more than

thirteen Missionary Society surveys from each pre-test and post-test. It was even more difficult to find five male and five female non Missionary Society members to stay for ten minutes after service to complete the post-tests. For the participants that did remain to complete the surveys, I observed them hurry through the surveys and circling the responses so they could leave. For surveys that were completed and legible, I received a 5 ranking in over 90 per cent of the responses for the category 'passion to motivate the people.' The written responses were overly generous and positive, but the facial expressions and oral responses about completing the surveys were consistently negative. Therefore, the total number of survey responses did not provide enough information to measure the attitudes of our two target groups: the Missionary Society and the general congregation.

There was a lack of consistency between the survey data and the oral comments from the project participants following the sermons. For example, the data from the sermon evaluations reflected an overall positive measure of responses in attitudes about missions. However, I observed three of our church leaders complain stating, "All of this writing shouldn't be necessary." According to the *US Congregations Survey*, worshipers with the most education (master's or other graduate degree) are more likely, and the least education (high school diploma or less) are a bit less likely to work on social service activities than are those with a bachelor's or associate degree. Gender, being employed, and having children at home are not related to whether worshipers volunteer through their congregation to help others.⁷ There was a high correlation between the lack of higher

⁷ <http://www.uscongregations.org/pdf/community.pdf>, "How are worshippers involved in the community, US Congregations Survey, 2. (Accessed February 1, 2010).

education within the church and the negative attitudes about education. This is also part and parcel because of the low education attainment of the former church pastors. For example, I am the first pastor (out of twenty-one) within the one hundred and thirteen year history of the church with an earned and accredited master's degree. Our church has seven active adults within our congregation with at least a bachelor's degree (including my wife and myself). These findings were helpful towards identifying people that could recruit and tutor for our adult education programs.

I discovered that immediate action was needed toward creating education partnerships with adult literacy and secondary education programs. I spoke with officials at Furman University, and United Ministries (a GED service provider in Greenville County) about offering GED classes to our congregation. It is imperative that we increase our sensitivity toward the need for creating educational opportunities for our congregation because I desire to see an increase in volunteerism within our church. Data from the *US Congregations' Survey* reflects that there is a strong correlation between education attainment and volunteerism. Our intention is to increase our commitment to education with the expectation of increasing our commitment to volunteerism.

The second role I participated in during the project was as a teacher. I prepared and conducted six training exercises to increase our congregation's knowledge about missions and social problems in the community. My objective was to improve our participants' knowledge that would inspire volunteerism for our FOCUS celebration on November 14, 2009. Note Table 4.5 that indicates the participant responses concerning the effect of teaching toward their commitment to volunteerism during our final training session titled "Follow Jesus," held on Wednesday, October 21, 2009.

Table 4.5 Were you inspired to volunteer for the FOCUS outreach celebration on November 14, 2009?

Response	Yes	No
Number of Responses	19	3
Total Responses	86.3%	13.7%

I experienced some challenges correlating the data from the survey instruments to the intellectual efficacy of the congregation. I discovered a temporary decline in attendance during the Bible study training sessions. I also discovered that at least twenty of our participants were discouraged about completing surveys and handouts simply because they could not comprehend them. For example, there was a large variance (minus fourteen) in the number of pre-tests and post tests completed in comparison to the total attendance during the training exercises. The largest variance (minus 12) of participation was on October 21, 2009. There were a total of 35 in attendance for the training, but only 28 completed the pre-tests and 23 completed the post-tests. I observed many frowns, walk outs, and grumbles each week as the surveys were distributed. I often heard at least three participants saying each week, “Why do we always have to do all of this writing?” Another participant commented during our lesson “Ministry Costs”, “If I knew we had to do all of this, I could have stayed at home.” The surveys did not capture the myriad of the negative attitudinal responses. Through further research, I learned that the two former pastors either did not teach Bible study (1969-2000), or lectured during the entire session (2000-2008). I had raised the expectation level for our participants during Bible study. They now are expected to do advanced reading, engage in open

discussion, and write down information about the lesson. I attributed the negative responses to two major factors: a psychological adjustment our church was making to the changes in pastoral teaching and leadership style, and the lack of a positive mood about education from a large measure of our congregation. According to Gerd Bohner, in *Attitudes and Attitude Change*, mood primes evaluatively similar contents. Bohner further states, “In several studies participants were more likely to recall happy memories when they were happy than sad and vice versa.”⁸ If our congregants will continue to have happier experiences when learning and about missions, they will be more likely to respond positively during Bible study lessons about missions. Phil Erwin, author of *Attitudes and Persuasion*, argues that the primary factors towards attitude change are intelligence and self-esteem. Erwin states:

Intelligence and self-esteem have both been implicated in affecting the balance between reception of (attention and comprehension of a message) and yielding to (actually being persuaded and retaining the message in memory) a persuasive communication. With higher levels of intelligence and self-esteem, recipients are more likely to attend to and understand the messages attempting to persuade them. But they are also more likely to question and resist persuasion attempts.⁹

A renewed focus on empowerment through cultural and religious education increases the probability of a higher self-esteem for African-Americans, and commitment toward community action.¹⁰ According to oral history shared during our “Help is Here” training session, Mt. Emmanuel had only two previous intentional mission efforts within the community within the last forty years. Intentional mission education and outreach were

⁸ Gerd Bohner and Michaela Wanke, *Attitudes and Attitude Change*, (East Sussex: Psychology Press, 2002), 98.

⁹ Phil Erwin, *Attitudes and Persuasion*, (East Sussex: Psychology Press, 2001), 101-102.

¹⁰ Kenneth Henry, “Reconstruction for the Twenty-first century: the Witness of the Church to African-Americans in Higher Education,” *Journal of the ITC* 32, (Fall-Spring 2004-2005): 192.

relatively new concepts for our congregation. Some negative and even ambivalent responses are expected during the transition from a traditional family-oriented church to a missional learning-centered church.

The survey instruments reflected overall positive responses to the teaching style I demonstrated during the project. However, they were insufficient for ascertaining the real attitudes our congregation had about missions. Mt. Emmanuel averaged thirty-three participants in attendance for the six training sessions. The surveys provided insufficient data because at least twenty of our participants could not comprehend the surveys, and the other thirteen simply sped through the surveys to get them over with. I made some adjustments to the surveys by reducing the number of questions from twelve to five in the pre-tests and post-tests. This was primarily due to a significant number of our membership (thirty-three, 22%) who did not have at least a high school diploma. The low level of adult education exposed my methodological flaw in effort to gather data during the project. I learned that I should have conducted more interviews with our congregation, instead of relying heavily on the survey instruments to collect data. The interviews would have provided more opportunities for open-ended responses from our participants for discussion on the history of their commitment to missions.

My teaching was effective because of a consistent commitment to innovation and accommodation of our congregation's learning styles. I made adjustments during the project to accommodate the literacy problems of our participants, such as creating group activities that emphasized teamwork and problem solving skills. The instruction was also effective because of my commitment to introduce information about community issues, and space was allowed for our participants to identify solutions. During our project

training session “Ministry Costs,” the participants worked in four groups to identify solutions for community service and action. There were a total of four groups with consisting of ten people. Two of the four groups responded that emergency relief or material assistance (food, clothes for the needy) should be the primary service from our church for the community.¹¹

My role as project director was effective because my primary focus was to lead by example. I made an intentional effort to attend every Missionary Society meeting, Bible study, and scheduled special meetings with Missionary Society members during the course of the project. It was difficult to ascertain the commitments of the Missionary Society members and congregation based on five hours of observation (Sunday school, morning worship, and Bible study attendance) per week. I would often hear that their participation was limited due to work schedule conflicts and health problems. However, I learned that those were the cases for only ten of our twenty-six Missionary Society members. At least thirteen of our twenty-six Missionary Society members are retired or unemployed.

There were basic failures in communication about the scope of the project. Eight of our project introduction letters were in the mail (see Appendix A.1). These letters were returned because updated addresses on our church membership were not available. As a result, our membership contact forms were revised to include e-mail addresses so that additional contact could be maintained through e-mail. I also submitted the names of

¹¹ Cynthia Woolover and Deborah Bruce, *A Field Guide to U.S. Congregations*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 59.

the returned letters to our deacons' ministry and assigned each cluster leader to make contact with each member to update the addresses.

My objective as project facilitator was to provide our congregation with the best information I felt that they would need in order to participate in the project. I was able to achieve this objective based on the information that I had from our church leadership. The purpose of the training exercises was to increase awareness about community needs and issues with the expectation of improving our commitment toward community care. The project was successful to this effort because our participants indicated an attitude change during a written post-evaluation of the final training session "Follow Jesus." A total of twenty-three of participants responded that the information helped them become more aware of the needs of the community.

The Overall Participation of the Missionary Society

The overall participation of the Missionary Society was fair throughout the project, but there were many areas that needed improvement. The first area that needed the most improvement was the commitment to completing the pre and post test for the sermon evaluations (see Table 4.4). There was an average of seven Missionary Society members who completed our post-sermon evaluations (no more than ten, and as few as three) following morning worship. This was an average of 26 per cent (seven out of twenty-six total members) of our total Missionary Society membership. I observed a consistent pattern of frowns and grumbles when I asked for them to stay for ten minutes following the service to complete the surveys. At least half of them stated that they did not know that they needed to complete the surveys 'every' Sunday following the

sermons. This response troubled me because I explained the importance of the surveys to them for three consecutive months during the Missionary Society meetings prior to the ministry project. Our missionaries did not complete the surveys simply because they were in a rush to get to their cars and go to their respective destinations. I did not conclude that the length of our worship service (one hour and thirty minutes) contributed to their haste because our twenty-six Missionary Society members are normally the last ones to leave the parking lot each Sunday.

During my project research, I discovered that information is not the only factor toward facilitating change. According to Amitai Etzioni, in *Studies in Social Change*, both internal and external forces influence social change. Etzioni further stated:

The four universal functional problems are: the need of a system to control the environment, gratification of the system's goal, maintenance of solidarity among system's units, and reinforcement of the integrity of the system's value system and its institutionalization.¹²

Etzioni's model helped me to further evaluate Mt. Emmanuel's potential to influence change in the community. I discovered four things as a result of using this model. First, prior to the inception of the ministry project, Mt. Emmanuel had very little control over the problems that occurred in the community. The long history of crime was an example of our lack of control over external forces that affected the community. Second, Mt. Emmanuel did not have any written and up-to-date mission goals prior to the beginning of the ministry project. The church constitution was a reprint from a standard Baptist administrative manual, and it was not specific to the cultural nuances of our

¹² Amitai Etzioni, *Studies in Social Change*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1966), 10.

community.¹³ As a secondary result of the project, I discovered that a revision of our constitution will be necessary to reflect the role and responsibilities of our Missionary Society. Third, there was very little maintenance and oversight of the mission activity of the church. The Missionary Society operated independently from other groups within the congregation. Little or no information was reported orally or in writing to the overall congregation concerning the outcomes of mission efforts. Fourth, I had a limited and inadequate staffing to reinforce the importance of missions. As a result, Mt. Emmanuel hired a full-time bilingual administrative assistant to increase the integrity of our church's intentions to reach out to the Hispanic community in Greenline-Spartanburg. As another secondary result of the project, I also registered and completed an Intermediate Spanish course through Furman University during the project. Our commitment to change was a process of creating a balance of applying useful information and establishing leadership integrity in order to become effective in missions.

The second area that needed improvement for the Missionary Society was an increase in their commitment to attend the training exercises. There was an average of nine Missionary Society members attend the weekly training sessions during Bible study each week (no more than fourteen, and as few as five). This was an average of 34 per cent of our Missionary Society membership. There were four Missionary Society members that did not attend any of the training sessions, nor the FOCUS celebration. If our Missionaries intend to encourage others to be committed to missions, they also must demonstrate a commitment to mission education as well.

¹³ Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina.
http://www.mtemmanuel.org/myadmin/file_upload/files/CONSTITUTION%20AND%20BY-LAWS.pdf.
 (Accessed March 1, 2010).

I learned that I needed to be more empathetic in my preparation toward the Missionary Society because there were a variety of reasons for their lack of attendance. The three primary reasons were health issues (four members), work schedule conflicts (three members), and transportation issues (three members). Procedural patience is a key component toward creating harmony and teamwork. Floyd Massey, in *Church Administration in the Black Perspective*, states the following:

Exercising procedural patience, the newly called minister, tempering all behaviors with consideration for what has been, must moderate and control the compelling temptation to change everything. This point is essential. Academic preparation alone will not guarantee success, for the black church, though tending toward almost unanimous desire for a trained leader, may be suspicious of the seminary-trained upstart.¹⁴

It is important that I establish a genuine rapport with our Missionary Society as I encourage them to critically engage in missions. I expect our Missionary Society to have a better response to my leadership as they observe a better commitment on my behalf to listen to their needs and concerns.

My basic conclusion was that the overall congregation lacked a commitment to mission education because of a lack of commitment to learning by the Missionary Society. I cannot expect the congregation to follow an example for commitment that is not demonstrated by the very group that is organized to lead our mission efforts (the Missionary Society). I scheduled a follow-up meeting with the Missionary Society president to address the lack of commitment to training from the Missionary Society members. She stated that the problem could be resolved by providing training during our Missionary Society meetings on the second Saturday of each month. This would

¹⁴ Floyd Massey, Jr. and Samuel Berry McKinney, *Church Administration in the Black Perspective, Revised Edition*, (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 2003), 46.

accommodate the attendance of four of our members who have work schedule conflicts during the week, and who otherwise could not attend any of the training sessions.

Our Missionary Society also set outreach and ministry goals for the upcoming year. This helped create an incentive for more involvement from each member of the Missionary Society. Our conclusion was that more activities needed to be created to ensure that each member could commit to a specific mission task. Mt. Emmanuel created a food pantry and clothing bank to create opportunities for more volunteerism from our Missionary Society members.

The efforts of the Missionary Society did bring a tremendously positive outcome by helping to increase the mission offering during morning worship for our ministry project. Our strategy was to position the Missionary Society as advocates for increasing mission contributions to their peers within the congregations. Each week during the project a different member of the Missionary Society would make an appeal to increase contributions to the congregation during morning worship. The congregation responded positively with an average weekly mission offering of \$162.96 for the month of December. This was a fifty-four per cent increase compared to the weekly average from the second quarter of 2009 (Mar-May indicated an average of \$86.56 per week).

I had a personal goal to compare our commitment to social justice and community care to churches with similar demographics. I discovered through research during the project that commitment to social justice and community care are not high priorities for most U.S. congregations. According to Cynthia Woolever, in *A Field Guide to U.S. Congregations*, reaching those who do not attend church and wider community

care/social justice emphasis ranked fifth and sixth (16 and 15 per cent) when asked which of the following aspects of this congregation do you personally most value?¹⁵ This data was applicable to our project for two reasons:

- 1) Social justice emphasis was low at Mt. Emmanuel because our Missionary Society members had no previous training experience in missions prior to the project.
- 2) I attributed the lack of participation primarily to the newness of the project's goals and the work schedule conflicts from four of our Missionary Society members.

Mt. Emmanuel was making strides to make missions a high priority by rescheduling missionary training during the monthly Missionary Society meetings. We expect participation to increase as we develop training sessions that help accommodate the diverse schedules of our Missionary Society.

At the conclusion of the project, I learned that I depended too heavily on the traditional meeting schedules of the Missionary Society to engage and collect information about the attitudes about missions. Mt. Emmanuel, historically, has been a pastoral and clergy-centered congregation. I should have been more sensitive to the relational culture of the church to make home visits and phone calls to measure the attitudes of the Missionary Society. It was unfair of me to assess their commitment to missions wholly upon their commitment to complete surveys, attend monthly meetings, and to participate in the FOCUS celebration. As a result, I plan to be more intentional in making personal

¹⁵ Cythia Woolever and Deborah Bruce, *A Field Guide to U.S. Congregations*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), Figure 7.1, 73.

contact with the inactive members of the Missionary Society in order to strengthen our collective commitment to missions.

The Overall Participation of the General Congregation

The overall participation of our congregation was average during the ministry project. There was an average of twenty-four non-Missionary Society members who attended the Bible study training exercises during the week, and there was a total of eighty-nine church members register during the FOCUS celebration (79.2 % of our active membership including Missionary Society members). I expected to see an increase in a commitment to volunteerism from the overall congregation as a response to awareness about the ministry project. According to Frank McGuckin, in *Volunteerism*, volunteerism is defined in the following statement,

Volunteerism is recognizing that a need exists and responding to that need out of one's own initiative; it is not an act of following a certain mandate dictated by an authority. In response to the needs of society, volunteers give not only material things but also service, time, and energy.¹⁶

I discovered during my project research that few people volunteer in their communities through their place of worship. According to Rodney Stark, in *What Americans Really Believe*, seventy-one per cent responded 'none', and fourteen per cent responded 'one-two hours when asked about how many hours per month do you volunteer for your place of worship?',¹⁷

¹⁶ Frank McGuckin, "Society's Responsibility and Commitment," *Volunteerism* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, Inc., 1998), 1.

¹⁷ Rodney Stark, *What Americans Really Believe*, (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2008), 42.

According to the following survey question “How Are Worshipers Involved in the Community,” in the *U.S. Congregations*:

Worshipers in smaller congregations (under 100 in worship) are more likely to assist in services to help people in need (62% do), than are worshipers in mid-size congregations (100 to 350 in worship; 58% do) or those in large congregations (with more than 350 in worship; 38%).¹⁸

It was important for us to evaluate the difference between our participants actually volunteering and attending the FOCUS celebration. There was a negative correlation between the number of people who signed up to volunteer (forty-one) and the number of people who actually volunteered (seventeen). Volunteers were given four weeks prior to the project to sign up in at least eight volunteer categories (see appendix C.4). Again, as with many of our project sessions, the participation was less than fifty-percent of our target group’s population. I observed the other twenty-four pre-registered volunteers arrived to the event to eat their meals, or even to prepare to-go plates and then leave after about only thirty minutes of participation. I concluded that our expectations needed to be clearly defined before expecting specific outcomes for our volunteers. This will help to reduce uncertainty in the future about the expectations of responsibilities for our volunteers.

