

# THE PURPOSES OF THE CHURCH AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION

## Session 2 – Reaching Our Community

### *Learning to Fish for People Like Jesus*

*“One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers—Simon, also called Peter, and Andrew—throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. Jesus called out to them, ‘**Come, follow Me, and I will show you how to fish for people!**’ And they left their nets at once and followed Him.”*

Matthew 4:18-20 (NLT)

### *Jesus’ Strategy of Fishing for People*

See Matthew 10 and Luke 10.

#### **1. Know what you are \_\_\_\_\_.**

You must identify who you are trying to reach.

##### **(1) Jesus had a clear evangelistic target:**

*“I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”*

Matthew 15:24 (NIV)

##### **(2) Paul had a clear evangelistic target:**

*“I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, just as Peter had been to the Jews.”*

Galatians 2:7 (NIV)

##### **(3) Jesus gave the disciples a clear evangelistic target:**

*“Don’t go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel.”*

Matthew 10:5-6 (NIV)

Here are four ways to define our target.

### A. Define Our Target G \_\_\_\_\_ !

ASK: How many people live in your area?

According to a 2020 Percept Demographic report on those living within a 5-mile radius of our building, there are 127,184 persons residing in our area. This represents an increase of 16,582 or 15.0% since 2000.

### B. Define Our Target D \_\_\_\_\_ !

ASK: What kind of people live in this area?

Here are some things we learned from a demographic report:

- The largest age group in terms of numbers is Survivors (age 39 to 59) comprised of 35,408 persons or 27.8% of the total population in the area. Boomers (age 60 to 77) are next at 19.6% of the population.
- The overall education level in the area is somewhat high. College graduates account for 62.5% of those over 25.
- 24.2% of adults are single (never married); 59.5% are married; 16.3% are divorced or widowed.
- Anglos represent 81.5% of the population and all other racial/ethnic groups make up just 18.5% which is well below the national average of 41%. The largest of these groups, Asians, accounts for 7.7% of the total population. African-Americans are projected to be the fastest growing group increasing by 19.4% between 2020 and 2025.
- The average household income is \$163,604.

### C. Define Our Target C \_\_\_\_\_ !

ASK: What are their values, interests and fears?

Here is what we learned:

“Concerns which are likely to exceed the national average include: Satisfying Job/Career, time for recreation/leisure, retirement opportunities, social injustice, achieving a fulfilling marriage and long-term financial security.”

- Family problems are estimated to include: Finding/providing aging parent care

(17.9%), dealing with teen/child problems (17.6%), dealing with alcohol/drug abuse (15.2%), dealing with abusive relationships (8.0%), and dealing with divorce (4.3%).

- Community problems are estimated to include: Dealing with social injustice (14.2%), finding/providing good schools (22.8%), neighborhood crime and safety (22.7%), dealing with racial/ethnic prejudice (13.4%), dealing with problems in school (11.8%), and dealing with neighborhood gangs (5.5%).

#### **D. Define Our Target S \_\_\_\_\_ !**

ASK: What do they already know about the gospel?

##### Here is what we learned:

- 35.1% of people in our target are strongly involved with their faith; 32.2% are somewhat involved; 31.8% are not involved.
- 24.1% of the people decreased their involvement with their faith in the last 10 years.
- The largest religious group by preference are Catholics at 27.7%, followed by Lutherans at 19.1%.
- The largest spiritual/personal concerns include: dealing with stress (31.1%), finding companionship (18.1%), finding life direction (16.1%), finding a good church (12.1%), and finding spiritual teaching (9.3%).
- 78.6% of people believe in God.
- The overall music style preferred can be described as somewhat traditional at 29.2%, while contemporary is not far behind at 22.9%.

#### **Personalizing Our Target**

##### Meet “Eden Prairie Ed & Paula”

- They’re well educated.
- They basically like their jobs and where they live.
- Health and fitness are high priorities for them and their family.
- Family values and traditions are very important.
- They are somewhat down on or a bit skeptical of “organized” religion.
- They listen to contemporary music.
- They would rather be in a large group than a small one. Why? Because in a large group they can hide. Nobody puts them on the spot. Nobody is going to make them stand and say their name. They can sit in the back and leave if they don’t like it.
- They care about quality and excellence.
- They have a church background but may not find that background meaningful.
- Music and movies are important.
- They prefer the casual and informal over the formal.
- They are over-extended in both time and money.

