

Special
Evangelism
Issue

LEADING GATHERING LIVING



[ON MISSION]



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[ON MISSION]

This is a special evangelism issue of *On Mission* magazine. *On Mission* highlights missionaries, chaplains and churches working to reach North America and the world for Christ. *On Mission* is a publication of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

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Your gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® give missionaries the resources they need to spread the gospel across North America. Give online at AnnieArmstrong.com/Give.

A Gospel challenge

By Kevin Ezell, NAMB president (@kevezell)

One night many years ago Bill Sullivan had a conversation about Jesus with a young, twenty-something couple named Mike and Glenda. They came to faith in Christ, and a few days later, I stood on a pew and watched my parents get baptized. I never met Bill Sullivan and didn't fully understand what my parents did that night, but that gospel conversation changed my parents' lives for eternity.



It changed the trajectory of their three children, 13 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren as well.

I'm convinced that for the church in North America to make a dent in lostness, we need more Bill Sullivans—more believers actively engaging their neighbors and coworkers in gospel conversations.

You will find many stories in this special edition of *On Mission* of believers and churches who are putting their faith into action and seeing God work in some remarkable ways. I hope these can serve as models and inspiration for what all of us can do.

Sometimes, it is easy to overlook all of the opportunities God has given us. We have posted a prayer guide at GCChallenge.com that will help lead you through praying for the people in your life with whom you can share the gospel. These are people all around us; we interact with them every day. I believe if we pray for them and ask God to help us, we will see opportunities multiply.

Pray also for your Christian brothers and sisters, that they would be faithful in sharing Jesus with the people in their lives. And pray for your pastor as he seeks to make evangelism a priority and create a gospel conversation culture in your church.

If we all approach this with urgency and join arms in this effort, we will see a wave of gospel conversations and salvations sweep across North America. We will see renewal in our churches. Please join me in praying—and taking action—today. [\[OM\]](#)



Go to GCChallenge.com to make the pledge for gospel conversations and share your gospel conversation story.

Engage24 workshops

Workshops provide practical lessons from Southern Baptist pastors on how they lead their members to live on mission.

Speakers include:

Tim Dowdy

James Merritt

Hal Seed

Ronnie Floyd

Vance Pitman

Ted Traylor

Joel Southerland

Jimmy Scroggins

Ken Whitten

John Meador



Register today at namb.net/Engage24

Best activities for unchurched friends

Activities that students are most likely to invite their non-believing friends to:

- 84% Social events
- 60% Weekly large-group teaching
- 53% Weekly student worship
- 51% Weekly small groups and Bible studies
- 46% Summer camps
- 45% Day trips
- 44% 2-3 Day retreats
- 21% Service projects
- 17% Activities planned with a local middle or high school
- 13% Overnight trips like camping
- 6% Mission trips

Sources: NAMB Research, LifeWay Research

The Pulse on student evangelism

No one would deny the importance of reaching the next generation for Christ. The North American Mission Board, in partnership with LifeWay, recently conducted a survey of student ministers to learn more about the state of student evangelism in North America.

Hispanic youth in America

Today, Hispanics are the youngest major ethnic group in the United States. Nearly half of U.S.-born Latinos are younger than 18.

Source: PewResearch.com, April 20, 2016

Strongest influences for youth ministries

- 67% Pastors
- 57% Conferences and events
- 50% Authors
- 38% Leaders who are not pastors, teachers or authors
- 31% Teachers
- 31% Ministries
- 27% Classes and training

Sources: NAMB Research, LifeWay Research

Time management

How student ministers spend their time:

- 13.6 Hours alone, handling logistics, paperwork and preparing lessons
- 7.6 Hours with students
- 5.9 Hours with the church staff
- 4.5 Hours doing other tasks
- 2.9 Hours with adult volunteers
- 2.1 Hours with a parent

Sources: NAMB Research, LifeWay Research



Most popular social media platforms for teenagers

Although Facebook still has the highest number of users among teenagers, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter ranked higher in importance.

Source: Statista.com, February 2017

Social media connection

Facebook and Instagram are the most popular forms of social media for youth ministers when communicating to students, parents and adult volunteers.

Sources: NAMB Research, LifeWay Research



Noted

85% of all believers ages 18-29 agree that they have a responsibility to share the gospel with unbelievers.

69% feel comfortable sharing their faith.

25% look for ways to share the gospel.

27% intentionally build friendships with unbelievers in order to do so.

Source: Christianity Today

Sharing by generations

Millennials

Millennials share their faith more than any other generation today. Nearly two-thirds of Christian Millennials (65%) have presented the gospel to another within the past year.

Busters

Since tracking began in 1996, data shows born-again Busters, who are currently in their thirties and forties (63%), were evangelizing at an all-time high in 1998. However, evangelism practice among Busters is down to 48% today.

Boomers

Among the Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964), nearly two-thirds of born-again Boomers (65%) shared their faith in 2007, but today, this has dropped to less than half (49%).

Elders

The outreach efforts of born-again Elders (ages 68 and older), have remained fairly steady over the past several decades. Today, Elders (53%) share their faith about as much as the average born-again Christian (52%).

Source: Barna Research

Measured

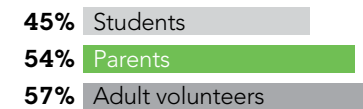
Connecting with students

How student ministers communicate with students, parents and adult volunteers:

Email



Phone



Text



Social Media



Face-to-face



Sources: NAMB Research, LifeWay Research

Teens and their phones

93% of teens between ages 15 and 17 have a mobile device that can access the Internet.

On average, teenagers and millennial-age groups spend around 200 minutes per day on their mobile devices.

Source: Statista.com, February 2017

Teens on Scripture

Although 69% of American teens claim to own a Bible, only 3% read their Bible daily.

Source: Barna Research, August 28, 2016



Teens and social media

51% of 13-33 year olds agree that getting "likes" on social media gives them a rush.