In conclusion, as a result of the data recorded during our project, the basic course of action for our congregation is to develop a training and recruitment calendar for the Missionary Society. Our congregation did not previously have a structured program where volunteers are recruited and trained consistently. The data from this project will be used to help recruit and structure our Missionary Society as the volunteer training

¹⁸ <http://www.uscongregations.org/pdf/community.pdf>, Findings from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey, 2. (Accessed March 1, 2010).

ministry for our church. This will also help to increase the membership of the Missionary Society. Our church will encourage all of our new and existing members to become members of the Missionary Society through recruitment at our new member orientation class during Sunday school. This class will be taught by our Sunday school superintendant who is also a member of the Missionary Society.

The data from Stark's research helped me to understand why so many of our FOCUS celebration participants (approximately one hundred) stayed for less than two hours of our seven hour community event. The peak hours of attendance were from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. (which happened to be when the food was being served). Many of our participants came to register, eat, fellowship, and then left the event. There was a total of one hundred and seventy-six persons register for our FOCUS celebration, but only seventeen of our members actually volunteered during the event (9 per cent). Out the one hundred seventy-six people who registered, twelve were non-member volunteers from the greater Greenville community. Mt. Emmanuel was able to register sixty-five non members for the event. The data that was collected gave us keen insight concerning the social and spiritual needs of the participants. As a secondary result of our project, three participants informed us that they had already accepted the Lord and they wanted to know more about our church.

Mt. Emmanuel was able to gain more concrete information about the social location of our congregation relative to meeting the needs of the community. Table 4.7 indicates the correlation of our membership living inside and outside of our community.

Category	Living Inside	Living Outside	Total Average in

	Community	Community	Worship (Mar-Dec 2009)
Count	14	117	131
Percentage (%)	10.6	89.3	100

Our geographic and social dislocation contributed greatly towards our lack of sensitivity to the needs of the community. Mt. Emmanuel is a walk-to church for 10% of our active membership and a drive-to church for 89% of our active church membership. At least sixty of our adult members grew up in the community, but eventually they moved away after starting their own families.

Crime in the community has been a problem for the last fifty years and it does not appear to be on the decline. According to Deb Wyatt, crime analyst for the Greenville Police Department, our police beat (FOX) had the second highest crime case volume in the third quarter of 2008 (721 reported cases) and the third highest in the third quarter of 2009 (737 reported cases).¹⁹ That means that a crime is reported in or near our community every three hours. The high crime in Greenline-Spartanburg was illustrated during the project training sessions to emphasize our need to become involved in a positive way in the community. Our church will continue to meet with our city councilwoman Ms. Jil Littlejohn in order to resolve the crime issues in the community. Mt. Emmanuel is committed to becoming part of a neighborhood watch program. As another secondary result of the project, our fourteen members who live in the community have also increased their attendance to the quarterly neighborhood association meetings.

¹⁹ Wyant, Deb. Crime Analyst, *Greenville Police Department*. Greenville, South Carolina. 2009.

It was difficult for our church to increase sensitivity to the needs of a community where there was little meaningful contact with or awareness of the people who lived there. The project helped us revisit our understanding of God's purpose for blessing the church with the gospel message. Our basic premise is that God is personal and is concerned about the needs of people. To refer to God as personal then, is not to say that God is a person, nor that God is less than person, for God is the source of personal, and therefore carries within himself the ontological power of personality.²⁰ Our church wanted to build healthy and personal relationships with the community based on the principles of the gospel. Our focus during the project was to share a message of love, hope, and care for the community. Our church sought to establish some healthy and just relationships with our community members. The intense suffering of our community called for collective compassion and care from our congregation toward serving human needs. The sermons and Bible study lessons during the project motivated our congregation to act with compassion and concern toward the community, regardless of race, gender, or linguistic differences.

I discovered that this motivation from the congregation was primarily due in response to my pastoral authority. During our final preparation meeting on Friday, November 13, 2009, I asked our church leadership, "Why are we having the FOCUS celebration?" After about fifteen seconds of silence, one female Missionary Society member responded cautiously and stated, "To lead others to Christ." There were fifteen total leaders in the meeting, but the rest of the leadership was silent (and seemingly

²⁰ Rufus Burrow, Jr., *God and Human Dignity*, (Notre Dame, Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 108-109.

indifferent) following her comment that emphasized our need to evangelize in the community.

Our congregation observed that I was committed to the process, and therefore they followed my example of commitment. Mt. Emmanuel has not had enough time to develop their understanding of the principles of altruism and volunteerism in the community. They participated in the project mainly because ‘pastor said so,’ but they left the project with a higher consciousness of the need for missions. The greatest indicator of this was the fifty four per cent increases in the mission offering from the second quarter to the fourth quarter of 2009. Table 4.8 records the average weekly mission contributions from March-December 2009.

Month	Amount	Month	Amount
March	\$67.84	August	\$131.21
April	\$114.00	September	\$129.13
May	\$77.85	October	\$100.80
June	\$77.62	November	\$163.42
July	\$100.47	December	\$162.96

I discovered the need to for our congregation to be proactive in building relationships with the community in order to reduce the occurrences of crime in our community. This is why the climax of our project featured an intentional mission event called our Faithful Outreaching Christians United to Serve (FOCUS) in Community Celebration. The purpose of the celebration was to re-introduce the community to our congregation. The event was successful because at least twenty of the community

residents who registered were completely unfamiliar with the members and leaders of our congregation. Our Missionary Society president shared a comment from one community member stating, “I didn’t think you were from the church down the street. I thought that was an uppity church!” The FOCUS celebration was the woman’s first time interacting with any member of our congregation, while she only lived six houses down the street from our church.

I discovered at our FOCUS celebration that our adult literacy problem was not merely an internal issue within our congregation, but it is also a problem within the community. Our Missionary Society reported at least a dozen of our participants who registered needed someone at registration to complete the form for them because they could not comprehend the forms. As a result, I spoke with Mrs. Janet Robinson, director of the David Hellams Community Center about hosting GED classes at the community center. As another secondary result of the project, our church plans to assist Mrs. Robinson with helping our community residents to register for these GED courses.

Evaluation of Project Goals

Our project goals were designed to address the three areas of our project to create transformation toward missions: advocacy, benevolence, and commitment. The first project goal was to increase our Bible study attendance from an average of forty people per week to sixty-five per week. Our church was unsuccessful in reaching this goal. There was an average attendance of 33.7 people per week during the six training sessions. I believe Mt. Emmanuel was unsuccessful in reaching our goal for two reasons:

- 1) Our 12 p.m. weekly Bible study was postponed during the course of the ministry project. There was an average of fifteen people per week during our 12 p.m. Bible study

prior to the beginning of the ministry project. These fifteen persons were unable to attend our evening training sessions due to health or driving restrictions.

2) I discovered that our emphasis on increasing involvement in the community actually discouraged participation in our Bible study training sessions. For example, there was a net gain of zero for the overall Bible study attendance during the project. Table 4.9 notes the overall attendance for the training sessions.

Date/Topic	Total Attendance	Net Gain/Loss (+/-)
9/16- Help Is Here	35	-
9/23- Prayer Changes People	40	+5
9/30- Ministry Costs	37	-3
10/4-Everybody Counts	28	-9
10/11-Help Somebody	23	-5
10/18-Follow Jesus	34	+12

The net zero increase was an improvement compared to our Bible study attendance during April and May of 2009, which reflected a net loss of minus eleven over the course of six lessons (Note Table 4.10).

Date	Total Attendance	Gain/Loss (+/-)
4/1	40	-
4/8	29	-11
4/22	34	+5
4/29	21	-13
5/13	21	-
5/20	29	+8

The emphasis on group interaction and activity-based learning was discouraging for at least ten of our participants. Three females approached me during the project and stated that the surveys and activities were difficult for them because they either never attended (one female) or never finished high school (two females). I had seven participants comment that they would not have come to the training sessions if they knew that so much writing was involved. I discovered that throughout the last forty years of the church, my two predecessors either did not teach Bible study or simply lectured for one hour. According to a discussion during a meeting with seventeen members of our church leadership, there was no time given for participants to ask questions about the lesson. I now have enough oral and written information to develop a strategy for improving our participation in Bible study. The focus of each lesson will be on participant action and not solely on the actions of the pastor. My role will be to light a flame of inspiration as the teacher and not to fill minds with Bible trivia. I will also continue make careful efforts to accommodate the diverse learning needs of our congregation. Our church will develop a range of learning activities that will not exclusively consist of writing exercises.

I discovered during the project that our low Bible study attendance compared to morning worship attendance was not a regional anomaly. I interviewed eight pastors within the community and throughout the region to find out if any pastors had a Bible study attendance that was at least fifty percent of their morning worship attendance. Table 4.11 records the average worship and Bible study attendance during 2009 for the following pastors.

Pastor Name	Church Location	Avg. Worship Attendance	Avg. Bible study Attendance
Gary Grogan	Chesnee, SC	320	125 (39%)
Leonard Griffin	Charleston, SC	175	37 (21%)
Roderick Cummings	Newberry, SC	210	30 (14%)
Montez Kaufman	Marshville, NC	110	30 (27.2%)
WC Honeycutt	Seneca, SC	95	30 (31%)
Dale Sutton	Greenville, SC	180	75 (41.6 %)
Brenda Washington	Greenville, SC	60	25 (41.6 %)

As a result of the interviews, I learned that none of the pastors reported a Bible study attendance that was at least fifty per cent of their morning worship attendance. Our attendance during our ministry project (33.7) was twenty-five percent of our average morning worship attendance for 2009 (131). While our church did not reach the quantitative goal of sixty-five per week in Bible study, the quality of information that was collected about attitudes about mission education was invaluable; particularly concerning the oral history from the church leadership that highlighted that pastoral instruction during Bible study was a relatively new congregational phenomenon. Our church is prepared to implement a training strategy that will invite leaders to host Bible study sessions in their homes to add a personal touch to the teaching ministry.

Our second project goal was to increase our weekly mission contributions from an average of \$75.00 per week to an average of \$125.00 per week. We were successful in achieving this goal by increasing the weekly mission offering to an average of \$131.12 (There was also a slight increase in operations income from September \$13, 670 to \$13, 736 in October). Mt. Emmanuel was successful in reaching this goal for two reasons:

- 1) The Missionary Society members were empowered by implementing a “Mission offering appeal” during the morning worship services. Beginning in September of 2009, each member of the Missionary Society made a special appeal each Sunday for the congregation to give more to missions. This enabled the congregation to see who our missionaries were, and it expanded the number of spokespersons who reinforced the importance of giving to missions beyond the pastor and Missionary Society president.
- 2) The second reason I believe that there was an increase was because of the two training sessions on benevolence and missions. Note Table 4.12 that illustrates some of the comments made by our participants in the post-lesson survey titled “Ministry Costs!”

Table 4.12

Were you inspired to learn more about missions by participating in this Bible study lesson?

We should let others know that we care	This was a motivating lesson.	We need to go out into the community and share more love and about the gospel.	I want to do more to rebuild our church and our community. We are all a part of one body.	Always willing to learn.
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When you learn more you can help others with their problems.	There is always something to learn.	I love to help people and to learn about missions.	This lesson awakened my awareness to the needs of the community.	This lesson moves the church closer to mission-minded ministry.
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These responses were from ten of our twenty-six post tests that were completed following the lesson. The responses were positive reinforcement for the future use of activity based Bible study lessons.

Our third project goal was to increase the membership of the Missionary Society from nine members to thirty members. Mt. Emmanuel reached a total of twenty-six members by the end of the project (86 per cent of our goal). I believe that the membership increased because of the awareness of the project combined with the efforts of the Missionary Society to recruit new members. Our new Missionary Society members became involved almost immediately with preparation for our project. Two of our new members managed our clothing bank during our FOCUS celebration. Our church donated a total of fifty items of clothing and four bags of food to ten families at our FOCUS celebration. Our new Missionary Society members were able to invite members of the community to our event. Their membership in the Missionary Society gave us the opportunity to build new relationships within the community.

The total responses from our final two project surveys were insufficient. Our church only received eight surveys from our volunteers that evaluated the FOCUS project, and there were six Missionary Society members complete the Missions post-test

surveys. I believe that I would have received more responses if I had made personal contact with each Missionary Society member stressing the importance of the surveys.

The ministry project was an overall success because it made a definite increase in the awareness for advocacy, benevolence, and commitment towards missions in our congregation. The membership of our Missionary Society increased from nine to thirty members, and the mission contributions increased from an average of \$86.56 per week during the second quarter of 2009 to \$131.12 per week during the ministry project. I consistently emphasized during the project that when God blesses us, we are to bless others by increasing our commitment to witnessing for Christ in the community. Our church is already working to combine our annual church picnic with another FOCUS community celebration in June of 2010. Our church is now revisiting the usage of vacant properties owned by our church to serve the adult education and ESL learning needs within the community.

There were both positive and negative factors discovered during the project. The positive factors were the increases in contribution to missions and increases in membership to the Missionary Society. Our FOCUS celebration featured many services that created forward movement toward resolving community issues: a clothing bank, health screenings, blood drive, employment opportunities, and our church registered as a member of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. The negative factors were the attitudinal responses from some of our participants that reflected apathy about our ability to reduce the occurrences of crime and poverty in the community. I know that Mt. Emmanuel can continue to make a difference as long as our church continues to focus on fulfilling God's

mission and not realizing our self-centered agendas. Lives were changed for the better and we have begun to develop a new identity of a mission-minded church.

The ministry project helped me improve my listening and communication skills as a pastor. As a new pastor of Mt. Emmanuel, my ability to listen to the needs of our congregation will help me to understand when to introduce new information about community issues. Goodwill was an identified weakness of mine from the assessment in the *Power Base Inventory*. According to Kenneth W. Thomas, goodwill is based the feeling of support and respect that the manager has built with team members.²¹ There is a correlation between goodwill and empathy in pastoral leadership. I observed that while social justice and community care is a high priority for me, it will not become a high priority for our congregation overnight. In conclusion, I would like to include a quote from Michael Slote in *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*. Slote states, “Empathy involves having feelings of another (involuntarily) aroused in ourselves, as when we see another person in pain.”²² I learned that I need to pay more attention to the personal pains of our congregation in order to motivate them to care for the wider needs of the community. As pastor, I must support our congregation through careful in-reach before expecting a commitment to outreach in the community in order for Mt. Emmanuel to become wholly a missional church.

²¹ Kenneth W. Thomas, *The Power Base Inventory*, (Tuxedo: Xicom, Inc, 1991), 15.

²² Michael Slote, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy*, (London: Routledge), 2007, 13.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: CREATING A STRATEGIC PLAN AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This chapter concludes with the overall goal of the ministry project which was to transform attitudes and commitment to missions at the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church. The primary goal of the project was achieved, and a major secondary outcome of the project was the creation of a strategic plan for missions with specific goals and objectives that expanded upon data discovered during our project. The attitudes about missions changed among the members at Mt. Emmanuel because of their repeated exposure to mission messages persuading them to increase commitment during sermons, Bible study, and small group meetings. In general, our participants became more ‘mission-minded’ as a result of repeated cognitive responses to increase their knowledge about how God has liberated the church toward involvement in missions.

Project Summary

Our congregation entered this project with limited collective experience with mission involvement in the Greenline-Spartanburg community. The purpose of the project was to transform attitudes about missions through teaching the ABC’s of missions (advocacy, benevolence, and commitment). I established three primary goals for this project under the following subheadings:

- 1) Advocacy: to increase the number of members in the Missionary Society from nine to thirty people.

- 1) Benevolence: to increase the average weekly mission offering from \$75.00 to \$125.00.
- 2) Commitment: to increase weekly Bible study participation from forty to sixty-five people.

The research method of the project was designed to empower our congregation's mission activity and was based upon the principles of action-research. The sermons and training exercises were a linear training process designed to fix the mission inactivity of our church. Our congregation reached 86.7 per cent of our first goal by increasing the Missionary Society membership from nine to twenty-six people. Membership increased primarily through internal recruitment strategies from existing Missionary Society members toward members within the congregation. Our congregation exceeded the second goal by increasing the average weekly mission contributions from \$75.00 to \$131.12. Contributions increased primarily as a result of the Missionary Society members making weekly mission offering appeals during Sunday morning worship. Our congregation did not achieve the second goal, and actually experienced a decrease in Bible study participation. This was primarily due to the postponing of our 12:00 p.m. Bible study during the course of the ministry project (there were approximately 15 people who only attended 12:00 p.m. Bible study and could not attend the 7:00 p.m. session due to health reasons or work schedule conflicts). Our 12:00 p.m. Bible study was reinstated at the conclusion of the project to accommodate the scheduling demands of our church membership.

Our project also presented several secondary outcomes beyond the initial project goals. First, our Missionary Society has now created a sustainable partnership with Loaves and Fishes to operate a food pantry within our church for the needy families of our community. Second, our finance committee has responded to the increase in mission awareness and presented a projected increase in missions in the 2010 church budget. On January 12, 2010, our church adopted a budget that featured a \$4,000 annual increase in projected contributions to missions (from \$1,000 to \$5,000). Our church budget now illustrates missions as a distinctive category within a three category budget (operations, missions, and building fund). This distinctive category (also previously not identified in past budgets) was created in order to maintain consistency with our financial practices (our missions account has always been a separate account from our operating expense account). Third, the data from our project produced sufficient information that helped us to create a strategic plan to assess and evaluate our future mission practices. Table 5.1 illustrates the project goals with primary and secondary outcomes.

Table 5.1 Summary of Primary and Secondary Outcomes of Ministry Project.