- They consider themselves spiritual but may not know Christ.

Some church-based activities that might attract their attention include:

- Marriage enrichment opportunities
- Active retirement programs
- Parent training programs
- Cultural programs (music, drama, art)
- Divorce support
- Addiction recovery programs (e.g., Celebrate Recovery)
- Sports programs

Once we know what we're fishing for, then...

## 2. Fish for the kind of fish \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Every study of evangelistic outreach reveals that 85% or more of all converts...are brought to Christ by someone they trust—a member of the family, neighbor, close friend, or business associate” (Roger Fredrikson, Gospel of John).*

How do we determine who our church can best reach? Ask these two questions:

**(1) What kind of people are we already reaching?**

**(2) What kind of leaders do we have?**

Here are the facts:

- We can best \_\_\_\_\_ people that we \_\_\_\_\_ to!
- Leaders attract who they \_\_\_\_\_, not who they \_\_\_\_\_.

## 3. Learn to \_\_\_\_\_.

*“Jesus knew what they were thinking....”*  
Matthew 9:4; 12:25; Mark 2:8; Luke 5:22; 9:47; 11:17

*“I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore, be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.”*

Matthew 10:16 (NKJV)

*“Be wise in the way you act toward those who are not believers.”*

Colossians 4:5 (TEV)

THE PROBLEM: The longer I am a believer, \_\_\_\_\_ I think like an unbeliever.

**How to Discover the “Mind-set” of Unbelievers: \_\_\_\_\_ !**

If you don't ask the right questions,  
You won't get the right answers.

If you don't get the right answers,  
You won't develop the right strategy.

If you don't develop the right strategy,  
You won't get the right results.

*“We need to know the people we're trying to reach, so we can connect the Truth to their everyday lives.... What are your friends' greatest concerns, hopes, desires, fears, longings? What are their greatest objections to the Christian faith? What are they pursuing? Who or what do they serve in a spiritual sense? What's the one thing they most want in life? Answers to these questions will...help us apply the Gospel to their hearts.”* Robert Warrenburg

### **3 Action Steps**

**1) Ask the people of the church to help us to \_\_\_\_\_ our community.**

**2) Review the details of the \_\_\_\_\_ report of your community.**

Review and make note of all key details about people, including the following:

- *Current population*: age composition, education levels, economic base, employment, marital status and housing information.
- *Religious information*: Learn about people's religious views. It would also be helpful, if this information can be obtained, to list all churches in the community, how many members, average attendance.

### 3) Interview \_\_\_\_\_ in your community.

#### **Description:**

Each church leader is asked to interview two community leaders. Here is a list of the types of leaders who could be interviewed:

- *Local political officials:* mayors, city council members, state representatives, and congressmen.
- *Journalists:* editor of the community newspaper, news anchor for local TV and radio stations, etc.
- *Educators:* school principals, school superintendent.
- *Law enforcement officials:* chief of police, local magistrate (judge).
- *Business leaders:* presidents/CEOs/owners of key local businesses.

#### **Purposes:**

1. Increase the awareness and concern of church leaders and the congregation regarding the social, economic, physical and spiritual needs of community people.
2. Become more aware of community needs in order to clarify the vision of the church for reaching people with the gospel.
3. Determine how community leaders perceive the church can be of help in the community.
4. Discover what community leaders think regarding the testimony of the church and its effectiveness in the local community.

#### **Survey Questions:**

##### Personal Information

1. How many years have you lived in the community?
2. What is your occupation?
3. What is your title?
4. How long have you been involved in this area of leadership?

##### Community

1. What do you think of our community? That is, describe its general health. Is it aging, friendly, etc.?
2. In your opinion, where is our community going to be in the next 5 years? How is it going to change economically or socially?
3. In your opinion, what kind of community growth do you anticipate in the next two years; e.g., population growth, housing growth, etc.?

4. What do you see the moral climate of our community to be?
5. In the next two years, do you see the moral climate changing for better or worse?
6. What do you think most families are like in our community?
7. How do you see the family role changing in the next two years, e.g., more or less divorces, more or less single parents, etc.?
8. What are the most felt or pertinent needs of our community now?
9. What do you think will be the most pertinent needs of our community in the next 5 years?
10. What is your heart or burden for the local community?