35% of teens say they use a social media platform less once their parents join the network.

Source: YPulse.com, August 2, 2016

Teens and TV

Over 70% of children between the ages of 8 and 18 have a TV in their bedrooms. On average, they spend about 4.5 hours a day watching TV, which also includes accessing shows through phones and computers.

Source: LiveStrong.com, June 13, 2017



Heard

“Many at this school who don’t believe have either had no experience with Christians or bad experiences with Christians. I’m looking at this trip as an awesome opportunity to change that.”

Devon Bartholomew, a NAMB-endorsed chaplain at Syracuse University, on the collegiate Send Relief trip he is leading to Puerto Rico to assist in hurricane relief efforts

“Because of GenSend, living on mission is such a part of me now. I see my entire life through the lens of the gospel, and that changes everything.”

Sarah Resse Hunt, former Liberty University student and GenSend campus mobilizer in Portland, Oregon

“When I was on a short-term mission trip in Salt Lake City, I read Romans 15:20-21. When I read that Scripture, I knew God was calling me to carry the gospel to those whom had never heard before—just as Paul did, and I knew Salt Lake City was where He was calling me to do that.”

Brittany Thompson Ferris, GenSend participant

Source: NAMB



The Pulse on youth in America

36% of younger millennials—those born between 1990 and 1996—consider themselves religiously unaffiliated.

- 19% Evangelical Protestant
- 16% Catholic
- 11% Mainline Protestant
- 8% Other
- 6% Historically Black Protestant
- 3% Other Christian groups

Source: PewResearch.com, May 12, 2015

Disaster Relief

Disaster Relief is a Send Relief initiative to help families who've survived natural disasters.

*Send hope.
Send help.
Send Relief.*



Hunger/Poverty



Adoption/Foster Care



Trafficking




Refugees/Internationals

Send Relief is part of an ever-growing and ever-changing evangelism movement that sends hope, help and relief to North America for God's ultimate glory.

God cares about human suffering and calls His people to do the same. It's clear in the Old and New Testaments that we are to love one another, serve one another and to care for the weak and vulnerable.

Send Relief initiatives enable the Church to do just that. Send Relief offers opportunities that can create gospel conversations while meeting community needs in the areas of disaster relief, adoption and foster care, poverty, refugees and internationals and human trafficking.

 Send Relief invites gospel conversations into situations that seem hopeless. Learn how to get involved at SendRelief.org.




Reaching North America with the gospel

Send Network exists to equip the local church with tools to have gospel conversations and reach the lost in North America.

The Church. Built on the apostles and prophets with Christ as the cornerstone, the Church is made for believers to gather, learn, encourage, worship and glorify God. The Church is for unbelievers to learn about the saving grace of Christ.

The North American Mission Board's Send Network recognizes the importance of church planting and the crucial role it plays in pushing back lostness in North America. The purpose of Send Network is to help churches plant churches. Send Network supports, trains, coaches and encourages church planters as they reach communities with the hope of the gospel.

Although church planting can be challenging, it can also be one of the most rewarding callings. Send Network seeks to enhance the church planting experience and further God's kingdom.

 Send Network spreads the gospel through church planting. Get started at namb.net/SendNetwork.

The most important conversation

Pastor and evangelist Greg Laurie gives practical advice on how to start gospel conversations.

ON MISSION: Who is the first person you spoke to about Jesus?

GREG LAURIE: The first person I engaged with the gospel was a woman sitting on Newport Beach in Orange County. I was 17-years-old and had been a Christian for about three weeks. I was very new to the faith. Someone had given me a copy of a little booklet called *The Four Spiritual Laws* put out by Campus Crusade years ago. I was so new at what I was doing that I hadn't gotten the chance to memorize it. I picked that woman because she was my mom's age, and I thought she'd be nice to me. I asked her, "Could I talk to you about God?" She agreed, so I sat down and read the booklet verbatim. I just read it; I was so nervous. While reading it, I'd look up at her periodically, and she would just stare at me. At the end of the booklet was the

question, "Is there any reason why you shouldn't believe in Jesus Christ?" When I asked her that, she said, "No." I hadn't planned for success, so I told her to close her eyes. I led her in a prayer, and she prayed it. After she was done praying, she said, "Something just happened to me." That's when I realized if God can use someone like me, knowing as little as I knew and reading out of a book, what more could He do with me once I studied and read His Word?

OM: What is the Great Commission, exactly?

GL: Going into the world to preach the gospel and make disciples is the Great Commission. And the Great Commission is for everybody—not just preachers. It's for health nuts and soccer moms and teenagers and single folks. It's for whomever is a believer. I'd take it a step further and say that it is a sin to not fulfill the Great Commission. It's a sin to omit the good news by not sharing. Here we are, as Christians, and we have the answer to something eternal. It's exciting, and it can be fun! Next to knowing the Lord, the greatest feeling I've

PHOTOS BY GREG SCHNEIDER



Greg Laurie shares the gospel at a Harvest America Crusade in partnership with NAMB in Phoenix, Arizona.

Tell Someone

Greg Laurie trains a group of volunteers how to share their faith in preparation for evangelism outreach.



known is when I've led someone to the Lord.

OM: Why evangelism? Most think they'll just walk the walk. Why talk about Jesus when we can show them Him, instead?

GL: We're commanded to do both. We're commanded to be a good example, and we're commanded to preach the gospel. Jesus did not say, "Go into all the world, and be a good example." He said, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel." I'm not suggesting that we should be a bad example. Being a good example earns us the right to share our faith. We are called in Scripture to verbally articulate the gospel. Paul says in Romans, "How will they hear unless someone tells

them?" It's a great thing to model for people what a Christian is, but it's a greater thing to tell people about Jesus.

OM: How do you know when to share the gospel with someone?