Goal	Outcomes	
	Primary	Secondary
1. Increase Mission Advocates (from 9 to 30 members)	26	Food pantry established
2. Increase Mission Benevolence (from \$75 to \$125)	\$131.12	Missions now distinctive section of church budget
3. Increase Mission Commitment (from 40 to 65)	33.7	Strategic plan created to assess and evaluate future mission practices

The theological rationale of God's liberation through personal and communal faith helped us to revisit the historical contributions of the church's role in missions and social justice; particularly in the African-American (black) church. Historically, Mt. Emmanuel had great efforts of community action and care: an open door clinic, a community day care, and an admirable neighborhood clean-up campaign. I knew about some of these programs before the beginning of the project, and some others I learned through discussions with church leadership during the project. Our congregation learned that in the past God had empowered Mt. Emmanuel to witness to the oppressed, and our church was able to reflect upon the significance of the former service of the community through the years. The declining age of a long-tenured pastor, a radical change in the style of pastoral leadership, and significant ethnic/cultural changes within the community led to the declined emphasis on social action within the congregation in recent years. My service as a new pastor gave us the opportunity to re-evaluate our role as God's servants toward community care in the Greenline-Spartanburg community. Our strategic plan emerged as a formal statement of our goal to advocate for justice and serve the community.

My Personal Growth as a Minister

I had a number of positive learning experiences as a result of the ministry project. One of the most significant was the intermediate Spanish course I completed at Furman University during the project. The course helped me to increase my command of Spanish and also helped me to understand the diverse dialects of Spanish around the world. I also

participated in a Diversity Leadership Initiative (DLI) at the Riley Institute at Furman during the project. This course was the result of a community scholarship I received and was not directly related to my commitment to the ministry project. I was able to dialog with many community leaders from diverse backgrounds and religious creeds during the leadership course. I became more aware of the need to be globally conscious and culturally sensitive as a result of completing the course. As a secondary result of my completing the DLI course, our congregation also developed a partnership with Mrs. Adela Mendoza and the Alliance for Collaboration with the Hispanic Community (ACCH). This partnership helps us to schedule ESL courses at our church this fall to serve the members of the Hispanic community in Greenline-Spartanburg.

The *Power Base Inventory* had previously revealed my influential strengths of information and expertise. My influential weaknesses were goodwill and reward. I discovered that there was a strong correlation between my influential strengths and my selection of action research as my project research method. Action research values the power of information to reduce problems. I assumed that I was the mission information expert within my congregation; however, I discovered that needed to work harder in helping our congregation feel that missions was a team effort. This means that I need to create opportunities for more mission dialogues, and have less mission debates and discussions.¹ Our congregation had multidimensional ties to the three social problems (drive by shooting, and two robberies) that were highlighted during the project. Fourteen of our members are still living in the community and knew the residents of the homes

¹ Julia Sloan, *Learning to Think Strategically*, (Oxford: Elsevier, 2006), 106. Dialogue is define as to explore and search. Discussion is defined as to establish or fix. Debate is defined as to defend or argue.

who were targeted during the drive-by shooting. I needed to show greater sensitivity to the emotional concerns of our congregation. As a methodological flaw of the project, I discovered that interviews would have been more effective than the use of surveys to capture the attitudes of our congregation about community issues. I learned that an improvement of my listening skill helped my congregants feel that they are understood when facing serious challenges.

I intend to register in a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program with the Greenville Hospital System as a result of needing to improve my empathy skills in pastoral leadership. I know that my congregation needs good information in order to be empowered, but they also need a good cooperative relationship with me as their pastor in order to achieve a commitment to wider care for the community. I was challenged to revisit a comment from a classmate from seminary when reflecting on the project. He stated, “People don’t care about how much you know until they know how much you care.” I care enough about my congregation to sit down with them and listen to their fears, desires, and determinations concerning our congregation’s role in the community.

Creation of Our Strategic Plan

There were two primary sources used to create our strategic plan in addition to the data collected during our ministry project. According to John M. Bryson, in *Strategic Planning for Public and Non Profit Organizations*, “a strategic plan should answer three major questions: where are you, where do you want to be, and how do you get there.”²

The where we are in the strategic plan addresses a shift from Mt. Emmanuel as a pastoral

² John M. Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Non Profit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement*, 3rd ed., (New York: Josey-Bass, 2004), 5.

church (50 to 150 average worship attendance) to where we want to be as a healthy program church (150 to 350 average worship attendance). According to Roy M. Oswald, in *Discerning Your Congregation's Future*, “a congregation is an effective Christian community when proclamation, community development, and service are present elements.”³ Our average worship attendance for 2009 was 131 per week during morning worship. We averaged 149 in June and 143 in November respectively (see Appendix B.4).

The focus of our strategic plan is our vision statement. Our vision is recorded as following statement,

“Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church is passionate about proclaiming the transformative power of the gospel of Jesus Christ through demonstrating the power of love, learning, and liberation. Our goal is to transform and train each member to become faithful missionaries at home, in their communities, on their jobs, and throughout the world.”⁴

The key words of our vision statement are love, learn, and liberation. We see transformation as a learning process by which faith in Christ is demonstrated through creating healthy relationships. Mt. Emmanuel believes that receiving God's love gives us an opportunity to learn how to apply divine love through human relationships. Our congregation believes that when our church applies God's love through relationships;

³ Roy M. Oswald, *Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach*, (The Alban Institute, 1996), 132.

⁴ Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina. www.mtemmanuel.org/mission-vision, Our mission and vision statements were introduced during our Pastor's Address during our church business meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2010. (Accessed February 1, 2010).

liberation becomes a reality. Lives are transformed because of the connection unbelievers develop with God through God's church.

Our mission statement is recorded as follows:

"The mission of our church is to give visible form to the faith and fellowship to which God has called His people. We acknowledge ourselves to be a local manifestation of the universal church through which Jesus Christ continues to minister to the world by the work of his Holy Spirit. We shall seek to fulfill his calling through corporate worship services, a program of Christian nurture, by which our members may be built up in their faith and love, through proclamation to human need in the name of Jesus Christ. We desire to teach and demonstrate careful service to the community through outreach to youth and families. Our members are trained to serve the most common community needs such as providing food and clothing for youth and families."⁵

Our project helped us to develop a SWOT analysis in order to plan for the growth of our church (see appendix C.1). Our greatest discoveries during the project were revealed during a close examination of our administrative procedures. I discovered a large inactive membership (over 100 people) and an ingrown fellowship had developed within our congregation. Mt. Emmanuel will remain a pastoral size congregation if our church does not develop intentional outreach relationships as developed during our ministry project. The primary contingencies for church growth are based upon our commitment to develop new relationships and to maintain adequate administrative support. Our church needs keep accurate records of membership contact information and needs in order to care properly for our congregation.

We desire to become a church that grows out of the necessity for high quality personal relationships with the pastor to be substituted with multiple avenues for spiritual

⁵ Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina. <http://www.mtemmanuel.org/mission.php>. Our ability to build relationships with youth and families is a key component of the plan's success. (Accessed February 1, 2010).

growth.⁶ Our participants shared that they would like to see us develop an adult education program, as well as a food bank and clothing ministry for the community. These ministries are needed because our Missionary Society distributed fifty items of clothing to five families during our FOCUS celebration. Our Missionary Society also distributed two-hundred and twenty plates for the community during our Thanksgiving community dinner. Our church needs to establish a sustainable missions program to manage the daily distribution of a food and clothing ministry. The adult education component will consist of ESL courses for our Hispanic community residents, as well as GED classes for our congregation and community residents seeking to further their education. A scholarship incentive has been created to build a growing audience for continuing education. These programs will be managed by our Missionary Society president and Christian education director respectively. Once our active worship attendance exceeds two hundred, our church will add a part-time staff coordinator to manage the food and clothing programs. Our strategic plan will use surveys posted on our web site, church blog, and to be distributed through our administrative office in order assess attitudes toward community action and needs (see Appendix C.4).

Core Values

1. We believe the Kingdom of God comes through receiving God's transforming love and grace in Jesus Christ.
2. We become committed to the Kingdom of God by learning the power of Jesus' love through discipleship.

⁶ Oswald, 150.

3. We belong to God's universal family and therefore we must liberate others who are in need according to our faith in Jesus Christ.

Strategic Priorities

Our first priority is to grow in our love for fulfilling God's mission. Mt.

Emmanuel needs to maintain an intentional focus on missions, evangelism, and outreach within the Greenline-Spartanburg community. Mission means that our church has been 'sent' by God to carry his message of love and forgiveness to the world. Every Christian is essentially a missionary, and therefore our church is obligated to invite the world to follow Jesus. Mt. Emmanuel encourages each of our members to worship the Lord and develop a deeper spiritual relationship so that our church can share with others the power of experiencing the grace and love of Jesus Christ. Sincere worship increases the value of our relationship with God (John 4:24). Let us grow in grace through worship and with an attentive ear to the preaching of the gospel. Our goal is to increase our average worship attendance from an average of 131 to 175 per week. Mt. Emmanuel seeks to accomplish this goal through a passionate commitment to worship and hearing the preaching of the gospel.

Our first objective in reaching our first goal is to grow in our outreach to the un-churched. Each member is encouraged to witness to a friend, relative, associate, and neighbor this year (FRAN). Mt. Emmanuel hopes and prays that each of these people in our lives will develop a closer relationship with Jesus. Each of us will write down the name of a friend, relative, associate, and neighbor that may not know Jesus as Savior. Our church members will turn in these names to the administrative office and pray for these persons to have a relationship with Christ (Romans 10:1). Our members will then

invite them to attend church with us, and they may possibly become fellow disciples in Jesus Christ.

Our second strategic priority is to grow in our learning about God's giving. Mt. Emmanuel needs to increase our giving in both tithes and mission offerings. Our church must be aware that all that we have comes from God. Our church is aware of the economic challenges our world is facing, but we need to address the current economic challenges as tests of faith and not tragedies. These tests are opportunities to grow in our giving and in faithful service to God's church. If our members love God, we should not give grudgingly to his church. God is waiting for us to answer the call of faithful ministry to a hurting community. Our church must feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and give sight to the blind as we continue to fulfill God's mission (Luke 4:18-19). God's mission cannot be fulfilled without faithful financial support from the church. Our church was successful in increasing our mission giving during the FOCUS project from an average \$75.00 per week to \$131.00 per week. Our goal is to increase our mission giving to an average of \$200.00 per week, and our tithe to an average of \$4,000.00 per week. Our increase in giving will be as a result of our deeper spiritual relationship with God.

Our second objective that will enable us to reach our second goal emphasizes growth in our passion for learning. The objective will focus on leadership training and building strategic relationships with community leaders. Our church is scheduled to meet with our elected officials on Saturday, March 13, 2010 to discuss our plans to transform and bring positive change to this community. Our church needs to increase our sensitivity to the presence of the Hispanic population in this community. The full time

service of a bi-lingual administrative assistant will help us in our quest to serve the community in earnest. Each member needs to commit to a continuing education effort that will enhance your knowledge of stewardship and finance. Our church will host a King and Queen contest on April 10, 2010, to begin building an endowment for higher education for all learners. I am committed to providing our church with information and connecting everyone with resources that will help us reach this goal.

Our third strategic priority is to grow in our commitment to liberation. We need to increase our commitment to Christian education so that we can bring positive change in this community. God wants us to learn the power of the gospel so that it can be a lived reality in our lives and in the lives of everyone around us. The world should be a better place because of our commitment to live out the freedom of the gospel. Our church has been freed from the power of sin through God's grace. Our church should also desire for everyone to experience God's freedom through Jesus Christ. Our goal is to increase our Bible study attendance from an average of 40 per week to 75 per week. Mt. Emmanuel seeks to increase our Sunday school attendance from 45 per week to 80 per week through an intentional focus on liberation of the mind through learning the power of the gospel. We believe that knowledge of God's love gives power and new meaning to life. Mt. Emmanuel will begin offering a new member's class that will teach three sessions on the *ABCs of Evangelism*.⁷

⁷ Stan Toler, *The ABCs of Evangelism*, (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press), 2002. The ABC's of Evangelism gives guidance not only on sharing your faith but also on altar counseling, networking, and more. All the materials are completely reproducible, so you'll have everything you need to teach a class the ABC's of Evangelism.

Our third objective for reaching our third strategic priority focuses on growth in our fellowship and respect for each other. We cannot desire to see others free if we have not experienced God's freedom ourselves. We will share our testimonies about experiencing God's love this year in order to build trust among each other in our commitment to share the gospel. Peter encouraged the church to keep growing in their understanding of Jesus Christ in spite of the evil forces that to challenged them (2 Peter 3:17-18). We will host two leadership training workshops this year titled "Passion for Leadership." This training will focus on conflict resolution and developing effective communication skills. Leaders will be encouraged volunteer the hosting of a training session in their home. Our objective is to increase our fellowship in order to build trust in our mutual commitment to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

APPENDIX

Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church

Rev. Tony Boyce, M.Div., Pastor

Deacon Calvin Pepper, Chairman
Deacon James Brown, Treasurer
Helene Goodjoin, Minister of Music



Organized
1896

Trustee David C. Mitchell, Clerk
Trustee Pam Sims, Financial Secretary
Mary Garces, Administrative Assistant

August 21st, 2009

Dear church member,

I greet you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The purpose of this letter is to encourage your participation in our mission outreach project. The project is titled "Transforming Attitudes and Commitment to Missions at the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina". The goal of the project is to increase the commitment to outreach within our congregation in the Greenline-Spartanburg Community through mission education.

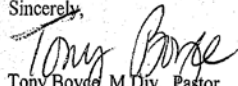
This project is a major part of the Doctor of Ministry degree program at Gardner-Webb University. I am scheduled to graduate at the completion of the project in May 2010, but our mission will not be completed, we still have work to be done for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our work will never end because we have a lot of lives to teach the word of God, not only in Greenville, South Carolina but, throughout the world.

Our project has three goals:

- 1) Advocacy: to increase Bible study participation from 40 per week to 65 per week or more.
- 2) Benevolence: to increase our financial contribution during Sunday mission offerings from \$75.00 per week to \$125.00 per week or more.
- 3) Commitment: to increase the membership and volunteerism in the Missionary Society from 9 to 30 members or more.

But let's not forget that the real reason for this project is to save lives for Jesus thru his disciples. Our project will officially begin on Sunday, September 13, 2009. We will be having some "Spanish Phonic Lessons" so that if we need to speak with someone in Spanish, we at least know how to hold a basic conversation and not be afraid. The project will conclude on Saturday, November 14, 2009 with a Community Celebration that will be held at the David Hellams Community Center between 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Please help this project be a success for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by offering your prayers and your participation. The Lord needs you. The mission of our church is to testify to the gospel of Jesus Christ and serve the needs of humanity. Jesus said, "Go and do likewise". Luke 10:37 NRSV. We know that God will lead our church to making a meaningful impact in this community. I am excited about the transformation that is about to take place. The Lord thanks you for your participation and I as well thank you in advance for your cooperation, support and prayers.

Sincerely,


Tony Boyce, M.Div., Pastor

"All Glory Be To God"

316 SPARTANBURG STREET, GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA 29607
PHONE (864) 232-5152 • FAX (864) 232-5161 • www.mtemmanuel.org

**Transforming Attitudes and Commitment to Missions at the Mt. Emmanuel
Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina**

Date _____

Participant # _____ **Missionary Society Member?** _____ **Yes or** _____ **No**

Instructions: This survey will be used as a pre-test to assess your understanding of Christian missions at the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church. This is a voluntary ministry exercise, and your name will be kept anonymous during process and results of this ministry project.

1. I am: a. male b. female
2. I am: a. single b. married c. separated d. divorced e. widowed
3. In which of the following represents the year were you born:
 - a. Before 1945 b. 1945-1964 c. 1965-1984 d. 1985-present
4. My highest level of education completed is:
 - a. High school b. associates degree c. bachelors degree d. master's degree e. doctoral degree f. none of the above
5. I currently: a. rent b. own my own home c. live with other relatives d. other _____
6. Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your Christian faith?
 - a. I am not a Christian, so the questions does not apply.
 - b. I do not talk about my faith, my life actions are sufficient.
 - c. I find it hard to talk about my faith in ordinary language
 - d. I mostly feel at ease talking about my faith and do so if it comes up
 - e. I feel at ease talking about my faith and I readily seek opportunities to do so
7. Which of the following best describes your understanding of how to become a disciple of Jesus Christ?
 - a. Attend morning worship regularly.
 - b. Attend Bible study regularly.
 - c. Having family members who are Christian.
 - d. Admitting that you are a sinner, believing that God forgives sin, and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.
 - e. I am not sure.
8. Which of the following experiences helped you to understand your answer to question #7?
 - a. Sermons preached during morning worship service.
 - b. Reading lessons during Bible study.