#### Church

1. What do you think is the role of the church in the community?
2. How do you perceive the church to be influential in the role of the family?
3. Had you heard of our church before this interview?
4. Are you currently a member of a church, synagogue, mosque, etc.?
5. What is your personal philosophy in life?

With regard to each ministry idea, ask these questions:

- (1) Is this potential ministry biblical?
- (2) Will this potential ministry enable the church to fulfill our purpose statement, especially in the area of evangelistic outreach, and does it reflect our values?
- (3) Does the church have the human, financial and facility resources to take on the ministry?
- (4) Is any other church or Christian organization participating in this ministry in our area to reach the people that we want to see reached?

#### 4. Go \_\_\_\_\_.

**Let our target determine our approach.**

*“When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you.”*

Luke 10:8 (NIV)

Adapt to your local customs and culture, as long as it doesn't violate the Bible!

The Apostle Paul's evangelistic strategy was to adapt to the situation that God put him in:

*“To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews.... In the same way, when working with Gentiles, I live like a Gentile...in order to win Gentiles. I become all things to all people, that I may save some of them by whatever means are possible.”*

1 Corinthians 9:21-22 (NIV/TEV)

Here’s the point: You can’t expect unbelievers to act like believers until they are! Paul said:

*“Whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.”*

1 Corinthians 9:22 (TLB)

**Jesus’ standard approach: \_\_\_\_\_.**

With this in mind, let’s consider our evangelism strategy:

**(1) The needs of unbelievers determine our \_\_\_\_\_.**

*“Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”*

Mark 2:17 (NIV)

*“Jesus said, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’”*

Matthew 20:32; Mark 10:51; Luke 18:41

**People will often respond to Christ  
if we discover the key to their hearts.**

**THE KEY: \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Before you can share the Good News,  
you must first capture their attention.**

**The felt needs of the unchurched are primarily:  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.**

**(2) The mind-set of unbelievers determines our \_\_\_\_\_.**

Jesus: *“Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves!”*

Matthew 10:16 (NKJV)



Jesus: *“The people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.”*  
 Luke 16:8 (NIV)

**(3) The culture of unbelievers determines our \_\_\_\_\_.**

The Key Question: Who are we trying to impress?

**5. Find the fish that are \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Focus on the most receptive audience in the area.**

*“If a home or town refuses to welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake its dust off your feet.”*  
 Matthew 10:14 (CEV)

*“You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”*  
 Mark 12:34 (TEV)

- Growing churches focus on reaching receptive people
- Non-growing churches often focus on re-enlisting inactive people

**Who are the most receptive people?**

**(1) Those in \_\_\_\_\_.**

**(2) Those \_\_\_\_\_.**

Generally, these are the ten most receptive groups of people:

1. Second-time visitors to the church
2. Close friends and relatives of new converts
3. People going through a divorce
4. Those who feel their need for a recovery program (alcohol, drugs, sexual, and so forth)
5. First-time parents
6. The terminally ill and their families
7. Couples with major marriage problems

8. Parents with problem children
9. Recently unemployed or those with major financial problems
10. New residents in the community

6. Use \_\_\_\_\_.

### Offer people choices

The more hooks you use, \_\_\_\_\_.

*“I become all things to all people so that I may save some of them  
by whatever means are possible.”*

1 Corinthians 9:22 (TEV)

**We live in a world full of choices!**

### Saturation Evangelism

Using every available means  
to reach every available person  
at every available time.

The idea is that one of the ways will eventually break through.

### Why We Usually Fish with Only One Hook

- The wrong question: How much will it \_\_\_\_\_?
- The right question: Who will it \_\_\_\_\_?

### Financing Evangelism in Our Church

1. Money spent on evangelism is never an “expense”; it is \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Churches do not have “money problems”; they have \_\_\_\_\_.

**Hudson Taylor said:**

**“God’s work done God’s way will not lack \_\_\_\_\_.”**

### *Personal and Church Exercises*

1. Personal: Write down the names of 5 people you are praying will come to know Jesus:
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
  - e.
  
2. For our church, discuss the following with others:
  - a. What do we already know about the people in our area?
  
  - b. How can we learn more?
  
  - c. Who has God called us to reach?
  
  - d. Does this match who we are?
  
  - e. If we are to reach the group God is calling us to reach...
    - ...what strengths do we already have?
  
    - ...what strengths do we need to develop?
  
    - ...what changes will we need to consider?