GL: Well, as Kenny Rogers once said, "You gotta know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, know when to run." I think the key to evangelism is asking the Lord to interrupt you and lead you in that time. Sometimes, you're called to sow a seed or water a seed others have sown. Other times, you're called to reap. The Lord has both helped me sow seeds and specifically prompted me to directly ask the question,

"Hey, would you like to accept Jesus Christ right now?" That's something you don't necessarily do right out of the blue. You've got to have conversations and establish relationships. The Lord will lead you in every conversation, relationship and opportunity. He will help you be intentional. We just need to listen to the Holy Spirit instilled in us for guidance.

OM: What's a good icebreaker or way to bring up the gospel to nonbelievers?

GL: I've started with my testimony. It works! I begin with who I was and how I acted before Christ was in my heart. When you're not a believer, you may think, "Where do these people come from?" I think they're shocked to find that we used to be just like them or maybe worse. The most effective tool in our evangelistic toolbox is our personal stories. The apostle Paul almost always started his messages with his personal testimony. It's a great way to build a bridge to preach to someone without preaching at someone.

OM: What if telling your personal story to a nonbeliever isn't natural?

GL: I'd say pray that it's supernatural. There needs to come a moment where you tell your story and bridge it to the life and death and resurrection of Jesus and how that's changed you for good. Nothing about it is natural, but it is supernatural.

OM: After your personal testimony has been shared, what's next?

GL: Ask a lot of questions. Ask them if they've heard the gospel before. Ask them about themselves, and get their personal story. Ask them what they think the meaning of life is. When I ask a lot of questions, I know how to appropriately share the gospel in that situation. We should avoid being robotic. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

OM: What's a good way to avoid being robotic?

GL: Chumming. It's an act of relationship and friendship that engages the other person in a comfortable conversation. A lot of times chumming is a good opener for a gospel conversation. For example, I chum with those in the service industry. Parking attendants, baristas, gas station employees and grocery workers are all people dying for good conversation. They are more likely getting snubbed at their jobs. People might be more dismissive of them; however, one chumming session can change that and open the door for evangelism. It's effortless.

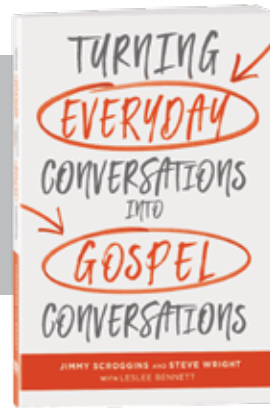
OM: What are some steps to evangelizing that believers could practice today?

GL: First, chum it up! Engage in conversation, and then follow-up a few times after that. Establish some sort of relationship, and share your testimony. Ask a lot of questions to get to know the person you're talking to. Last, don't forget to pray for God's supernatural works to happen to you and through you for His glory! **[OM]**



Explore NAMB evangelism resources, visit namb.net/Evangelism, and learn how to share your faith at namb.net/3Circles.

This article was excerpted from *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* by Jimmy Scroggins.



Everyday people; everyday conversations

By Jimmy Scroggins

The average person has 27 conversations per day. A recent study revealed that both men and women utter an average of about 16,000 words each day. We can talk about sports, weather, clothes, shoes, movies and TV shows. We're even willing to debate the nuances of politics, the intricacies of health issues or the complexities of national economic matters. However, when it comes to bringing up the simple gospel, we shy away. We break out in hives, our palms sweat, our tongues are tied, and we find ourselves talking about everything but the gospel. The idea of injecting Jesus into our conversations causes great anxiety and fear for ordinary believers and pastors alike.

Many believers are afraid that gospel conversations will be confrontational or argumentative. We think we have to be trained for every possible theological perspective we may encounter before we can share the gospel. We're often overwhelmed by the need to memorize a dozen verses or anxious that someone might ask a question we can't answer. Sadly, sharing the gospel has lost its simplicity. It doesn't have to be this way.

Consider the natural flow of everyday conversations. Our conversations include laughter, introspection, empathy and body language. We speak and we listen. Ultimately, our conversations have an introduction, a general direction and a conclusion. Our conversations are never completely random or altogether open-ended. People are often looking to us to offer meaningful responses.

Jimmy Scroggins teaches the 3 Circles evangelism tool at NAMB and IMB's Send Conference.



When was the last time you had a conversation and the person with whom you were talking shared a problem, issue, or concern? It happens a lot. These interactions are gospel opportunities, and we train people to recognize and seize them.

Here's a message we got recently: *Today I stopped to get coffee, and the guy at the table next to me started a conversation with me, and it happened just like you said. He shared a problem, I asked if I could share something with him, and he said yes. He was so moved by our conversation that he took the napkin I shared the gospel on and went straight home to share with his wife. AMAZING.*

There you go! An everyday conversation turned into a gospel conversation that ended with a man crossing from death to life. Also, notice his immedi-

ate willingness to go and tell someone else. Every day is filled with opportunities like this one that will never again be captured. If we miss them, they're gone. When we're willing to turn conversations to the gospel, we'll find that the gospel is robust. God is still reconciling the world to Himself. "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear" (Isaiah 59:1).

Let the gospel be the filter

Eddie and Jacob are two young men who were holding each other accountable to share the gospel intentionally. They had been praying together for open doors and opportunities to do so. One day, while walking through the grocery store, they saw a man and quickly assumed that he probably wouldn't be open to a gospel conversation. He

When was the last time you had a conversation and the person with whom you were talking shared a problem, issue, or concern? It happens a lot. These interactions are gospel opportunities, and we train people to recognize and seize them.

was a biker type: tattoos, leather vest, ponytail—the whole nine yards. Eddie and Jacob decided they would go ahead and approach the man despite their initial evaluation. To their surprise, he was very open to the gospel because his wife had been diagnosed with cancer only days earlier. The gospel gave this man great hope in the midst of his trial, and he repented and believed.