- c. Reading Sunday school lessons.
 - d. Instruction from family values.
 - e. All of the above.
 - f. None of the above.
9. How often do you pray for and with members of the Christian faith?
- a. Very often, at least once per day
 - b. Often, at least once per week
 - c. Not often, maybe once per month
 - d. I seldom pray for and with members of the Christian faith.
 - e. I am not sure.
10. Which of the following Biblical passages records a version of the Lord's Prayer?
- a. Psalm 23
 - b. I Chronicles 4:9-10
 - c. Luke 11:1-4
 - d. Luke 22:42
11. Which of the following best describes the place where you learned the Lord's Prayer?
- a. At home with my family.
 - b. I heard it preached in a sermon during morning worship.
 - c. I learned the Lord's Prayer during Bible study.
 - d. I am not familiar with the Lord's Prayer.
 - e. I am not sure.
12. Which of the following Biblical passages records a story about "counting the cost" before building a tower?
- a. Genesis 12:1-4
 - b. John 3:16
 - c. Matthew 16:17-19
 - d. Luke 14:25-31
 - e. I am not sure.
13. Where did you learn to locate the answer to question #12?
- a. I learned from my family.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
14. Which of the following Biblical passages records a story about a widow who gives an offering at the Temple?
- a. Genesis 15:1-4
 - b. I Samuel 17:41-45
 - c. Joshua 6:20-25

- d. Luke 21:1-4
 - e. None of the above.
15. Where did you learn your answer to question #14?
- a. I learned it from my family.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
16. Which of the following passages records the story of the “Good Samaritan?”
- a. Daniel 6:6-8
 - b. I Kings 18:41-46
 - c. Luke 10:25-37
 - d. Matthew 24:45-51
 - e. None of the above.
17. Where did you learn your answer to question #16?
- a. I learned it at home.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
18. Which of the following passages records the story of Jesus’ ascension to heaven?
- a. John 12:32
 - b. Luke 2:41-52
 - c. Mark 16:14-18
 - d. Acts 1:6-9
 - e. None of the above.
19. Where did you learn your answer to question #18?
- a. I learned it at home.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
20. Which of the following do you believe to be most helpful to your growth as a Christian missionary?
- a. Hearing sermons during morning worship.
 - b. Study the Bible during Bible study.
 - c. Hearing sermons and studying the Bible during Bible study.
 - d. Private prayer and devotion at home.
 - e. None of the above.
21. Please briefly explain your answer to question #20:
-

-
-
22. Which of the following best explains your desired commitment to learning about missions during this ministry project?
- a. I plan to hear all six sermons, attend six Bible studies, and volunteer for the outreach project on Saturday, November 14, 2009.
 - b. I plan to hear the sermons during morning worship and volunteer for the outreach project on November 14, 2009.
 - c. I plan to attend the six Bible study lessons and volunteer for the outreach project on November 14, 2009.
 - d. I plan to attend the Sunday morning lessons only.
 - e. I plan to attend the Bible study lessons only.
 - f. I plan to volunteer for the outreach project on November 14, 2009 only.
 - g. None of the above.
23. Please explain the reason for your answer to question #22:
-
-
-
24. Which of the following best describes your understanding of the most important need of the Greenline-Spartanburg community?
- a. Winning lost souls for Jesus Christ.
 - b. Housing development and neighborhood clean-up programs.
 - c. Employment development and financial education programs.
 - d. Youth programs and youth development.
 - e. I am not sure.
25. Which of the following best describes your past commitment to sharing the Christian faith to members of the Greenline-Spartanburg community?
- a. I shared my faith in Jesus in the community members independently.
 - b. I have shared my faith in Jesus through a ministry in our church.
 - c. I am not aware of any reason I should share my faith in Jesus to the members of this community.
 - d. I am not sure.
26. Which of the following best describes your commitment to giving money to mission needs?
- a. I give money each week during mission offering in morning worship.
 - b. I give money directly to the person who is in need.
 - c. I do not give money during the mission offering.
 - d. I give money to our church mission offering, but through other mission charities outside of the church.
 - e. None of the above.

27. Did you receive a letter informing you about the upcoming mission education project?

- a. Yes
- b. No

28. Are you a Christian?

- a. Yes
- b. No

29. Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church

- a. Yes
- b. No

30. Please share any comments you have describing what you hope to learn during this mission education project:_____

WE NEED HELP!

Luke 5:1-11

I. Introduction

- A. God has blessed me with tremendous opportunities to tell others about Jesus. I received the opportunity to travel the world at a very young age. In 1995, I traveled with our college gospel choir to the Virgin Islands to fellowship and encourage people to follow Jesus. In 1996, I traveled to Paris, France to sing the gospel, learn another culture, and again share the Good News of God's love. I was also fortunate to lead a community outreach celebration in Clinton, SC for over thirteen years. All of these experiences in sharing the gospel and serving the community would not have been possible if I had not learned two valuable lessons: I needed God's help and the help of other Christians to make these powerful experiences possible.
- B. God wants every Christian to be passionate about learning and living out the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Christians must be genuine advocates for helping make the world a better place!** Christian missions will not be experienced by the world if it is not carried out by the humble service of God's church. The church must fully depend on the teaching of Jesus in order to be successful in missions. We live in a time where our communities are hurting. There are more Black and Latino men in college than there are in prison. Listen to this information from the SC Commission for Minority Affairs:
1. The Cradle to Prison Pipeline campaign is a national and community crusade to engage families, youth, community leaders and institutions and those in power in

every sector in the development of healthy, educated children. The Campaign advances policies that put children on track to productive adulthood and opposes those that criminalize children at younger and younger ages.

"A Black boy born in 2001 has a 1 in 3 chance of going to prison in his lifetime and a Latino boy has a 1 in 6 chance of the same fate."

The *Children's Defense Fund's Cradle to Prison Pipeline*® is a national call to action to stop the funneling of tens of thousands of youth, predominantly minorities, down life paths that often lead to arrest, conviction, incarceration and, in some cases, death. Race and poverty are the major factors underpinning the "pipeline". the problems, policies and systems that feed the pipeline are a result of human choices:

- lack of access to health and mental health care
- child abuse and neglect, lack of quality childhood education
- failing schools, zero tolerance school discipline policies
- unsupported community institutions
- neighborhoods saturated with drugs and violence
- a culture that glorifies excessive consumption, violence and triviality
- rampant racial and economic disparities in child and youth serving systems
- tougher sentencing guidelines
- too few positive alternative to the streets after school and in the summer months
- too few positive role models and mentors in the home, community, social and cultural life

We created the "pipeline" and we have the power, knowledge and will to dismantle it. The need is urgent!

2. The church must work together to make a positive impact in the lives of hurting people. We cannot be effective in missions unless we express a genuine desire for God's help and a serious commitment to help each other. Webster defines help as to assist or aid; to relieve. **We need help!**

II. Text (How do we get help?)

1. **Listen to Jesus.** (V1- to hear (*akouo*)-understand)- In order for the church to tell others about Jesus, we must first listen to what he has to say. Sometimes I didn't want to hear what Jesus had to say. After making several mistakes in life, I realized that he was trying to teach to know God's love me so that he could help me love others. Jesus wanted Peter's boat to be used as a tool for sharing the good news of God's love. The world is a better place when people hear the gospel of God's love.
2. **Learn to share with others for Jesus.** (V 7-to come and help (*sullambano*-catch, conceive) them. Evangelism is not an individual effort. We need to work together as a team to effectively witness to others. Peter needed the Jesus' help to find the fish, and the help of James and John to catch the fish. Isolating the work of ministry will consume us, and possibly drown us. Jesus wants the church to learn to share God's blessings with others so that we can be tools for demonstrating God's love. The world is a better place when Christians work together.

3. **Leave everything and follow Jesus.** (V 11-left everything (*ephiemi*) to send forth (forgave). We effectively share the gospel when we carry around less baggage. We are often guilty of carrying around heavy unforgiving hearts and financial debt. Jesus helped Peter catch more than enough fish to care for his family so that he could follow him. Peter was trying to send Jesus away, but Jesus wanted him to follow him to build a meaningful relationship. We can make room in our lives to share the gospel when we know that our families are taken care of financially and spiritually. We can better serve God when the cares of money are not distracting us. Our communities are hurting primary because of economic depression. The world is a better place when people can follow Jesus without worrying if God will provide money for the journey.

III. Conclusion

Following Jesus will involve uncertain risks. We will have to listen to Him above the popular opinions of society and friends. Asking God for help is not popular in a world where people believe that they have all of the answers. Asking God for help requires patience and humility from the heart of every believer. We also must have open space in our hearts for sharing God's blessing with others. God does not want to grow a selfish church. The church must learn to share our financial and intellectual blessings with the hurting people of our community. The church also must leave everything behind and follow Jesus. Following Jesus often requires us to make tremendous sacrifices. We will continue to face challenges in everyday life. We can more effectively meet the challenges if we eliminate the numerous distractions in our lives that prevent us from focusing on Jesus. **We cannot effectively follow Jesus on our own, we must be willing**

to ask God for help. Confess to God in prayer that you need His help to effectively follow Jesus. Peter could not effectively follow Jesus until he repented of his sins. The first step to discipleship is admitting that you are a sinner. Admitting that you have sinned is the best way to ask God for help, and the best way to help others hear the gospel. You are not the only sinner saved by grace! Others who know of God's forgiveness are called to share with you in the service of discipleship. Don't be too prideful to trust God to grow our church. Don't be too shameful to work with others. We need to work together to bring about positive change in a hurting world. Children are dropping out of school, joining gangs, and going astray. Men are walking away from their families. Crime is on almost every corner in our neighborhood. Only the church can share the good news of God's saving power through Jesus Christ. Jesus came to share good news. Good news changes the lives of hurting people. There is power in the blood of the Lamb! Issac Watts said it best, O God our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home. We must look to the hills from whence comes our help, all of our help comes from the Lord! We need to trust God and each other in order to be effective in ministry. Don't be afraid to ask! We need help!

Story

A man from the big city was enjoying a relaxing drive in the country when a dog ran in front of his car. He swerved to miss it but lost control of his car and ended up in a ditch. After a few unsuccessful attempts to get his car out, the man sat on his bumper and waited for help to arrive.

He didn't have to wait long. A farmer who lived just down the road came to his aid with a big, powerful-looking horse.

The man watched as the farmer hitched the horse to the car's bumper. When the rope was secure, the farmer yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull!" But the horse didn't move.

Then the farmer yelled, "Pull, Buster, pull!" But the horse didn't move.

Next the farmer yelled, "Pull, Coco, pull!" But the horse still didn't move.

Finally, the farmer said, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" And the horse dragged the car from the ditch with very little effort.

The motorist was appreciative-and a little curious. "Why did you call out four names when your horse only responded to one?" he asked.

The farmer smiled. "Oh, Buddy is blind," he explained, "and if he thought he was the only one pulling he wouldn't even try!"

Just like Buddy, we need other people to bring out the best in us. As the Scripture says, "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12). That's why God created us to be part of a community, part of a family, part of the church.

It's very difficult to live the Christian life alone. It can be done, but like the verse says, one can be overpowered. The devil will find you easy prey. When you have others who are standing with you-even though they are not physically present-you can draw strength and encouragement from their prayers and support. **We all really need each other.**

Mission Information Form**Date** _____

Name _____ Preferred Name _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail address _____

My ministry interests and positions are (i.e. Sunday school, Missionary, VBS, usher, etc):

Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church: _____ yes _____ no

Date/year joined: _____

I joined by: _____ Letter _____ Christian Experience _____ Baptism

I was a baptized believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: _____ yes _____ no

Date _____ Place _____ Officiating Minister _____

Optional Information:

Date of Birth: _____ - _____ - _____ (MM/DD/YY)

Occupation _____ Employer _____

☐ Student _____ School _____☐ Married (Date: _____) Spouse _____☐ Children (list names and birthdays)

1. Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your Christian faith?

- f. I am not a Christian, so the questions does not apply.
- g. I do not talk about my faith, my life actions are sufficient.
- h. I find it hard to talk about my faith in ordinary language
- i. I mostly feel at ease talking about my faith and do so if it comes up
- j. I feel at ease talking about my faith and I readily seek opportunities to do so

2. Which of the following best describes your understanding of how to become a disciple of Jesus Christ?

- f. Attend morning worship regularly.
- g. Attend Bible study regularly.
- h. Having family members who are Christian.
- i. Admitting that you are a sinner, believing that God forgives sin, and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.
- j. I am not sure.

3. Which of the following experiences helped you to understand your answer to question #2?

- g. Sermons preached during morning worship service.
- h. Reading lessons during Bible study.
- i. Reading Sunday school lessons.
- j. Instruction from family values.
- k. All of the above.
- l. None of the above.

Post-Sermon Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Are you a Missionary Society Member? a. Yes b. No

Sermon Title: _____ Sermon Text: _____

1. I am: a. male b. female
2. Are you a Christian? a. Yes b. No
3. Did the sermon inspire you to pray with and for members of the body of Christ?
a. Yes b. No
4. How would you rank the delivery of the sermon with respect to the following things with **1** being the lowest and **5** being the highest ranking?

a. Presence of God in the preacher	1	2	3	4	5
b. Purpose of the message	1	2	3	4	5
c. Passion to motivate the people	1	2	3	4	5
5. Were you inspired and motivated to learn more about Christian missions by the preaching of this sermon? a. Yes b. No

Please explain:

ADVOCACY AND MISSIONS: LESSON #1

Lesson Plan Title: Help Is Here!

- I. Concept / Topic: To teach the importance of advocacy in Christian missions
- II. Standards Addressed: Introduce the requisites for Christian discipleship and compare Biblical examples to our present experiences and beliefs about following Jesus.
- III. Key words/phrases: Thrust out (*epanago*): to return, to lead up on; Taught (*didasko*): teach, instruct; toil (*kopiaio*): to feel fatigue, to work hard; catch (*zograo*): to take alive, capture

IV. General Goal(s):

- 1. Participants are to recognize that Jesus will help during the challenges of everyday life.
- 2. Participants are to openly share their attitudes about how our church should help the residents of the Greenline-Spartanburg community.
- 3. Participants are to openly discuss beliefs about how God will help our congregation in the task of outreach in the community.
- 4. Participants are to communicate the basic tenets of repentance and salvation to both believers and unbelievers.

V. Specific Objectives:

- 1. Participants should be able to discuss a personal experience how God used someone to help during a difficult moment in their life.
- 2. Participants should be able to assess personal attitudes about their concern to help the residents of the community.
- 3. Participants should be able to read the Biblical passage and connect the meaning of the passage with the need for the church to do community outreach.
- 4. Participants should be able to act upon the experience of the lesson by signing and mailing encouragement cards to each resident of Spartanburg Street.

VI. Required Materials: pencil, notebook paper, encouragement cards, Bibles, watches for timekeepers, stamps.

VII. Step-By-Step Procedures:

1. Participants will complete advocacy and missions questionnaire prior to Bible study and the questionnaires will be collected as a pre-test at the beginning of the lesson. (6:45-7:00 p.m.)
2. I will read Luke 5:1-11 and review basic theological principles of the passage: returning to God, human fatigue, genuine repentance, and deeds of mercy. (7:05-7:20 p.m.)
3. Participants will work in small groups of four or less and share an experience how God used someone to help during a difficult moment in their life. (7:25-7:35 p.m.)
4. Group participants will read newspaper articles about recent crimes and problems effecting the Greenline-Spartanburg community. (7:35-7:45 p.m.)
5. Group participants will reread Luke 5:1-11 and share with group participants what they believe God expects from our church regarding community outreach. (7:45-7:55 p.m.)
6. Each group will sign their names on church encouragement cards "Help is Here!" in English and Spanish (Su ayuda Esta Aqui!). Cards will be mailed to each home address on Spartanburg Street. (7:55-8:05 p.m.)
7. Participants will complete a short questionnaire as a post-test for lesson on advocacy and missions. (8:05-8:15 p.m.)
8. Lesson will be concluded with prayer for God's help in our task to serve the needs of our community. (8:20 p.m.)

VII. Assessment: Students will complete a post-test on advocacy and missions to measure how the information and activities influenced their attitude toward help the residents of the community.

BIBLE STUDY PRE-TEST**LESSON #1**

Date _____ Participant # _____ Missionary Society member? ____ Yes ____
 No

1. I am: a. male b. female
2. I am: a. single b. married c. separated d. divorced e. widowed
3. In which of the following represents the year you were born:
 - a. Before 1945 b. 1945-1964 c. 1965-1984 d. 1985-present
4. Are you a Christian? a. Yes b. no
5. Which of the following best describes your understanding of the most important about being a Christian?
 - a. Attending morning worship regularly
 - b. Attending Bible study regularly
 - c. Having family members who are Christian
 - d. Admitting you are a sinner, believing God forgives sin, and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.
 - e. I am not sure.
6. Which of the following best describes your commitment to studying the Bible?
 - a. I read the Bible every day.
 - b. I only read the Bible during Sunday school, Sunday worship, and Bible study.
 - c. I read the Bible at least once a week outside of my church attendance.
 - d. I don't read the Bible at all.
7. Which of the following Biblical passages records Jesus' call of his first disciples?
 - a. Genesis 1:1-4
 - b. Romans 12:1-4
 - c. Luke 5:1-11
 - d. Revelations 5:1-2
8. Have you ever shared the plan of salvation to someone and they accepted Jesus Christ as their personal savior? a. Yes b. No
 If yes, please explain:

Date _____ Missionary Society Member? ____ Yes ____ No

Participant # _____

POST TEST: ADOVCACY AND MISSIONS/LESSON #1

1. Did you attend the worship service and hear the sermon on Sunday, September 13, 2009 titled: "Jesus is Our Help?" a. Yes b. No
2. I am: a. male b. female
3. How much improvement did the Bible study lesson tonight your sensitivity and knowledge of the needs of our church's commitment to discipleship in the Greenline-Spartanburg community?
 - a. Little improvement.
 - b. Improvement c. Great improvement d. not sure
4. How important is it for you to re-read Luke 5:1-11 to help you focus Jesus' desire to help you with the task of discipleship in this community?
 - a. Not Important
 - b. Important c. Very important d. not sure
5. Which of the following activities best increased your sensitivity to meeting the needs of the Greenline-Spartanburg community?
 - a. The teaching from the pastor from Luke 5:1-11.
 - b. The group discussion on someone helping you during a difficult time.
 - c. The reading of the newspaper article about crime in Greenline-Spartanburg.
 - d. The encouragement card reading "Help Is Here" in English/Spanish.
6. How important is it for you to share what you learned about Christian discipleship in tonight's lesson with someone you do not know?
 - a. Not important
 - b. Important
 - c. Very Important
 - d. Not Sure
7. How important is it for you to help someone in this community of a different racial/ethnic background after participating in this lesson?
 - a. Not Important
 - b. Important
 - c. Very Important
 - d. Not sure.
 - e. Not sure
8. How likely are you to increase your participation in Bible study as a result of attending this lesson?
 - a. Highly unlikely
 - b. Unlikely
 - c. Likely
 - d. Very likely
 - e. Not sure

Why or why not? _____

WE NEED TO PRAY!