Another church member was sitting in a hospital waiting room with only one other man. The man was somewhat unkempt and seemed irritated and unapproachable. Plus, the man's size was a bit intimidating: he looked fully capable of hurting anyone who bothered him. Our church member prayed for the man and thought about God's arms not being too short to save. Then he mustered up his courage and spoke to the man, saying, "Sir, I know you don't know me, but I'd like to share some good news with you." The man responded by saying he "sure could use some good news." He came over and sat next to the church member, who shared the gospel with him using the 3 Circles. The man repented and believed in Jesus right there in that hospital waiting room.

In Scripture, we encounter many who may have seemed uninterested in hearing the gospel. Here's

a list of the least-likely people to repent and believe:

- Paul, who persecuted the church and killed Christians to stop the spread of the gospel (Acts 8:1)
- Man possessed by demons (Mark 5:1–15)
- Woman caught in adultery (John 8:1–11)
- Thief on the cross (Luke 23:32–43)

There is often a scriptural paradox regarding those who followed Jesus and those who rejected Him. The people who we think would follow Jesus don't (e.g., religious leaders, those who studied Scripture, rich young rulers, etc.). The people who we think would never come to Jesus do (e.g., tax collectors, thieves, prostitutes, murderers, etc.).

How do we know when someone is ready to hear and genuinely respond to the gospel? The fact is we really never know what God is doing in someone's heart. We need to have frequent, intentional gospel conversations and then allow the gospel to be the filter. **[OM]**

This article was excerpted from *Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* by Jimmy Scroggins.



Your Church On Mission, an evangelism podcast

The *Your Church on Mission* podcast brings you—the pastor—evangelism principles taken from real world examples. Be empowered to lead your church on mission and reach the lost in your community. Packed with powerfully transparent interviews from pastors of churches of all sizes, you won't want to miss an episode!

Share in the challenges and triumphs of pastors who've learned a thing or two, and discover how their takeaways can help you and your church grow in sharing the gospel, every time you tune in.



Download the 3 Circles app for your smart phone or tablet, and start turning everyday conversations into gospel conversations.

Listen now at
namb.net/Podcast



North American
Mission Board



Pastors leading *On Mission*

Produced by Alexandra Toy

10

pastors share their best advice for leading their congregations out of the pews and on gospel mission.

J.R. Lee
Freedom Church

"Always keep the vision of connecting people far from God to His plan for their lives. Vision tends to drift in the wrong direction. Therefore, keep the 'why' front and center because it allows you and your church to remain in step with Jesus' vision to spread His message throughout your city and to the ends of the earth."

Ed Litton
Redemption Church

"Do not say that your church cannot do this or that. People do what they are led to do. As a pastor, my job is to lead my church onto the mission field whether they are ready or not. We shouldn't wait for favorable circumstances. We should start acting now! Connect with other missional minded churches and engage in international and local missions. Connect with a growing church through one of Send City's church plants. Engage in something that seems small, and watch how God opens hearts and minds for His glory and for the good of the Church."

Ronnie Floyd
Cross Church

"Lead your church on mission intentionally and with a healthy stubbornness—never letting anyone lead you away from it. Your missional vision should be clear, concise and compelling. It should be the filter for your decision-making and the pathway to chart your strategic vision. If you do this, your church will not drift from the mission, and it can withstand any rift you may face about the vision. Lead your church with the mission on your heart at all times."

Bill Purvis
Cascade Hills Church

"Clarify, and be obsessed with the mission Jesus gave His church. We are to 'go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all that I commanded you' (Matthew 28:18-20)."

Johnny Hunt
First Baptist Church of Woodstock

"You cannot lead people whom you don't influence. Influence is a reality to leading others. I have come to realize I am good at specific things in leadership because of discipline and influence."

Ken Whitten
Idlewild Baptist Church

"Don't spiritualize management problems, and don't manage spiritual problems. Management problems have to be hit on the head with organization and excellence. Spiritual problems must be dealt with by prayer, God's word and faith."

Ted Traylor
Olive Baptist Church

"Leading the Church forward on mission demands the favor of God. So, keep your eyes on making disciples, prioritize seeking His favor and God will take you on a missional journey to His own glory."

James Merritt
Cross Pointe Church

"In 1 Corinthians 11:11, the apostle Paul said, 'Imitate me even as I imitate Christ.' Therefore, a lesson in missional leadership that I have learned is to set an example by living on mission myself. A passion for missions and evangelism is better caught than taught. A pastor must lead through his own priorities and lifestyle to set the example. He should live on mission at all times and should try to carry out the Great Commission by continually sharing the gospel. Leaders truly do lead by example."

Michael Catt
Sherwood Baptist Church

"In order to lead a church on mission, you must have a specific plan and mentality. By that, I mean you have to be intentional, purposeful, strategic and faithful. There are thousands of secondary distractions calling for our attention, but they do not lead to building the kingdom. When you are intentional, purposeful, strategic and faithful, you can easily say 'no' to secondary distractions in order to maintain the right priorities. Being faithful to the mission means being committed to the call no matter what you face. Leaders of churches on mission must do the hard things for a consistently long period of time and must press on regardless of opposition or little progress. Being a church on mission is a daily grind with glorious possibilities."

Mark Lashey
Lifehouse Church

"Don't focus on being a better leader; focus on being a better follower. Follow Jesus in a way that encourages and inspires others to join you. Follow Jesus in a way that expresses, 'Lord, I love you, and I trust you!' Follow Jesus in a way that is worshipful. When you fully follow Jesus, you will influence and motivate others to do the same. As the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians, 'Follow me as I follow Christ.'"



Learn more from leading evangelistic pastors at an Engage 24 workshop. Register now at namb.net/Engage24.

Churches gathering *On Mission*

By Josie Bingham

Evangelism is not just another word in the Christian dictionary. There is no fixed approach, no set answer for every congregation. Small, medium and large churches are growing through evangelism in unique, context-appropriate ways. The following three pastors share their churches' tools for gathering on mission. No two answers are exactly the same, yet they all center around the example of Jesus. God's grace sent Jesus on the ultimate rescue mission—to save us from our sins. Without that, there would be nothing to say, no one to evangelize, no reason to gather.



Evangelism is not a fixed approach. Many share the gospel in a variety of ways. Learn more from these three churches practices and biblical insights.



Gathering for a meal reaffirms the Church's role as family.

THE CHURCH AS FAMILY

Atlanta, Georgia

Atlanta was the last city Dustin Crawford expected to call home. Yet in June 2015, the Crawford family and two other church planters moved to the land of Chick-fil-A and the home of the Braves. In April 2016, Dustin and a group from their Sending Church planted Refuge Church ATL.

From drug dealers to prostitutes to the nouveau riche, all are welcome to seek out Refuge Church ATL for the gospel message and to break bread once a month over Fourth Sunday—a family meal served by the church once a month.

“Fourth Sunday is incredible because we get to see and hear gospel conversations being had amongst our church family right there at the table,” Dustin says. “It’s also there we get to really model evangelism and our passions as church leaders for creating a culture of soul keeping in our church.”

Dustin says there have been about 10 to 12 salvations now of their members who’ve accepted Christ after being rooted in a community that practices evangelism through knowing God’s Word and accepting who He calls them to be.

“God gave us a new heart for a new family here.”

Refuge Church ATL began as a gathering of 10 to 12 people but, overtime, they started their “slow

crawl” to 90 attending every Sunday.

“I call it a slow crawl because of our evangelism approach,” says Dustin. “We make sure people understand what the gospel is. Do they understand what it is for themselves? First, we tell people they’ve been transformed by the gospel. Then, we tell them they’ve been transformed by the gospel to transform others with the gospel. We stress this because if those who go to our church don’t understand the gospel, they won’t be able to share it with others, and lives won’t necessarily change.”

Dustin likens evangelism to soul keeping.

“If you’re spending time with the Lord, you’re full of health,” Dustin often reminds his church. “The gospel transforms us into new people. As 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, ‘Therefore if anyone is within Christ, the old has gone; the new is here!’ We often ask our congregation, ‘What identities are you?’ Then we show them who God says they are in Scripture. That’s important for evangelism because what you do flows from who you are.”

“We get an incredible response,” says Dustin. “It’s a biblical lens for people to see the world and to grasp truth and grow in it. We hear stories from people from all walks. And each time we’ve been amazed at how God has opened doors to create such a foundation for witnessing and family. When a pastor can go to his congregation and share what’s been going on—and celebrate what God’s done around us—that’s incredible. It’s abnormal but incredible at the same time.”

3 Ways to live out evangelism

By Dustin Crawford

1. Presence. Be present with God and with others. If you spend more time with Him—in His Word and in prayer—you will be more like Him and have a healthy soul to pour out to others. Without presence in Him, you’ll go to evangelize to someone but feel completely bone dry.

2. Hospitality. All of life is an opportunity to be hospitable. We always ask people, “How can a stranger become a family member in your presence?” Evangelism is understanding the gospel yourself and then transforming others’ lives by living out the gospel. It’s creating space where others can experience Jesus in your presence.

3. Congregation. Church is a time to participate and serve here, witness here and express family here. What would it look like to invite one person on Sunday to lunch? We show our congregation by hosting Fourth Sunday meal; it’s a way we can help people see what it looks like.

Dustin Crawford is the senior pastor of Refuge Church ATL.

“ We hoped to foster a culture where kids could just worship God and connect to Him through messages they could understand and internalize.”

REACHING STUDENTS

Columbus, Ohio

When Joel Kovacs asked a group of believers to help build a church founded on an untraditional approach, John McCambridge was one of the first to say, “Yes!” In 2010, Five14 Church was planted in a suburb of Columbus, Ohio called New Albany. Joel became the lead pastor, and John is now head of operations.

“Joel had this burning desire to start a church for high school students,” says John. “He took his inspiration from the camp, Young Life. Our aim was to be ‘No suit. No tie. No pretense.’ We hoped to foster a culture where kids could just worship God and connect to Him through messages they could

understand and internalize.”

John could relate. When he was 15 years old, he was totally unchurched. But he joined Young Life because his baseball team did.

“I remember liking being part of that group before I believed in Jesus or knew what the gospel was,” John says. “I think that shaped me to understand later that people who are nothing like Jesus, like Jesus. So, when Joel asked me and some others to be part of a church that highlighted only Jesus and His message for us all, I was all in. I kept thinking about how that foundation could build a church I’d have gone to when I was not a believer.”

John explains Five14’s evangelistic approach as two tiered—dynamic worship and digestible messages. Their church name comes from Matthew 5:14, “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden.”

“We found this verse to really capture the essence of our evangelistic approach,” says John. “We wanted to bring light to a dark world. We believe we can do that through loud and genuine praise during worship and through biblical and easily understandable messages.”

Teachings from pastors “who know that not everyone knows the gospel” have played a significant role in the rapid growth of Five14 Church. They’ve

Creating a space where students feel safe to ask questions and engage is a hallmark of Five14 Church.



gone from 300 people to 700-800 every weekend.

“This church and Sunday experience exists for others who don’t know Jesus,” says John. “Worship that is vibrant and energetic appeals to students and makes it a good place to bring their friends. We’ve seen that students bring their parents, too. Evangelism at Five14 is not about what the church does. Evangelism should be what the church is. That means being a place and community that is welcoming, caring and shows the love of Jesus. Students should be able to walk in and encounter an excitement that just bubbles out of its members. Then, those who are new, young in faith or

don’t yet believe will still desire to learn more or even be part of the church.”

“We started really being intentional with our language and centered many sermon series on the exploration of spiritual maturity,” says John. “We’ve heard from those who have a consumer mindset about church. They come thinking it’s about entertainment. Yes, we have loud music, and we dress casually. But we care deeply, and we love a lot. Evangelism is not entertainment. Evangelism is having depth within the walls of church that actually reaches and fishes for people. That’s what Jesus did. That’s what we’re trying to do.”