Luke 11:1-4

I. Introduction

- A. I have very intimate memories of learning the importance of prayer at an early age of five years old. I can remember a conversation with my first Sunday school teacher Mrs. Eila Shell at the Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church during our kindergarten Sunday school class. She asked us, “what do we say when we pray?” I proudly responded, “Bless momma, bless, daddy, my brother and sister.” She corrected me with a smile in her response, “*You are supposed to say God bless everybody!*” It was from that moment on that I frequently began to reflect on how selfish our prayers can be. We generally don’t pray to get a better understanding of God’s will for our lives.
- B. God wants the church to pray to get understanding of His will for the kingdom. God wants everyone to be included in His kingdom: rich, poor, black, white, Hispanic, male and female. We cannot be effective in our call to missions without a sincere commitment to prayer for this community. On May 31, 2009 there was an article in the Greenville News with the headlines reading, “Gunfire rips through Greenville Complex.” A shooting had occurred the night before at a nearby Spartan Court housing complex. No one was injured, but everyone was affected by the incident! Blacks, whites, Hispanics in the Greenline-Spartanburg community became fully aware of the imminent danger that lurks over our community. Our churches must lead the charge to pray for God’s presence, purpose, and peace to reign over this community. Missions cannot be about our good ideas, but must be about creating God’s ideal community. We must have a community of hope, love, and peace. The

tragedies that affect this community must not keep us in fear. They are a reminder to us that we need to place prayer as our first priority in order to understand the will of God. **We need to pray!**

II. Text-How do we know when/what to pray for?

Prayer-pay close attention to; agree with God

1. **Pray with a purpose.** (V 1-teach us to pray (*didaxon*) instruction). Jesus wanted his disciples to understand the purpose of prayer. The church must be intentional about our prayer life. We must remind each other of the importance of prayer and the purpose of prayer. Jesus wants a praying church.
2. **Praise God's Holy name.** (V 2-may your name be kept holy (*hagiazō*) consecrate). Jesus wanted his disciples to have a personal relationship with a Holy God. God is the subject and not the object of our prayers. We must let our community know that our God loves everybody regardless of the sins that we commit. God's presence will purify the sins of the community.
3. **Prepare for the future.** (V 3/4-give, forgive, don't let (*eisphero*) carry inward, lead into [evil experiences]). We may face similar challenges like the shooting in the future. But, or if, the next time it happens, we will be more prepared to respond with an attitude of hope. We must believe that a praying church can make a difference in the lives of hurting people. God wants the church to be prepared to face the evil that lies ahead of us. Preparation is not about competition, but about comprehension of God's will for the kingdom.

III. Conclusion

We must be careful about letting our selfish intentions dominate our prayer life. We may have numerous personal needs when we pray, but God will provide for everyone who puts their trusts in Him. Prayer should be about getting our will in line with God's will. Jesus prayed at every critical turning point of his ministry: after His baptism, before choosing his disciples, after being recognized as the Messiah, and before his crucifixion in the garden at Gethsemane. **The Lord's Prayer is both a model and a reminder that prayer should be first on every Christian's list if we are sincere about following Jesus.** The Lord's prayer reminds us that the church exists because of God's grace and not vice versa (and not God's existence because of the church's grace). We are to remind ourselves and everyone that God sent us to help this community. We want to let this community know that we are praying for God's purpose, God's praise, and God's preparation for a future that is full of hope and love! If another shooting ever occurs, we will be ready to respond in love. We don't want another shooting to happen before we let this community know that God cares and we care for everybody! If any of us have sinned, God's grace allows us to be forgiven. Forgiveness is where transformation takes place. God's will is to let the world know of His love for everyone.

I'll always remember Mrs. Eila Shell. She taught me the true meaning of prayer just as Jesus taught His disciples. We don't pray to a selfish God, so neither should our prayers be selfish. This is why we say, "Our Father...!"

We need to pray.

Story

Little River Community Church was located just down the street from First Memorial Church. Since they were located on the same street in the same town, the two youth

groups from the two churches were often competing with each other. They participated in the same softball league, the same basketball league, and had become intense rivals.

Little River Community was always trying to outdo First Memorial and vice versa.

One Sunday, following a Bible study on serving others, the youth group at Little River Community Church decided to go out into their community and put their faith into action.

The youth pastor organized the kids into "ministry teams" and challenged them to go out and serve others. *They could do anything-but they needed to remember: "Do what Jesus would do."*

So the youth group from Little River Community Church fanned out into the neighborhood and starting serving. One group washed cars for people up and down the street. Another group pumped gas for free at a self-service gas station. Another group went to a convalescent home and sang songs to the shut-ins who lived there.

After the time was up, all the ministry teams returned to the church and reported what they had done. Each group had stories to tell, as they shared what they learned and how it made them feel.

One of the groups told of how they had gone to serve a woman who lived close to First Memorial Church. When First Memorial, their rival, was mentioned, everyone groaned.

"We mowed grass, raked leaves and did yard work for her," said one of the students. "She was real nice. And after we were through, she invited us in and prayed for us. And then she said, 'You young people from First Memorial Church are always doing such nice things for us old folks.'"

"Oh no!" said the youth pastor. "She thought you were from First Memorial? Well, I hope you set her straight. Did you tell her that you weren't from First Memorial but from Little River Community?"

"Well...no we didn't," said the student, surprised by the youth pastor's question. **"You told us to do what Jesus would do, didn't you? We decided that Jesus wouldn't worry about who gets the credit!."**

This true story (the names have been changed) is remarkable because most of us would probably have been quick to let the woman know she was wrong to credit someone else for the work we had done. But the way of Jesus is not concerned with who gets the credit. In fact, the way of Jesus is to actually rejoice in the good fortune of others. It is to put others first, ourselves last.

When we serve, we should not be concerned with getting credit for it, but with glorifying God. He is the one who should receive praise and thanks. The object of service is not to make ourselves look good, but to direct people's attention to God.

Mission Information Form**Date** _____

Name _____ Preferred Name _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail address _____

My ministry interests and positions are (i.e. Sunday school, Missionary, VBS, usher, etc):

Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church: _____ yes _____ no

Date/year joined: _____

I joined by: _____ Letter _____ Christian Experience _____ Baptism

I was a baptized believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: _____ yes _____ no

Date _____ Place _____ Officiating Minister _____

Optional Information:

Date of Birth: _____ - _____ - _____ (MM/DD/YY)

Occupation _____ Employer _____

☐ Student _____ School _____☐ Married (Date: _____) Spouse _____☐ Children (list names and birthdays)

1. How often do you pray for and with members of the Christian faith?

- f. Very often, at least once per day
- g. Often, at least once per week
- h. Not often, maybe once per month
- i. I seldom pray for and with members of the Christian faith.
- j. I am not sure.

2. Which of the following Biblical passages records a version of the Lord's Prayer?

- e. Psalm 23
- f. I Chronicles 4:9-10
- g. Luke 11:1-4
- h. Luke 22:42

3. Which of the following best describes the place where you learned the Lord's Prayer?

- f. At home with my family.
- g. I heard it preached in a sermon during morning worship.
- h. I learned the Lord's Prayer during Bible study.
- i. I am not familiar with the Lord's Prayer.
- j. I am not sure.

Post-Sermon Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Are you a Missionary Society Member? a. Yes b. No

Sermon Title: _____

Sermon Text: _____

1. I am: a. male b. female
2. Are you a Christian? a. Yes b. No
3. Did the sermon inspire you to pray with and for members of the body of Christ?
b. Yes b. No
4. How would you rank the delivery of the sermon with respect to the following things with **1** being the lowest and **5** being the highest ranking?

d. Presence of God in the preacher	1	2	3	4	5
e. Purpose of the message	1	2	3	4	5
f. Passion to motivate the people	1	2	3	4	5
5. Were you inspired and motivated to learn more about Christian missions by the preaching of this sermon? a. Yes b. No

Please explain:

LESSON TOPIC: PRAYER CHANGES PEOPLE

1. **OBJECTIVE:** PARTICIPANTS WILL DEVELOP A GLOBAL AWARENESS OF MISSIONS BY LEARNING THE LORD'S PRAYER IN SPANISH.

2. **LIST OF HISPANIC/SPANISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES:**

HISPANICS- SPANISH: CUBA, COLUMBIA, SPAIN, NICUAGUARA, COASTA RICA, ARGENTENIA, PERU, BOLIVIA, URUGUAY, PANAMA, PUERTO RICA, VENEZUELA, HONDURAS, GUATEMALA

3. **COMMENT ABOUT CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY:**CHURCH HAS CHANGED FROM THE FOCAL POINT OF THE COMMUNITY TO A BUILDING IN THE MIDST OF HOLOCAUST.

(Referring to high crime, poverty, and drugs within Greenline-Spartanburg).

4. **ASSESSMENT:** Participants will break out into four groups and learn the Lord's Prayer (Padre Nuestro) in Spanish. Each group will be facilitated by a bi-lingual group leader. Copies will be given to participants to take home to practice.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Padre Nuestro

Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Padre Nuestro que estas en los cielos, santificado sea tu nombre.

Thy kingdom come. Thine will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.

Venga a nosotros tu reino. Hagase tu voluntad, aqui en la tierra como en el cielo.

Give us this day, our daily bread

El pan nuestro de cada dia, danoslo hoy.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Y perdonamos nuestras ofensas, asi como nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Y no nos dejes caer en ententacion, mas libranos del mal;

For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever, Amen.

Porque tuyo es el reino, tuyo el poder, y la Gloria, por siempre. Amen.

Date: _____ Missionary Society Member? ____ Yes ____ No
Participant # _____

Please circle your choice.

1. Sex: a. Male b. Female
 2. Generation: a. Builder (born before 1945) b. Boomer (1945-1964)
 c. Buster (1965-1984) e. Bridger (1985-present)
 3. Level of education: a. high school b. associate's degree c. bachelor's degree
 d. master's degree e.post graduate/doctoral degree
 4. I have been a Christian for:
a. more than five years b. more than ten years
b. more than fifteen years d. more than twenty years
 5. Do you speak any other languages other than English?
a. Yes b. No If yes, which ones?
-
6. How likely are you to learn another language other than English?
a. Highly unlikely b. unlikely c. likely d. Highly likely
d. not sure
 7. How often do you pray for the people of the Greenline-Spartanburg community?
a. Everyday b. Once per week c. Not often d. Never
 8. I currently understand Christian missions as: (1=first choice, 2=2nd choice, 3=3rd choice)
____ regularly attending worship service _____ paying tithe and mission offerings
____ telling others about Jesus _____ studying the Bible
____ regularly volunteering in my community
____ the ministry of Jesus carried out by the local church
____ attending Wed. Bible study _____ watching church on TV
____ visiting the sick/shut-in _____ praying for my local church
 9. I am currently or have participated within the last six months in the following activities in my local church: (please circle only three)
a. regularly attend worship
b. officer training in the local church (deacon, trustee, usher, choir, etc): please specify:

Post-Lesson Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Are you a Missionary Society member? a. Yes b. No

Lesson topic: _____

Lesson Text: _____

1. I am: a. male b. female

2. Are you a Christian: a. Yes b. No

3. Did the lesson inspire you to pray for and pray with the people of the Greenline-Spartanburg community?

4. How would you rank the teaching of the lesson with respect to the following things with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest ranking?

a. Awareness of the need for missions	1	2	3	4
5				

b. Ability to respond to the needs of the community	1	2	3	4
5				

c. Attitude of the pastor to respond to missions	1	2	3	4
5				

5. Were you inspired and motivated to learn more about Christian missions by participating in this Bible study lesson? a. Yes b. No

Please explain:

WE MUST COUNT THE COST!

Luke 14:25-35

I. Introduction

- A. Every one of us has received blessings from God and from God's people. I can remember as a young boy growing up in the church my father would always give me money to put in Sunday school, and in church. Sometimes I was given a dollar for Sunday school and a dollar for church. *I would often make plans to use the money for my own selfish purposes. I thought to myself, I could go to the snack machine during lunch at school the next week. I could use the money to buy bubble gum, candy, or play an arcade game.* My intentions for the use of the money would vary beyond the purpose and intent for which it was given to me. My father gave me the money so that I could give it back to God's kingdom. I had learned the valuable lesson in the importance of being intentional in my giving to God.

God wants the church to be intentional in our giving to the mission of the kingdom.

God's kingdom needs resources in order to make positive life a reality in the

community. **We can often find ourselves placing the priority to use the money in**

which God has blessed us with for everything except supporting the church. We

bypass the opportunities to plan our giving to the kingdom in order to support our

own selfish interests. We do this out of habit and without calculating the

consequences of our selfishness. The name of God is not respected, the resources of

the church are limited, and the community is at risks to danger and neglect. God's

church must be prepared and intentional in our giving and not impulsive and careless

in our living. Jesus wants everyone to calculate the risks of following Him! There are

tremendous consequences when we focus only on ourselves and fail to give to the mission of God's kingdom. The community may conclude that the church does not care for human suffering. We must count the cost.

II. How do we count the cost?

1. **Carry the cross.** (V 27- bear (carry, lift, endure) the cross (exposure to death). We must be willing to cut off our attention to the things that are hindering our commitment to discipleship and witness.

According to Target Market, a company that tracks black consumer spending, blacks spends a significant amount of their income on depreciable products.

In 2002, the year the economy nose-dived; we spent \$22.9 billion on clothes, \$3.2 billion on electronics and \$11.6 billion on furniture to put into homes that, in many cases, were rented.

Among our favorite purchases are cars and liquor. Blacks make up only 12% of the U.S. population, yet account for 30% of the country's Scotch consumption. Detroit, which is 80% black, is the world's No. 1 market for Cognac.

2. **Calculate the cost.** (V 28-count (compute, use pebbles) the cost.

We must remember that as missionaries we are ambassadors of God's love.

A. According to the Greenville City Police Department: The following dates for Armed Robberies occurred on or around Spartanburg Street: 1/11/07, 1/16/07, 9/22/07, 10/19/08, and 7/6/09

B. For Discharging Weapon: 11/11/07 and 5/30/09, C. a murder in 11/07,(8 serious incidents in two years (1 every three months).

3. Complete the course! (V 29- finish it (complete). God does not want half-hearted giving!

According to U.S. Guide to Congregations, some who are involved in community work do so through their congregations. About one--quarter of worshipers (26 percent) say they give back to their communities through programs of their congregations -- serving food to the hungry, helping to resettle refugee families, or getting involved in advocacy on behalf of the poor and the powerless, for example.

But even more -- 28 percent of worshipers -- do their charitable work through other groups -- working in schools and hospitals and sports leagues, tutoring children at elementary schools, picking up trash, writing letters to politicians, and organizing neighborhood block watches.

Jesus wants his disciples to count the risks of authentic discipleship. Following Jesus means that we are willing to suffer for a cause that is greater than ourselves. My father gave me money to put in the collection plate, and sometimes I used it to buy candy, soda, or play arcade games. The kingdom missed out on my giving and someone may have suffered as a result. We need to make sure that our intentions to follow Jesus are sincere, and we need to plan to give to the kingdom regardless of the state of the economy. God gives to us in difficult times, so we should not reduce our giving to God! We must count the cost!

Story

One fine day four people were flying in a small, four-passenger plane: a pilot, a minister, and two scientists, one of whom had just won an award for being the "Smartest Man in the World." As they were flying along, the pilot turned to the three passengers and said, "I've got some bad news, and I've got some worse news. The bad news is, we're out of gas. The plane's going down and we're gonna crash. The worse news is, I only have three parachutes on board.

This meant, of course, that someone would have to go down with the plane.

The pilot continued. "I have a wife and three children at home. I have many responsibilities. I'm sorry, but I'm going to have to take one of the parachutes." With that, he grabbed one of the chutes and jumped out of the plane.

The Smartest Man in the World was next to speak. "I'm the Smartest Man in the World," he said. "I might be the one who comes up with a cure for cancer or AIDS or solves the world's economic problems. Everyone is counting on me!" The Smartest Man in the World grabbed the second parachute and jumped.

The minister then spoke up and said, "Son, you take the last parachute. I've made my peace with God, and I'm willing to go down with the plane. Now take the last parachute and go."

"Relax, reverend," said the other man. "The Smartest Man in the World just jumped out of the plane with my duffle bag."

A lot of people think they're pretty smart. In reality, they're a lot like The Smartest Man in the World. They jump out into the world without parachutes. They think they know it all and have all they need to live happy and fulfilled lives, to keep them from crashing and burning. What they actually have is a duffle bag. The only parachute that will ultimately save is the Gospel of Christ. All other ways are false and lead to death. Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

A lot of smart men haven't learned how to make wise decisions. They act impulsively, without thinking. The result is sometimes the same as what happened to the Smartest Man in the World-death.

Mission Information Form**Date** _____

Name _____ Preferred Name _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail address _____

My ministry interests and positions are (i.e. Sunday school, Missionary, VBS, usher, etc):

Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church: _____ yes _____ no

Date/year joined: _____

I joined by: _____ Letter _____ Christian Experience _____ Baptism

I was a baptized believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: _____ yes _____ no

Date _____ Place _____ Officiating Minister _____

Optional Information:

Date of Birth: _____ - _____ - _____ (MM/DD/YY)

Occupation _____ Employer _____

☐ Student _____ School _____☐ Married (Date: _____) Spouse _____☐ Children (list names and birthdays)

1. Which of the following Biblical passages records a story about "counting the cost" before building a tower?

- a. Genesis 12:1-4
- b. John 3:16
- c. Matthew 16:17-19
- d. Luke 14:25-31
- e. I am not sure.

2. Where did you learn to locate the answer to question #12?

- a. I learned from my family.
- b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
- c. I read the passage during Bible study.
- d. None of the above.

3. Which of the following Biblical passages records a story about a widow who gives an offering at the Temple?

- a. Genesis 15:1-4
- b. I Samuel 17:41-45
- c. Joshua 6:20-25
- d. Luke 21:1-4
- e. None of the above.

4. Where did you learn your answer to question #3?

- a. I learned it from my family.
- b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
- c. I read the passage during Bible study.
- d. None of the above.