Faith Promise Church believes that contemporary music creates a welcoming culture and sows seeds among congregations.

WELCOMING CULTURE

Knoxville, Tennessee

Twenty years ago, Faith Promise Church was planted as the first relatively contemporary, evangelistic church in Knoxville, Tennessee. Lead pastor, Chris Stephens, and a core group wanted to create an environment inside a church where people could meet and experience God, commune with fellow believers and be held accountable to living on mission.

“We were the first of our generation in our location to do something contemporary,” says Chris. “People shouldn’t be afraid to attend church. They shouldn’t feel unworthy. God loves every person. He made every person.”

Faith Promise just launched their ninth campus; the other eight host gatherings average 7,500 people weekly.

“Culture trumps everything,” Chris says. “It’s what happens down the hall. It’s got to always be about welcoming those who walk through our doors just as Jesus would. Evangelism is about telling others the good news of Jesus Christ. We can’t do that

if we’re not interested in people or interested in welcoming them into our church and homes.”

Chris believes that culture starts with their front door greeters.

“From the time people pull up in the parking lot to the time they leave, they need to feel cared about,” says Chris. “We talk about it all the time. We have greeters who know to take people wherever they need to go. We have folks who stand by our kiosks to offer resources or guide those who are wondering what the next steps are in their walks of faith. If it’s a person’s first time, Faith Promise volunteers and staff are there to help.”

Boring is not a fruit of the Spirit, according to Chris.

“Evangelism is about what Jesus did, how He rescued us. We want to mirror Jesus ministry—that’s our evangelism approach. He included everyone, didn’t He? Anybody could sit at His table and eat with Him. That’s what we try to do. Without a culture of caring, there is no evangelism. We represent the body of Christ, but we can’t do that if we’re exclusive or reclusive.”

Faith Promise has special services specifically for the lost with invitations to accept Jesus as Lord

“Evangelism is about telling others the good news of Jesus Christ. We can’t do that if we’re not interested in people or interested in welcoming them into our church and homes.”

and Savior.

“We look for God to bring people and to reach people through people,” says Chris. “Our members know they can bring their friends and families to any service, but these designated ones are special. They are like parties for those who didn’t believe they’d be invited. They say, ‘Come as you are.’ That’s what Jesus said to us through His ministry. He’s the Master and the Model. We’re simply trying to do as He did.” **[OM]**

Josie Bingham writes for the North American Mission Board.



Learn more from top evangelistic pastors at namb.net/YourChurchOnMission.



Members living On Mission

A collegiate church trains
disciples who make disciples

By Tobin Perry

On a hot day in August 2016, some of Tracy Gatter's fellow college students invited her to a volleyball game.

That pickup volleyball game on the campus of the University of Idaho became a destiny-changer for Tracy.

Freshman small-group leaders from Resonate Church—a collegiate church ministering on six campuses in the Pacific Northwest—had organized the volleyball game and barbecue on campus as an outreach effort.

"I ended up playing against [Tracy] in a four-on-four volleyball game," said Alanna Engle, then a junior small group leader and one of the organizers of the event. "I thought she was pretty good at volleyball, and she immediately caught my attention because I had never met her. I got her phone number there and started asking her to hang out."

In the following months, Alanna and Tracy would meet and talk on a regular basis. Slowly, Tracy

Resonate Church encourages students to share their walks of faith through small groups and volleyball or various activities.

The church's track record in evangelism is impressive. Last year, nearly 150 college students moved from "death to life," as they like to describe salvation decisions at the church, through the ministry of Resonate.

began to open up about her life and background. Alanna would invite her to church, but Tracy made it clear she wasn't interested. However, she did keep the conversation going.

Jesus is precious, Hell is real and a choice is demanded

It was an ongoing conversation Alanna had been well-equipped to handle through her experience at Resonate. Like many young Christians who head to college, she had no experience sharing her faith with others. Though Alanna grew up in a Christian home and knew her Bible, evangelism hadn't been a priority.

But then came Resonate Church. For most of its decade-long existence, Resonate Church has been a disciple-making factory on college campuses in the Northwest. Senior pastor Keith Wieser and his team launched the church with six people on the campus of Washington State University in Pullman, Washington, in August of 2007. Today 1,000 people worship inside Resonate's six campuses in three states. More than 3,700 students participate in small groups in a typical year.

The church's track record in evangelism is impressive. Last year, nearly 150 college students moved from "death to life," as they like to describe salvation decisions at the church, through the ministry of Resonate.

But evangelism wasn't something that came naturally to Resonate when the church started in the fall of 2007. Though Keith and the other early leaders began the church with the desire to bring a relevant gospel to college students, they admittedly didn't do it well in the first year.

"About year two, we realized that we had a significant gap in our desire to be missional and our actually being missional," Keith says. "That's when we began to help our students to understand loss personally. When we did that students began to really understand what they had the opportunity to be part of."

Resonate leaders began to use a specific phrase with students to help them internalize the significant nature of evangelism and their role in it. *Jesus is precious, Hell is real and a choice is demanded.*

"We wanted to be able to tell the students why we do this," Keith says. "It's not to be a 'good Christian,' in whatever way that looks like. It's not to impress your small group leader or whatever those outside motivations could be. Really, the reason [to share the gospel] is because you look on the loss around you and, like Jesus looking over Jerusalem, you have compassion. This really begins to get to the heart of our students, so they can look at their roommates, their classmates, the people in their dorms and their apartments and the people at their work and to be able to understand that



Resonate Church equips students to share their faith with others on campus. Weekly Bible studies are one way students are fed.

behind every facade, there are significant questions only Jesus can answer."

One way that Resonate makes this truth a reality to students is through maps which illustrate how God is working in different parts of the cities where students live. Leaders at Resonate place a colored dot on a map where Resonate groups are and place colored dots where each groups' missional focuses are. It may be neighborhoods, a workplace or even athletic stadiums on campus.

"That map is an image that gets burned into their minds about what God is doing on campus," Keith says.

The gospel transmitted through family lines

God is using these students to impact their own families—many of which do not know Christ. University of Idaho senior Steven Trantham came to faith in Christ in high school despite a difficult

Resonate Church hosts Sunday services at 11:15 a.m. in the Moscow High School gym and auditorium. All are welcome.



childhood. Even though Steven grew steadily as a Christian throughout high school, he had never made sharing the gospel a significant part of his life.

“When I got to Resonate I heard something different,” Steven says. “We’re to follow Christ’s example to go into places where people don’t know Him and openly share our faith. It was a new thought for me.”

Steven says through a Resonate small group, and other discipleship opportunities at the church, he learned to share the gospel in practical ways using the 3 Circles approach. He also says Resonate helped him learn how to turn everyday conversations into spiritual ones centered around the gospel.

Those tools helped him when his older sister, Kayla, transferred to the University of Idaho. Although she knew of her brother’s conversion

Resonate leaders began to use a specific phrase with students to help them internalize the significant nature of evangelism and their role in it. *Jesus is precious, Hell is real and a choice is demanded.*

to Christianity and involvement in Resonate, she wanted little to do with spiritual matters. Even in high school, Steven had tried to explain what he believed to his sister, but the response was pretty clear and consistent—don’t shove your religion down my throat.

Even after the transfer, Kayla initially had no interest in attending Resonate, but through her brother, she made friends with several other women at the church. Over time, Kayla started attending Resonate events and eventually worship services. Despite it all, she provided no sign her views on the gospel were softening.

One night, Kayla pulled Steven aside and told him she wanted to talk to him about Christianity. She had been hearing the gospel and had specific questions about how to relate what she was learning about God with the past they both shared. They talked through these questions, and he explained the gospel to her. They walked through what surrendering life to Christ would mean, together.

But Kayla wasn’t ready. When Steven left the conversation, he didn’t believe Kayla was convinced. A month later though, Kayla surprised him by saying she’d committed her life to Christ.

“I think my experience being in a group with Resonate, in a discipleship sense and an accountability

sense, really helped me through this,” Steven says. “A lot of the questions she had were legitimate things I had to wrestle with, too. To have people around me in community who helped me see Jesus in the midst of those things and not just be ignorant about my past is just huge.”

Equipping students to share their faith

Keith notes that evangelistic conversations may come more naturally for many of the Resonate students because many of them have been on the other side of them. Few of the Pacific Northwest students that make up Resonate’s six campuses come from Christian homes.

But Resonate also provides a variety of venues where students learn to share the good news in natural, normal ways. Small groups play a big role in this. Leaders regularly take students out to share the gospel with them on campus.

“It’s not necessarily about the response to the gospel in those specific moments,” Keith says. “But we’ve found that if someone can begin to share their faith in cold-turkey evangelistic environments, their likelihood to be able share their faith within relationships increases. They’ve shared the gospel enough that it’s natural, not forced.”

It’s through Alanna’s Resonate group that she

Resonate provides a variety of venues where students learn to share the good news in natural, normal ways. Small groups play a big role in this. Leaders regularly take students out to share the gospel with them on campus.

Living on mission from the Resonate family of churches

“God is teaching me that He can use me wherever I am. I don’t have to be on staff [at a church] to be used by Him. I can be working as an assistant and be just as effective. Maybe the people are different, but the conversations are still the same.” —Sarah Wellenbrock

“You could ‘just show up to church’ during your 20s, or maybe you could be part of a movement in the kingdom of God. We are forever convinced that God can use college students to do incredibly more than we can ask or imagine.” —Lou Walleck

“I no longer want comfort but a life of unpredictability with God in control. I’m still learning every day what that looks like.” —Hannah Burns

“All it takes is a ‘yes.’ Whether you feel strong enough to say it or not, the Lord wants it, and He will use it.” —Brannen Pedregon

“We cannot assume any longer people will come to us—we must go to them. We need to do church and mission in the context of everyday life.” —Jacob Dahl


“It may not be the American dream but guiding people to know Jesus is really the most extraordinary job we could ever have.” —Matthew Young

found encouragement and strength to continue to share the gospel with Tracy months after the impromptu volleyball game had ended. And when Tracy was assigned by her professor to visit a public speaking event, she took Alanna up on the offer to attend Resonate Church.

It just so happened that Sunday Matthew Young, one of the Resonate’s pastors, was preaching on the Holy Spirit. The next day Tracy told Alanna she was ready to become a Jesus-follower. Alanna walked her friend through what it meant to follow Jesus.

All because of a volleyball game—and a church that makes disciples. [LOM!](#)

Tobin Perry writes for the North American Mission Board.

 Learn more about getting involved in reaching college campuses for Christ at namb.net/Collegiate-Church-Planting.

Leaders of small groups at Resonate Church often take their students out to share on campus.

GC Challenge

LIFE CHANGE.

The gospel is the most profound reality of life. The GC (Gospel Conversations) Challenge is an opportunity to join together as churches, associations and state conventions to pledge our commitment to having gospel conversations.



It can all begin with a conversation.

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Ministry Gospel

3 Circles Kit

Jimmy Scroggins
(NAMB, 2016)

Here's a tool anyone could use in sharing the gospel with neighbors, friends, relatives, coworkers, coffee baristas and those they encounter every day. Jimmy Scroggins' *3 Circles Kit* is effective, timeless and true.

As a small group leader at my local church, I'm no stranger to people's daily problems. I hear about them all the time. It's easy to talk about Jesus with fellow believers. But what about engaging in gospel conversations with those whose beliefs we don't yet know?

With the *3 Circles Kit*, I was able to turn conversations about ordinary life into conversations about God's gift of eternal life through His Son, Jesus Christ. The kit's simple, 3-stage approach opens the door for believers to have more meaningful life conversations with people from all kinds of backgrounds and faiths.