Post-Sermon Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Are you a Missionary Society Member? a. Yes b. No

Sermon Title: _____ Sermon Text: _____

1. I am: a. male b. female

2. Are you a Christian? a. Yes b. No

3. Did the sermon inspire you to pray with and for members of the body of Christ?
a. Yes b. No4. How would you rank the delivery of the sermon with respect to the following things
with **1** being the lowest and **5** being the highest ranking?

a. Presence of God in the preacher 1 2 3 4 5

b. Purpose of the message 1 2 3 4 5

c. Passion to motivate the people 1 2 3 4 5

5. Were you inspired and motivated to learn more about giving to Christian missions by
the preaching of this sermon? a. Yes b. No

Please explain:

Date _____

Group# _____

MINISTRY COSTS!: PROBLEM SOLVING WORKSHEET

I. What is the problem? _____

II. What may have caused the problem? _____

III. List 3 possible solutions.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

IV. What are the positive outcomes of option 1? What are the estimated costs if any? \$

V-What are the negative outcomes of option 1?

VI. How do you feel about this option now?

VII. What are the positive outcomes of option 2? What are the estimated costs if any? \$

VIII. What are the negative outcomes of option 2?

IX. How do you feel about this option now?

X. What are the positive outcomes of option 3? What are the estimated costs if any? \$

XI. What are the negative outcomes of option 3?

XII. How do you feel about this option now?

XIII. What is your solution? _____

Date _____

Participant # _____

Benevolence and Missions Questionnaire

1. I am: a. Male b. Female
2. In which generation were you born?
 - a. Builder (before 1945) b. Boomer (1945-1964) c. Buster (1965-1984) d. Bridger (1984-present)
3. What is the **highest** level of education you completed?
 - a. High school degree b. associates degree c. bachelor's degree d. masters' degree
 - e. doctoral degree f. none of the above
4. Do you have a written financial budget for your household?
 - a. Yes b. No Please explain why?

5. Do you believe that our church is capable of helping to reduce crime in this community?
 - a. Yes b. No Please explain why?

Post-Lesson Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Lesson Topic: _____

Lesson Text: _____

1. Are you a Missionary Society member? a. Yes b. No
2. I am: a. male b. female
3. Are you a Christian? a. yes b. no
4. Did the lesson inspire you to manage your finances better in order to give more resources to the church?

a. yes b. no

5. How would you rank the teaching of the lesson with respect to the following things with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest?

a. Awareness of the need for missions	1	2	3	4
5				
b. Ability to respond to the needs of the community	1	2	3	4
5				
c. Attitude of the pastor about missions	1	2	3	4
5				

6. Were you inspired to learn more about missions by participating in this Bible study lesson?

a. yes b. no

Please explain:

WE CAN GIVE!

Luke 21:1-4

I. Introduction

- A. I have had a variety of experiences and observations with giving. I have strong memories of receiving money from my father to go to the movies. He would reach into his wallet and carefully separate each dollar before counting them out and giving them to me. It often frustrated me that he did not give me some 'extra' money for the evening, but I concluded that my father wanted to make sure that I was given exactly what was needed.
- B. God wants the church to be more liberal in our giving to the church. We often conclude that liberal giving is exclusive to rich and wealthy people. Generous giving is about reflecting the true character of our giving and forgiving God. Jesus proclaimed that the widow's giving was more than the giving of the wealthy because she gave out of her poverty, and they gave out of their abundance. The measure of your giving is not about the amount of the offering, but it is about the measure of what you have left. If a widow can make a sacrificial gift, so can we! We can give!

II. Text (How can we give?)

1. **Learn the system.** (V 1- looked up (recover sight) and saw (be sure, understand).

We cannot assume that everyone is at one extreme (rich) or the other (poor). The system is designed that everyone can participate.

Poverty- as a lack of those goods and services commonly taken for granted by members of mainstream society (SC < \$10, 830 (1), < \$14, 570 (2)).

2. **Leave an offering.** (V 2- casing in (to throw). We cannot assume that one has to be wealthy to give an offering. Giving is based on what you have and not what others have.

CHANGING PRIORITIES. The African American community doesn't just participate in philanthropy -- according to recent studies, it trumps other major racial and ethnic groups in its generosity. A 2003 study reported in the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* that African Americans who give to charity donate 25% more of their discretionary income than whites. And a study of affluent people of color making donations in the New York region, released in October, found that African Americans gave more money annually than either Latino or Asian Americans, according to the Coalition for New Philanthropy.

3. **Live by faith!** (V 4- all the living (present state of existence (livelihood)).

Christianity is about faith in Christ. We cannot assume that our personal situation is the worst case scenario. Our giving will be a blessing to others who are less fortunate than us. Jesus wants us to trust him every day through our giving.

III. Conclusion

Our attitude about giving to the church cannot be predicated on the state of the economy. As long as we have a dollar, God should have a dime. We are never too poor to give. A tough economy gives us a marvelous opportunity to exercise our faith in liberal giving. *My father also taught me another lesson about giving: that we can give our time, talent, and treasure.* We have so much to give: we can share our skills, donate goods, and give our money to the church. Our giving will be a blessing to someone else. The widow may have been poor, but her giving got Jesus' praise! Does Jesus praise or mourn our giving? Jesus praises giving that is based on a living trust in God's ability to care for us as we

seek to care for the least of society. Jesus was impressed with the widow's giving because she trusted God enough to provide for her each day. God expects us to exercise a daily trust. Remember we can give: learn the system, leave an offering, and live by faith. We can give!

Story

A preacher paid a visit to a farmer and asked, "If you had two hundred dollars, would you give one hundred dollars to the Lord?"

"Sure would," said the farmer.

"If you had two cows, would you give one cow to the Lord?"

"Yeah, I would."

"If you had two pigs, would you give one of them to the Lord?"

The farmer replied, "That's not fair. You know I have two pigs."

There is no other time for giving but now. It will never be easy.

Mission Information Form**Date** _____

Name _____ Preferred Name _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail address _____

My ministry interests and positions are (i.e. Sunday school, Missionary, VBS, usher, etc):

Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church: _____ yes _____ no

Date/year joined: _____

I joined by: _____ Letter _____ Christian Experience _____ Baptism

I was a baptized believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: _____ yes _____ no

Date _____ Place _____ Officiating Minister _____

Optional Information:

Date of Birth: _____ - _____ - _____ (MM/DD/YY)

Occupation _____ Employer _____

☐ Student _____ School _____☐ Married (Date: _____) Spouse _____☐ Children (list names and birthdays)

1. Which of the following Biblical passages records a story about a widow who gives an offering at the Temple?

- a. Genesis 15:1-4
- b. I Samuel 17:41-45
- c. Joshua 6:20-25
- d. Luke 21:1-4
- e. None of the above.

2. Where did you learn your answer to question #1?

- a. I learned it from my family.
- b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
- c. I read the passage during Bible study.
- d. None of the above.

3. How likely are you to give all of the money you currently have to the church?

a. Very likely b. Likely c. Unlikely d. Very Unlikely e. not sure

Why or why not? _____

Post-Sermon Evaluation

Date _____

Participant

Are you a Missionary Society Member? a. Yes b. No

Sermon Title: _____ Sermon Text: _____

1. I am: a. male b. female
2. Are you a Christian? a. Yes b. No
3. Did the sermon inspire you to pray with and for members of the body of Christ?
a. Yes b. No
4. How would you rank the delivery of the sermon with respect to the following things
with **1** being the lowest and **5** being the highest ranking?

a. Presence of God in the preacher	1	2	3	4	5
b. Purpose of the message	1	2	3	4	5
c. Passion to motivate the people	1	2	3	4	5
5. Were you inspired and motivated to learn more about giving to Christian missions by
the preaching of this sermon? a. Yes b. No

Please explain:

Everybody Counts!

Luke 21:1-4

- I. Objective: this session will encourage personal sensitivity to the spiritual values and financial contributions that can be made by each member of the congregation.
- II. Reflections on scripture and how it applies to learners: the widow was from one of the most negative social positions in society but had a positive attitude about giving. Jesus praised her giving in spite of a broken system.
- III. Main idea or thought I wish to get across: God is more concerned about our having a positive attitude in giving and not our aptitude (how much we give).
- IV. Other ideas/thoughts stemming from main idea: many people feel that they are too poor to give.
- V. How can the learners experience the main idea? They will give each other compliments in order to emphasize the power of positive reinforcement in building trust in relationships.
- VI. Materials we will need: index cards (1 blue, 1 white for each person), two rolls of pennies, roll of nickels, plastic cup, pencils.
- VII. Object of the activity: to give away more compliments than you receive to as many people as possible.
- VIII. Special room arrangements: participants will be arranged into four groups. Each person in each group will receive two pennies in a plastic cup, one white index card and one blue index card. Each group will be at a station for a maximum of five minutes. Each group will rotate to the next station. Each person is to give another person in their group two compliments. The person they give the two compliments to must sign their index card white index card. No one is to give the same person in their station more than two compliments. You cannot leave your station until you have at least two compliments. The first person who ends up without any pennies must come to the director to get a

nickel before moving on to the next station. They must give at least five different people a compliment before completing the game. Each person they give a compliment must sign their index card. The first person who gets five different people to sign their second index card wins!

IX. Assessment: Post lesson evaluation will be completed

HOW DID IT GO? (Fill in after class.)

Positive things _____

Trouble spots _____

Evidence of growth _____

Date _____

Participant # _____

Benevolence and Missions Questionnaire: Everybody Counts!

1. I am: a. Male b. Female

2. In which generation were you born?

a. Builder (before 1945) b. Boomer (1945-1964) c. Buster (1965-1984) d. Bridger (1984-present)

3. Which of the following indicates the **range of your household income** per year?a. Less than \$20,000 b. \$20,000-\$50,000 c. \$50,000-\$75,000 d.
\$75,000-\$100,000 e. more than \$100,0004. How strong is your commitment to liberal giving **beyond your tithe** to the church?

a. Very Strong b. Strong c. Weak d. Very Weak

Please explain why?

5. Do you believe that a person has to make a certain amount of income in order to give to the church?

a. Yes b. No Please explain why?

Post-Lesson Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Lesson Topic: _____

Lesson Text: _____

1. Are you a Missionary Society member? a. Yes b. No

2. I am: a. male b. female

3. Are you a Christian? a. yes b. no

4. Did the lesson encourage you to be more positive in your attitude in giving to the church?

a. yes b. no Why or why not? _____

5. How would you rank the teaching of the lesson with respect to the following things with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest?

a. Awareness of the need for missions 1 2 3 4 5

b. Ability to respond to the needs of the community 1 2 3 4 5

c. Attitude of the pastor about missions 1 2 3 4 5

6. Were you inspired to learn more about missions by participating in this Bible study lesson?

a. yes b. no Please explain:

WE CAN HELP!

Luke 10:25-37

I. Introduction

A. I would not be alive today unless some very special people made sacrifices to help me. In June of 1993 I was in a single car accident in Laurens, SC. I lost control of my vehicle during a thunderstorm and my car ran off a bridge not far from my parents' home. I was unconscious for several minutes, and after getting out of the car, I went by a nearby neighbor's home to call for help. There was a woman there that showed deep concern and waited until highway patrol and my family arrived.

B. God wants the church to demonstrate compassion and commitment to all humanity. We must be careful not to let our fears limit us from reaching out to help someone who is in need. We often fail to care for those who are closest to us. We often worship each week without concern for those who live closest to our church. God has placed people in our midst to show us who we have been called to care for. Jesus told the parable of the Samaritan to teach a valuable lesson in neighborliness. We will be more helpful and merciful to our neighbors when we remember that someone has been helpful and merciful to us. We can help!

II. Text (How can we help?)

1. **Make a serious confession.** (V 29-wanting to justify (just or innocent, be righteous) We have all sinned. We have all been hurt. We all need God's help.

My confession: When I had my car accident, I was driving too fast for conditions.

2. **Move with sincere compassion.** (V 34- moved with pity (feel sympathy, have bowels yearn)

Community issue: On July 6, 2009 a former resident of 54 Spartanburg Street was robbed at gun point. He was assaulted and robbed of his money and merchandise.

3. **Make a special commitment.** (V 35-took out (gave, commit) two pence)

Commitment issue: Our compassion must transform into commitment.

We must show our concern for our community in tangible ways. Sign up and show up on November 14 for our FOCUS in Community celebration.

III. Conclusion

Jesus told the parable of the Samaritan to teach a valuable lesson about compassion. Our compassion to others is not limited to the people that we know and feel comfortable with, but also to those that we don't know and may feel uncomfortable with. **The crisis should take precedent over the credentials.** Jesus wants the church to know that they have been empowered to cast out demons and heal in his name. The priest and the Levite had the capacity to help the man who was robbed, but they did not have the compassion to help. We can help, but our help must have the compassion of Jesus Christ! Make a serious confession, move with sincere compassion, and make a special commitment. We can help!

Story

A collector of rare antiques walked into a curio shop and noticed a beautiful piece of glass art displayed under a sign marked "Unbreakable."

"Pardon me," the man said to the storekeeper, "but what is the price of this piece?"

"One hundred thousand dollars," replied the storekeeper.

With a gasp, the man asked why the price was so high.

"Like the sign says, it's unbreakable!" the storekeeper explained.

The man examined the piece carefully and asked, "Are you certain that this piece is unbreakable?"

The storekeeper assured him that it was.

The man greatly admired the piece, so he paid the full price and took it home. There he put it on display in a protective case. He told everyone who came to admire it that it was very special-an unbreakable piece of glass.

Several weeks later, the man visited the curio shop again and explained to the storekeeper how much care he'd taken to protect and preserve the beautiful piece he'd purchased.

While looking around, the man noticed another piece of glass art beneath the unbreakable sign. It occurred to the man that he'd seen the same piece marked \$500 the last time he was in the shop. He asked the storekeeper, "How can that piece be unbreakable, too? Last month when I was here, it was in the display cabinet with those other pieces, and it was marked \$500!"

"No, the price is \$100, 000," the storekeeper replied. "It's unbreakable, now, too."

"How can you be so sure?" the man demanded.

"Because anyone who pays a hundred grand for this thing is going to take as much care of it as you have with yours!"

When you know something is extremely valuable, you tend to take very good care of it.

The Bible tells us that we were "bought with a price" (1 Corinthians 6:20). God paid a very high price for each of us. He sacrificed his only son so we could have eternal life.

For that reason, every person you meet is of great value, because he or she is of great value to God.

How do you treat the people you encounter every day? How do you treat the members of your own family? How do you treat people who are different from you or people who have less than you do?

Mission Information Form**Date** _____

Name _____ Preferred Name _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail address _____

My ministry interests and positions are (i.e. Sunday school, Missionary, VBS, usher, etc):

Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church: _____ yes _____ no

Date/year joined: _____

I joined by: _____ Letter _____ Christian Experience _____ Baptism

I was a baptized believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: _____ yes _____ no

Date _____ Place _____ Officiating Minister _____

Optional Information:

Date of Birth: _____ - _____ - _____ (MM/DD/YY)

Occupation _____ Employer _____

☐ Student _____ School _____☐ Married (Date: _____) Spouse _____☐ Children (list names and birthdays)

1. Which of the following passages records the story of the "Good Samaritan?"

- a. Daniel 6:6-8
- b. I Kings 18:41-46
- c. Luke 10:25-37
- d. Matthew 24:45-51
- e. None of the above.

2. Where did you learn your answer to question #1?

- a. I learned it at home.
- b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
- c. I read the passage during Bible study.
- d. None of the above.

3. Please describe your definition of the word **neighbor**.

Post-Sermon Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Are you a Missionary Society Member? a. Yes b. No

Sermon Title: _____ Sermon Text: _____

1. I am: a. male b. female

2. Are you a Christian? a. Yes b. No

3. Did the sermon inspire you to pray with and for members of the body of Christ?
a. Yes b. No4. How would you rank the delivery of the sermon with respect to the following things
with **1** being the lowest and **5** being the highest ranking?

a. Presence of God in the preacher 1 2 3 4 5

b. Purpose of the message 1 2 3 4 5

c. Passion to motivate the people 1 2 3 4 5

5. Were you inspired and motivated to learn more about Christian missions by the
preaching of this sermon? a. Yes b. No

Please explain:

Commitment and Missions: Help Somebody!

I. Objective: this session will encourage sensitivity to the importance of commitment to helping others who are suffering.

II. Reflections on scripture and how it applies to learners: the Samaritan helped the suffering man regardless of the differences between their religious and ethnic backgrounds.

III. Main idea or thought I wish to get across: God wants us to show our love for everyone by helping people who are in need. **Christians should focus on producing compassionate service more than being recipients of compassionate service.**

IV. Other ideas/thoughts stemming from main idea: many people feel that they should only help people that they know and feel comfortable with.

V. How can the learners experience the main idea? They will separate in groups and read a police report of someone who was robbed on Spartanburg Street. Each group will have to answer a different question: a) How would you want our church to help the victim if it was your?: 1) father, 2) brother, 3) uncle, 4) pastor

VI. Materials we will need: index cards (4 cards: one for each group,), police report, picture of the house, communication cards.

VII. Object of the activity: to get a better understanding of the levels of commitment we have about helping people who are suffering.

VIII. Special room arrangements: participants will be arranged into four groups. Each group will receive the same police report of a robbery that occurred on Spartanburg Street, a picture of the residence, and an index card with their specific group question.

IX. Assessment: Post lesson evaluation will be completed. Communication card will be completed.

HOW DID IT GO? (Fill in after class.)

Positive things _____

Trouble spots _____

Evidence of growth _____

Commitment and Missions Questionnaire: Help Somebody!

1. I am: a. Male b. Female

2. In which generation were you born?

a. Builder (before 1945) b. Boomer (1945-1964) c. Buster (1965-1984) d.
Bridger (1984-present)

3. Which of the following indicates the possibility that you will **help someone that you do not know**?

a. Highly likely b. Likely c. Unlikely d. Very unlikely

4. How strong is your commitment to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with **new people**?

a. Very Strong b. Strong c. Weak d. Very Weak

Please explain
why? _____

5. Do you believe that you have to know someone in order to help them?

a. Yes b. No

Please explain why?

Post-Lesson Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Lesson Topic: _____

Lesson Text: _____

1. Are you a Missionary Society member? a. Yes b. No

2. I am: a. male b. female

3. Are you a Christian? a. yes b. no

4. Did the lesson encourage you to help someone who is in need?

a. yes b. no Why or why not? _____

5. How would you rank the teaching of the lesson with respect to the following things with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest?

a. Awareness of the need for missions 1 2 3 4 5

b. Ability to respond to the needs of the community 1 2 3 4 5

c. Attitude of the pastor about missions 1 2 3 4 5

5. Were you inspired to learn more about missions by participating in this Bible study lesson?

a. yes b. no Please explain:

WE ARE GOD'S WITNESSES

Acts 1:6-9

I. Introduction

- A. I have a dear memory of a time when a group of my seminary classmates went out to witness. We were on a class assignment to go to the Grady Hospital area in Atlanta, Georgia. We went to be ambassadors of the love of God and to win souls for Jesus Christ. We met an unusual lady who was sitting on the steps in front of the hospital. We discovered that some people on the streets have more faith than people in the church.
- B. God wants the church to receive the transformative power of the Holy Spirit so that we can be effective witnesses. The church is not relevant in our witness unless we bear record to the divine power of God at work in our lives. God's power changes both the human heart and intellect to know the love of Jesus Christ. It seems that our churches are concerned about sharing everything *except* the life changing power of the gospel. A witness for Christ is one who can bear record of the power of God and one who is willing to die for their faith in the gospel. Many people can bear record of everything *except* the power of God working in their lives. It seems that we lack a genuine commitment for to the transforming power of discipleship. If we are a church, then we are witnesses for God. We are God's witnesses.

II. Text (How do we witness?)

1. Believe in God's plan of divine restoration. (V6- restore again (reconstitute in health, home, and organization). God wants the world to know Jesus.

2. **Beware of God's divine reputation.** (V7- authority (freedom, ability, liberty).

God's absolute power protects the church from evil.

3. **Become an instrument of God's divine revelation.** (V8- receive power (to take, to grab hold of, to bring). God shares his power with the church in order for us to be effective witnesses.

III. Conclusion

Jesus wanted the disciples to be prepared as witnesses in order to meet the challenges of everyday life. God did not want to send the disciples into the world unprepared.

Our mission group went out with clear instructions for our class assignment. We even carried some food for our trip to Grady Hospital. But what we did not carry with us was a firm knowledge that there were people who lived on the street who loved the Lord. All of the saved were not in church, and all of the unsaved were not in the streets! Many times when you intend to witness to others, God will use others to witness His power to you! We are all witnesses of the power of God. We must be willing to share the power of God's love to everyone we meet. We are witnesses when we believe in God's divine plan of restoration. We are God's witnesses when we beware of God's divine reputation, and we are God's witnesses when we become instruments of his divine revelation. We all have a testimony of God's love in our lives. **Witnessing requires a passionate and perpetual commitment to the service of God!** We are God's witnesses!

Story

There was a fireman who lived in a certain town. Everyone liked the fireman because he was a nice guy. **He made it a habit to be gentle and kind, which was unusual for**

firemen, who were supposed to be tough. There was a fire one day, and the fireman charged to the scene of the fire with his fellow firemen and heavy equipment. As they came toward the fire, much to their surprise and chagrin, they encountered between themselves and the flames about two hundred townspeople. And each of them was standing there with some tiny instruments, aiming them at the fire, going squirt, squirt, squirt, squirt.

The fireman asked, “What’s going on here?” One man had from the group turned and with a spray bottle said, “Well, we all appreciate this wonderful work you’re doing in our community and each of us has come to contribute in some small way to your work.” Squirt, squirt.

The fireman said, “I don’t get it. You are all crazy!”

“Oh we realize that we all could do more, couldn’t we, folks?” said the spokesman.

“Most definitely,” another man with a cup of water said, “But we just wanted to offer this token of our support.” Squirt, squirt.

“You don’t know what you’re doing!” shouted the fireman.

“True, but you have to appreciate the fact that everyone is willing to offer whatever help they can,” said the spokesman.

And everyone said, “Amen!” and some who had baby aspirators went squirt, squirt.

At that, the fireman shouted, “Get the ###! out of here! **This is no picnic, this is a fire, and a fire doesn’t require well-meaning people who come to make small contributions. A fire is a place where people come to give their lives.**”

Sometimes we are a lot like those people:

“We all appreciate the work you’re doing, pastor.” Squirt, squirt. “We want to let you

know that we support all that you're trying to do." Squirt, squirt. "We bring what we can—it's not much, but the little bit we can offer to the work of the kingdom we gladly give." Squirt, squirt.

And one hears the celestial fireman say, "Will you please get out of here! What I am looking for are disciples who are radically committed and willing to die for the sake of the gospel!"

Following Jesus means being willing to follow him to the cross. "And anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it" (Matthew 10:38-39).

Mission Information Form**Date** _____

Name _____ Preferred Name _____

Address _____ City/State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail address _____

My ministry interests and positions are (i.e. Sunday school, Missionary, VBS, usher, etc):

Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church: _____ yes _____ no

Date/year joined: _____

I joined by: _____ Letter _____ Christian Experience _____ Baptism

I was a baptized believer in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: _____ yes _____ no

Date _____ Place _____ Officiating Minister _____

Optional Information:

Date of Birth: _____ - _____ - _____ (MM/DD/YY)

Occupation _____ Employer _____

☐ Student _____ School _____☐ Married (Date: _____) Spouse _____☐ Children (list names and birthdays)

1. Which of the following passages records the story of Jesus' ascension to heaven?

- a. John 12:32
- b. Luke 2:41-52
- c. Mark 16:14-18
- d. Acts 1:6-9
- e. None of the above.

2. Where did you learn your answer to question #18?

- a. I learned it at home.
- b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
- c. I read the passage during Bible study.
- d. None of the above.

3. Which of the following do you believe to be most helpful to your growth as a Christian missionary?

- a. Hearing sermons during morning worship.
- b. Study the Bible during Bible study.
- c. Hearing sermons and studying the Bible during Bible study.
- d. Private prayer and devotion at home.
- e. None of the above.

Post-Sermon Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Are you a Missionary Society Member? a. Yes b. No

Sermon Title: _____ Sermon Text: _____

1. I am: a. male b. female
2. Are you a Christian? a. Yes b. No
3. Did the sermon inspire you to pray with and for members of the body of Christ?
a. Yes b. No
4. How would you rank the delivery of the sermon with respect to the following things
with **1** being the lowest and **5** being the highest ranking?

a. Presence of God in the preacher	1	2	3	4	5
b. Purpose of the message	1	2	3	4	5
c. Passion to motivate the people	1	2	3	4	5
5. Were you inspired and motivated to join the Missionary Society or become more
involved in missions by the preaching of this sermon? a. Yes b. No

Please explain:

Commitment and Missions: Follow Jesus!

I. Objective: this session will encourage Christians to witness God's salvation through Jesus Christ to others.

II. Reflections on scripture and how it applies to learners: the disciples had an order for setting the priorities of their witness: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the world.

III. Main idea or thought I wish to get across: God wants everyone to hear the gospel and experience the salvation of Jesus Christ.

I. Other ideas/thoughts stemming from main idea: many Christians do not know how to witness to someone and therefore have never shared the gospel of salvation of Jesus Christ.

II. How can the learners experience the main idea? They will separate in groups and read an outline for sharing their testimonies. They are to select one person from the group to come before the class and share their testimony.

VI. Materials we will need: pencil, paper, Bibles.

VII. Object of the activity: to encourage participants to witness God's salvation through Jesus Christ during the FOCUS celebration.

VIII. Assessment: Post lesson evaluation will be completed. Sign up for FOCUS celebration.

HOW DID IT GO? (Fill in after class.)

Positive things _____

Trouble spots _____

Evidence of growth _____

Date _____

Participant # _____

Commitment and Missions Questionnaire: Follow Jesus!

1. I am: a. Male b. Female

2. In which generation were you born?

a. Builder (before 1945) b. Boomer (1945-1964) c. Buster (1965-1984) d.
Bridger (1984-present)

3. Have you ever witnessed to someone and they accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior?

a. Yes b. No c. Not Sure

4. Which of the best describes my current understanding of the Bible as it relates to the importance missions?

- a. I am very familiar with the Bible and the importance mission involvement.
- b. I am somewhat familiar with the Bible and mission involvement.
- c. I am not familiar with the Bible and mission involvement.
- d. Not sure.

5. Did you receive a letter describing the details of the FOCUS mission project?

a. Yes b. No c. I am not sure

6. Do you plan to volunteer for the FOCUS mission project on November 14, 2009?

a. Yes b. No Please explain:

Post-Lesson Evaluation

Date _____

Participant # _____

Lesson Topic: _____

Lesson Text: _____

1. Are you a Missionary Society member? a. Yes b. No

2. I am: a. male b. female

3. Are you a Christian? a. yes b. no

4. Did the lesson encourage you to witness God's salvation through Jesus to others?

a. yes b. no Why or why not? _____

5. How would you rank the teaching of the lesson with respect to the following things with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest?

a. Awareness of the need for missions 1 2 3 4 5

b. Ability to respond to the needs of the community 1 2 3 4 5

c. Attitude of the pastor about missions 1 2 3 4 5

6. Were you inspired to volunteer for the FOCUS outreach celebration on November 14, 2009?

a. yes b. no Please explain:

Information Card

Please complete the following information and drop off at the registration desk.



Mount
Emmanuel
Missionary
Baptist
Church

Date: _____ () New Address

Mr. Mrs. Ms.
Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____
State: _____ Zip Code: _____

E-Mail: _____

Home Phone: _____
Work: _____
Mobile: _____

Birthdate: _____

I am: () unmarried () married

Spouse's Name: _____

Please check the appropriate box(es) below:

() I am visiting today as a guest of: _____

() I am a regular attender.

() I am a member of a church

My Pastor is _____

() I am currently serving in a ministry,

My ministry is _____

Please list the names and birthdates of your children

who reside in your home:

Name	Birthdate
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Read the items below and check the appropriate box if you would like to take the next step.

I. Faith

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord", and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)

() I would like to know more about what it means to be a Christian.

II. Life in Christ

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2)

() I have recently made a decision to follow Christ. What is the next step?

III. Community

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

() I would like to know more about what it means to participate in Christian Community.

IV. Service

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. (Ephesians 4:11-12)

() I would like to know more about the gifts God has given me to serve by attending a spiritual gifts workshop.

() Please contact me regarding serving in one of these areas listed on the right.

Comments, Requests, or Prayer Needs

() Comment () Prayer request

() Request for counseling

() financial () crisis/marriage () other

If you indicated an interest in serving in a ministry at MEMBC, please select one or more ministry areas:

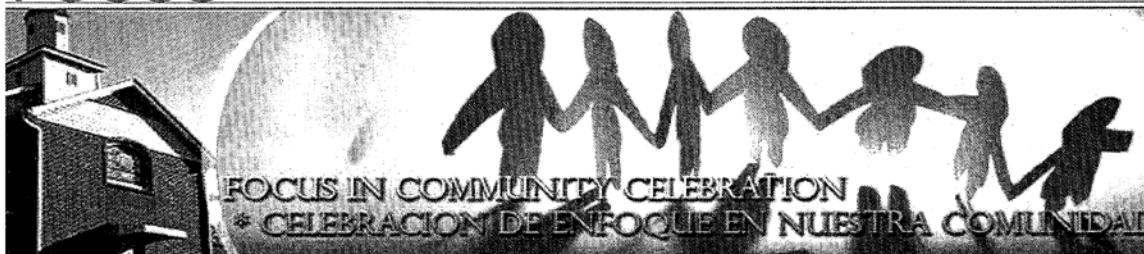
() Nursery () Preschool () Elementary
() Middle School () High School () College
() Young adults () Men's ministry () Women's ministry
() Church () Marriages () Premarital
() Support groups () Parenting () Single parents
() Missions () Usher/greeter () Hospitality
() Office Support () Technology

() Other _____

APPENDIX

Faithful Outreaching Christians United to Serve /Cristianos Unidos Listos Para Servir

FOCUS



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2009 AT THE DAVID HELLAMS COMMUNITY CENTER FROM 9AM TO 4PM
 14 DE NOVIEMBRE EN EL DAVID HELLAMS COMMUNITY CENTER COMENZANDO A LAS 9AM HASTA LAS 4PM
 (DAVID HELLAMS COMMUNITY CENTER 111 SPARTANBURG STREET GREENVILLE, SC 29607)

EVERYONE IS WELCOME TO JOIN US FOR FAMILY FUN, SINGING, CULTURE EDUCATION, AND HEALTH EDUCATION. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT MRS. MARGARET DURRAH (MRITA76@AOL.COM). BIENVIDOS!

TODOS ESTAN INVITADOS PARA ATENDER Y DISFRUTAR DE, CULTURA EDUCATIVA, ALABANZAS AL SENOR Y SALUD EDUCATIVA. SI LE GUSTARIA SER UN/A VOLUNTARIO/A, SERA GENIAL YA QUE LOS NECESITAMOS. PARA MAS INFORMACION, FAVOR DE ENVIAR UN COREO ELECTRONICO A MRS. MARGARET DURRAH (MRITA76@AOL.COM) BIENVENIDOS!

 MT EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY, TONY BOYCE, M.Div., PASTOR 316 SPARTANBURG STREET GREENVILLE, SC 29607 PHONE 864.232.5132 FAX 864.232.5161 WEB WWW.MTEMMANUEL.ORG



FOCUS IN COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2010

DAVID HELAMS COMMUNITY CENTER

GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA



1. What was your general impression of the FOCUS Celebration?
2. Do you think the goals for this event were achieved? Why or why not?
3. What did you find most helpful or enjoyable?
4. What was not helpful or enjoyable?
5. Do you recommend this event be continued? _____ Yes _____ No

**Transforming Attitudes and Commitment to Missions at the Mt. Emmanuel
Missionary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina**

Date _____

Participant # _____ **Missionary Society Member?** _____ **Yes or** _____ **No**

Instructions: This survey will be used as a post-test to assess what you learned about Christian missions during our ministry project. This is a voluntary ministry exercise, and your name will be kept anonymous during process and results of this ministry project.

1. I am: a. male b. female
2. I am: a. single b. married c. separated d. divorced e. widowed
3. In which of the following represents the year were you born:
 - a. Before 1945 b. 1945-1964 c. 1965-1984 d. 1985-present
4. My highest level of education completed is:
 - a. High school b. associates degree c. bachelors degree d. master's degree
 - e. doctoral degree f. none of the above
5. I currently: a. rent b. own my own home c. live with other relatives d. other _____
6. Which of the following best describes your readiness to talk to others about your Christian faith?
 - a. I am not a Christian, so the question does not apply.
 - b. I do not talk about my faith, my life actions are sufficient.
 - c. I find it hard to talk about my faith in ordinary language
 - d. I mostly feel at ease talking about my faith and do so if it comes up
 - e. I feel at ease talking about my faith and I readily seek opportunities to do so
1. Which of the following best describes your understanding of how to become a disciple of Jesus Christ?
 - a. Attend morning worship regularly.
 - b. Attend Bible study regularly.
 - c. Having family members who are Christian.
 - a. Admitting that you are a sinner, believing that God forgives sin, and confessing Jesus Christ as Lord.
 - b. I am not sure.
2. Which of the following experiences helped you to understand your answer to question #7?
 - a. Sermons preached during morning worship service.
 - b. Reading lessons during Bible study.
 - c. Reading Sunday school lessons.
 - d. Instruction from family values.
 - e. All of the above.

- f. None of the above.
3. How often do you pray for and with members of the Christian faith?
 - a. Very often, at least once per day
 - b. Often, at least once per week
 - c. Not often, maybe once per month
 - d. I seldom pray for and with members of the Christian faith.
 - e. I am not sure.
 4. Which of the following Biblical passages records a version of the Lord's Prayer?
 - a. Psalm 23
 - b. I Chronicles 4:9-10
 - c. Luke 11:1-4
 - d. Luke 22:42
 5. Which of the following best describes the place where you learned the Lord's Prayer?
 - a. At home with my family.
 - b. I heard it preached in a sermon during morning worship.
 - c. I learned the Lord's Prayer during Bible study.
 - d. I am not familiar with the Lord's Prayer.
 - e. I am not sure.
 6. Which of the following Biblical passages records a story about "counting the cost" before building a tower?
 - a. Genesis 12:1-4
 - b. John 3:16
 - c. Matthew 16:17-19
 - d. Luke 14:25-31
 - e. I am not sure.
 7. Where did you learn to locate the answer to question #12?
 - a. I learned from my family.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
 8. Which of the following Biblical passages records a story about a widow who gives an offering at the Temple?
 - a. Genesis 15:1-4
 - b. I Samuel 17:41-45
 - c. Joshua 6:20-25
 - d. Luke 21:1-4
 - e. None of the above.
 9. Where did you learn your answer to question #14?

- a. I learned it from my family.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
10. Which of the following passages records the story of the “Good Samaritan?”
- a. Daniel 6:6-8
 - b. I Kings 18:41-46
 - c. Luke 10:25-37
 - d. Matthew 24:45-51
 - e. None of the above.
11. Where did you learn your answer to question #16?
- a. I learned it at home.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
12. Which of the following passages records the story of Jesus’ ascension to heaven?
- a. John 12:32
 - b. Luke 2:41-52
 - c. Mark 16:14-18
 - d. Acts 1:6-9
 - e. None of the above.
13. Where did you learn your answer to question #18?
- a. I learned it at home.
 - b. I heard the passage preached during a sermon in morning worship.
 - c. I read the passage during Bible study.
 - d. None of the above.
14. Which of the following do you believe to be most helpful to your growth as a Christian missionary?
- a. Hearing sermons during morning worship.
 - b. Study the Bible during Bible study.
 - c. Hearing sermons and studying the Bible during Bible study.
 - d. Private prayer and devotion at home.
 - e. None of the above.
15. Please briefly explain your answer to question #20:
-
-
-
16. Which of the following best explains your desired commitment to learning about missions during this ministry project?

- a. I plan to hear all six sermons, attend six Bible studies, and volunteer for the outreach project on Saturday, November 14, 2009.
 - b. I plan to hear the sermons during morning worship and volunteer for the outreach project on November 14, 2009.
 - c. I plan to attend the six Bible study lessons and volunteer for the outreach project on November 14, 2009.
 - d. I plan to attend the Sunday morning lessons only.
 - e. I plan to attend the Bible study lessons only.
 - f. I plan to volunteer for the outreach project on November 14, 2009 only.
 - g. None of the above.
17. Please explain the reason for your answer to question #22:
-
-
-
18. Which of the following best describes your understanding of the most important need of the Greenline-Spartanburg community?
- a. Winning lost souls for Jesus Christ.
 - b. Housing development and neighborhood clean-up programs.
 - c. Employment development and financial education programs.
 - d. Youth programs and youth development.
 - e. I am not sure.
19. Which of the following best describes your past commitment to sharing the Christian faith to members of the Greenline-Spartanburg community?
- a. I shared my faith in Jesus in the community members independently.
 - b. I have shared my faith in Jesus through a ministry in our church.
 - c. I am not aware of any reason I should share my faith in Jesus to the members of this community.
 - d. I am not sure.
20. Which of the following best describes your commitment to giving money to mission needs?
- a. I give money each week during mission offering in morning worship.
 - b. I give money directly to the person who is in need.
 - c. I do not give money during the mission offering.
 - d. I give money to our church mission offering, but through other mission charities outside of the church.
 - e. None of the above.
21. Did you receive a letter informing you about the mission education project?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
22. Are you a Christian?

a. Yes

b. No

29. Are you a member of the Mt. Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church

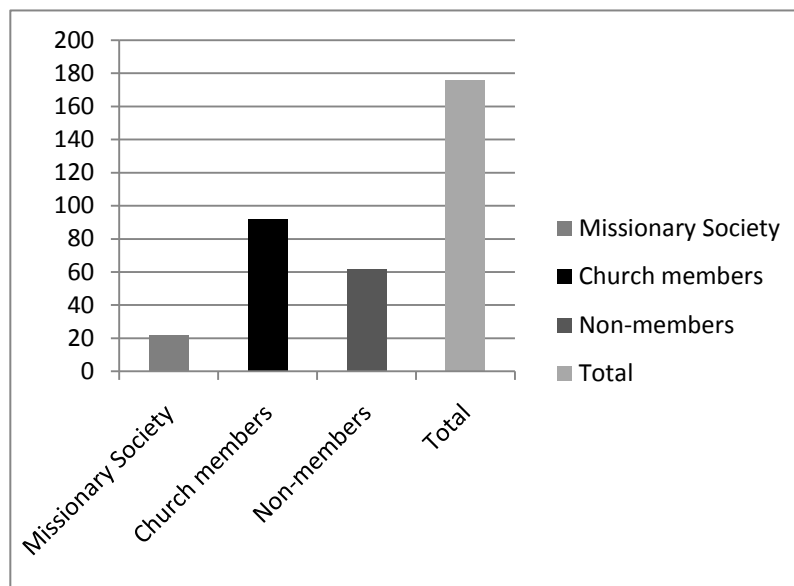
a. Yes b. No

23. Please share any comments you have describing what you learned during this mission education

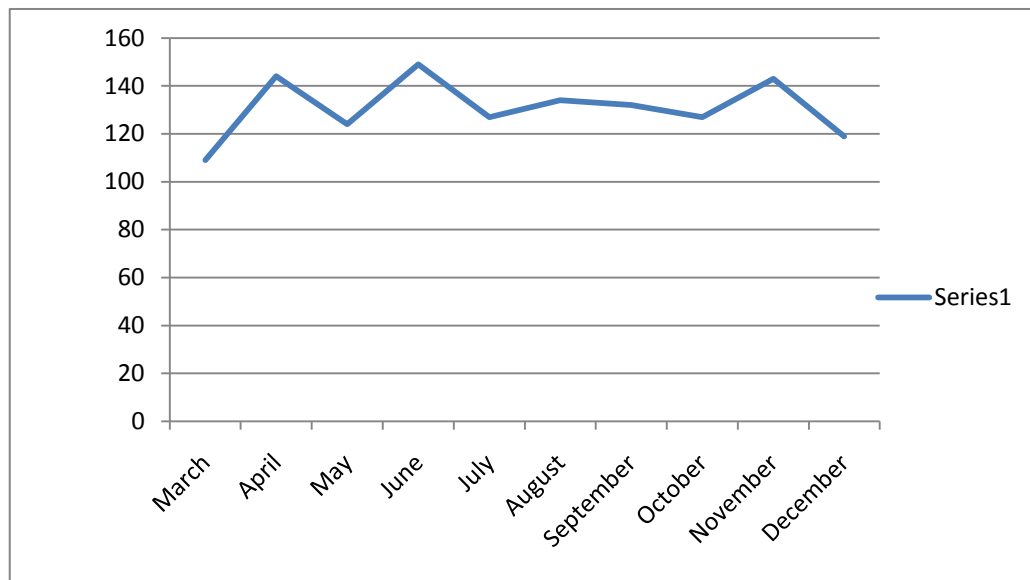
project: _____

Category	Attendance	Group total
Missionary Society	22	26
Church members	92	163 (unofficial)
Non-members	62	N/A
Total	176	

Percentage of Group Total	
84.60%	Missionary Society
56.40%	Church members
35.20%	Non-members



Month	Average
March	109
April	144
May	124
June	149
July	127
August	134
September	132
October	127
November	143
December	119
AVERAGE	131



The Greenville News

High: 89°
Weather, 4B

GreenvilleOnline.com

SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2009 ■ FINAL EDITION

Gunfire rips through Greenville complex

By E. Richard Walton
STAFF WRITER
erwalton@greenvillenews.com

Witnesses are being sought to tell investigators what they saw after two groups exchanged volleys of shots in an apartment complex in the Greenville-Spartanburg community Saturday afternoon, a commander said.

No injuries were reported, Greenville police Lt. Theresa Thompson said. The first shots were fired in a group clustered in Spartanburg Court at 3:20 p.m., followed by a "retaliation" of gunfire, she said. Investigators spoke to witnesses, but they all said

they didn't see anything or were indoors, she said. "Some said they thought it was firecrackers," Thompson said.

She said police are pretty sure no one was hurt. "We checked all the hospitals," she said.

Three vehicles — two cars and a truck — were damaged, Thompson said. Detectives were scouring the community for clues, but by evening, hours later, there were few tangible leads to follow.

"There were shell casings," Thompson said, adding that police were not releasing what kinds they were.

Thompson said investigators were still hoping that someone saw something and was willing to tell police.

She said tips can be phoned in anonymously by calling (864) 271-GCPD, or via 271-GCPD.

Tips still can be left at CrimeStoppers at 23-CRIME, she said, but city police receive the tip soon-

Conditioning
Henig Furs at **B**
We welcome all furs for storage regardless of where you purchased it!
Henig Fur Salon • Haywood Mall • 864-678-9290

Several times a year, I get painful flare-ups of **Gout**

Radiant Research is conducting a clinic research study of an investigational medication for Gout. Qualified participants will receive all study-related exams an investigational medication at no cost and may be compensated up to \$350 for their time and travel.

Call Mon-Fri for more information
864.848.1002
552-A Memorial Dr., EXT., Greer, SC
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The Greenville News

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Sheardrick Davis

Greenville



Miss Sheardrick Davis of Greenville died Nov. 17, 2008.

Survivors are her parents, Erica Cheeks and Pierre Mansell of Greenville.

Services: 2 p.m. Saturday, November 22, 2008, at Trinity United Methodist Church, 2703 Augusta St., with burial in the Resthaven Memorial Gardens.

The family is located at their residence.

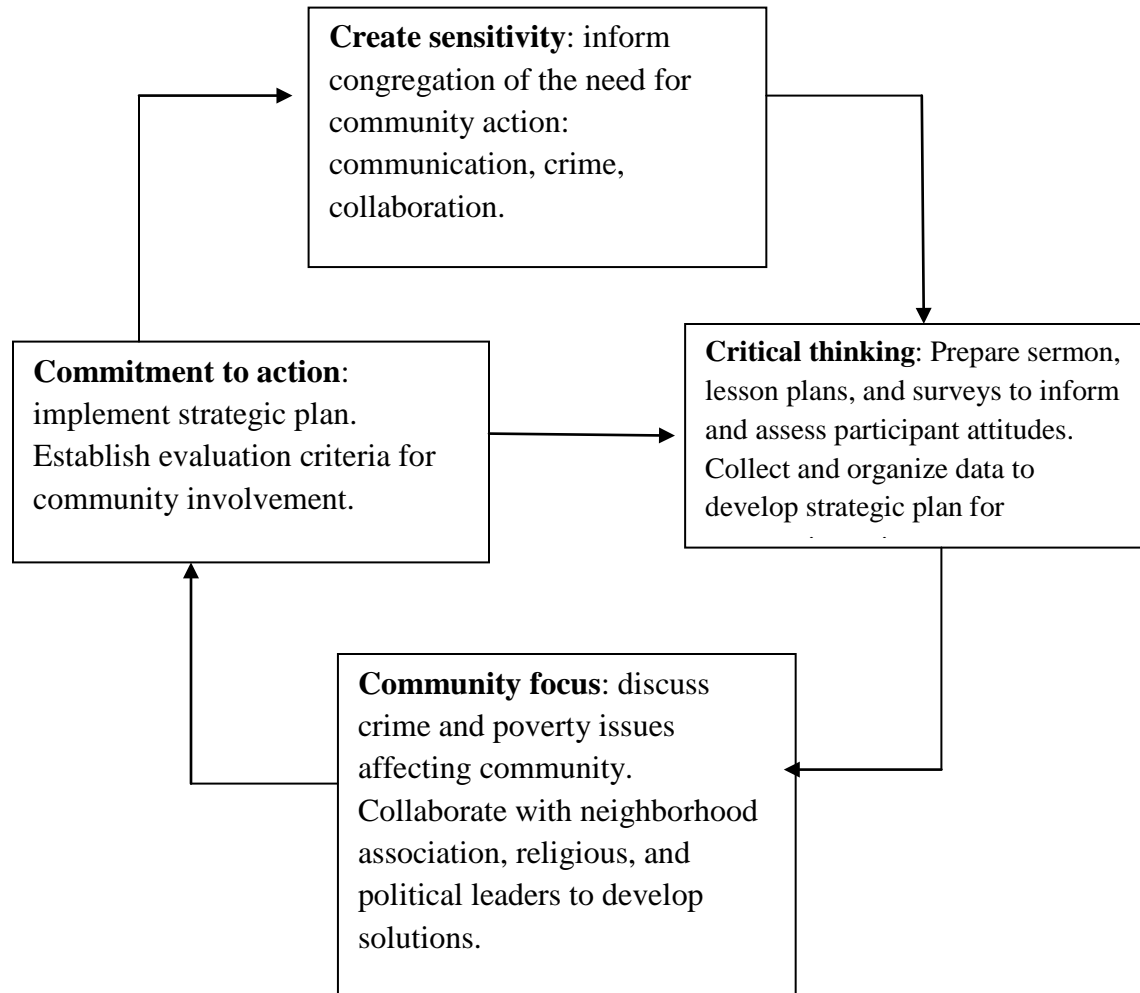
In our care, S.C. Franks Chapel of Remembrance

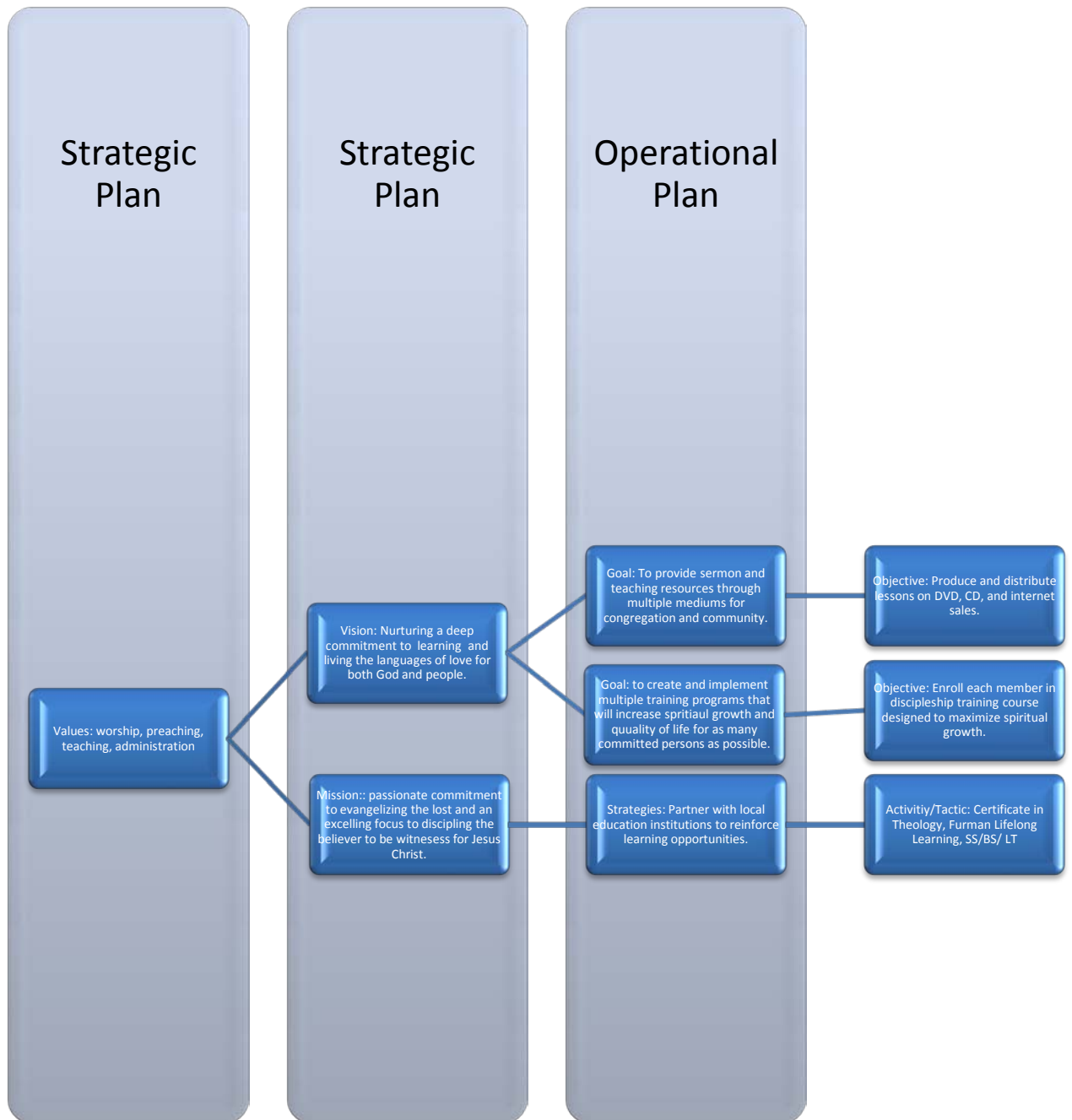
Published in *The Greenville News*: 11-21-2008

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<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>GREAT HISTORY PEOPLE ENJOY PARTICIPATING IN MUSIC MINISTRY PEOPLE ENJOY FELLOWSHIP/MEALS VARIETY OF MINISTRIES ARE POSSIBLE FULL TIME PASTOR FULL TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (BI-LINGUAL SPANISH/ENGLISH) TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED TO WORSHIP/BIBLE STUDY WEB SITE/MODERN COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP OF APPROXIMATELY 150 MEMBERS YOUTH ADVISORS ACTIVE WITH YOUTH/TUTORING ON WEDNESDAYS WELCOME SONG/WELCOME OF VISITORS</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>SPONTANEOUS LOCAL OUTREACH LAY LEADERSHIP TRAINING (ITC CERTIFICATE IN THEOLOGY) NEED FOR ADDITIONAL STAFF (PART TIME YOUTH MINISTER) LONG RANGE PLANNING- PARTNERSHIPS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS DEVELOPMENT OF LITTLE MOUNTAIN CAFE (YOUTH CENTER) DEVELOPMENT OF 313 SPARTANBURG STREET PROPERTY NEW MEMBERSHIP CLASS (SUNDAY SCHOOL) MULTIPLE WORSHIP SERVICES (BI- LINGUAL SERVICE) PARTNERSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING CHURCHES (I.E. NEW BEG/OVERBROOK) NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH PROGRAM</p>
<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>REACTIVE/SHORT TERM COMMITMENT TO MINISTRY PASTOR/STAFF (SMALL) WORKLOAD TOO HEAVY POOR COMMITMENT TO PLANNING/EXECUTION AMONG LEADERSHIP POOR COMMUNICATION/EXECUTION FROM VARIOUS AUXILIARIES INADEQUATE FACILITIES LARGE NUMBER OF INACTIVE MEMBERS (OVER 100) INEFFECTIVE EVANGELISM INGROWN FELLOWSHIP LACK OF MEMBER CARE POOR COMMITMENT TO STEWARDSHIP/TITHING POOR COMMITMENT TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: SS/BIBLE STUDY</p>	<p>THREATS</p> <p>FRAGILE/VULNERABLE ECONOMY LANGUAGE BARRIER (FEW SPANISH SPEAKING MEMBERS) LACK OF EDUCATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL OVERSIGHT MORAL DECAY/DECLINE OF TRUST IN RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS COMPETING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS/THEOLOGIES COMPLEX ZONING ORDINANCES FOR GREENVILLE CITY AND COUNTY CURRENT LOCATION LIMITS CHURCH GROWTH POTENTIAL CHURCH SPLITS/CHURCH HOPPING COMMUNITY CONDUCTIVE TO CRIME</p>







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