You'll discover relevant ways to converse in topics you may never have experienced by drawing back to biblical truths unveiled in this timely resource. I've found it to be extremely helpful while leading others, and I am left with a newfound courage in my soul to have gospel conversations with anyone about my Lord and Savior.

As Jimmy often says about this life-giving tool, "Everyone, from our relatives to our coworkers, need to hear about Jesus, and now we get to tell it." The *3 Circles Kit* can only help as you begin your next steps in evangelism.

Josie Bingham writes for the North American Mission Board.



Live This Kit

John Meador
(NAMB, 2017)

As a local church pastor, I recognize the need for God's people to be equipped in order to fulfill 1 Peter 2:9–10 by declaring the message of Him who called us out of darkness and into His marvelous light. The abdication of personal responsibility in the work of evangelism stems from the apathy that often defines the Church in North America. *Live This* reminds the Church of its mission with a unique combination of clarity and conviction.

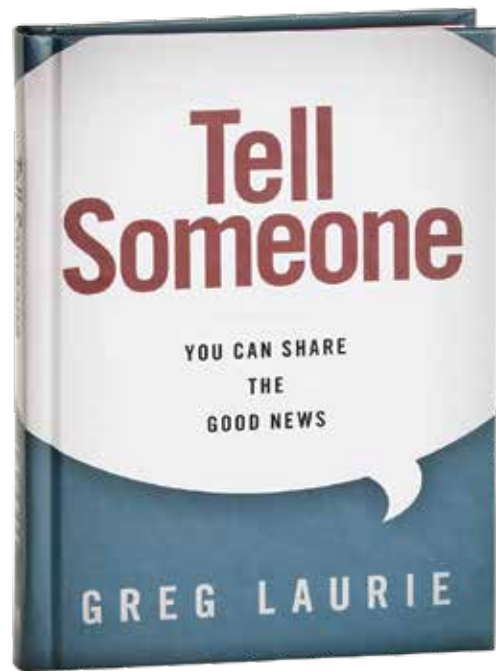
Clarity in this tool is biblically robust. *Live This* defines how each member in the body of the Church can faithfully declare the whole truth of God's character, man's sinful plight and Jesus' rescuing work. Conviction in *Live This* doesn't lead with shame and guilt over a lack of evangelistic fervor. Rather, it stirs our hearts with the beauty of the gospel and calls us to respond in worship by proclaiming Jesus Christ to a world far from Him. Using a simple acronym derived from Ephesians 2:1–10, the authors provide church leaders with a plan for equipping all who know and love Jesus Christ to share the good news of His life, death, burial and resurrection with the world.

Live This does just what a resource should do. It takes a task that I've been given as a pastor of a local church and provides me with a catalyst to accomplish that calling. For that reason, I'm thrilled to join the ranks of those pastors who will equip our flock using *Live This*.

Matt Rogers is pastor of The Church at Cherrydale in Greenville, South Carolina.



Leading Mission



Tell Someone *Greg Laurie* (B&H Publishing Group, 2016)

Tell Someone: You Can Share the Good News is written to show believers evangelism does not have to be complicated or intimidating. By sharing stories of his successes and failures, Greg Laurie contends that every believer is capable of talking about Christ with another person—regardless of any feelings of inadequacy. Evangelism and discipleship are simple tasks that continuously coincide with our daily lives. In Greg's own words, "This is what every follower of Jesus should be engaged in on a regular basis: sharing our faith, leading others to Christ, discipling them and helping them to get grounded in the church. Then we go out and do it all again." Evangelism is not a one-time event. Rather, it is a continual and fluid process in which every believer is qualified.

Greg explains the reason we share Christ is because Jesus told us to through the Great Commission. To help achieve this, Greg outlines tangible, evangelistic techniques that readers can easily apply to their lives. He also provides five encouraging steps, explaining how believers can keep an evangelistic culture within their churches.

Through his inspirational take on evangelism, Greg encourages his readers to unashamedly tell someone about the good news of Christ and to live with a continuous evangelistic mindset.

Alexandra Toy writes for the North American Mission Board.

The Simplest Way to Change the World *Dustin Willis and Brandon Clements* (Moody Publishers, 2017)

There is no shortage of books on the market that will tell us how to love our neighbors better. Whether it's the need to evangelize our cul-de-sac or dig wells in Africa, the "how-to" lists are a mouse click or bookstore trip away.

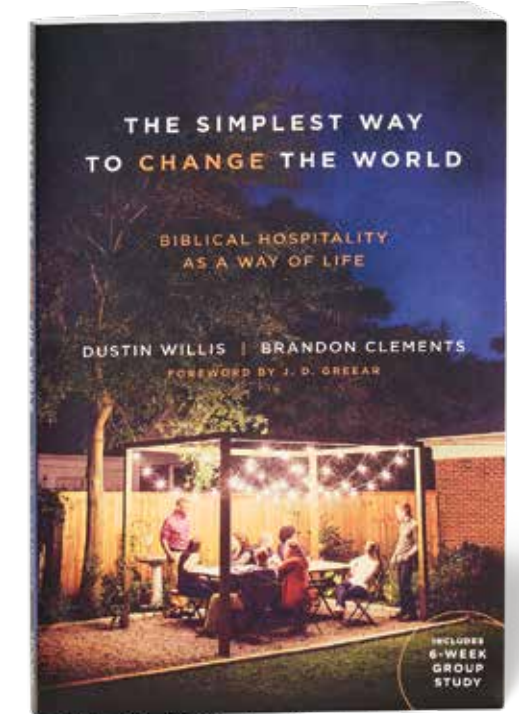
But if you're like me, the how-to's come with a side dish of guilt and some low-level panic. "I don't have time to add another thing!" "I'm scared to share the gospel with that guy." "I don't know anything about well digging."

That's why I was thankful to read Brandon Clements and Dustin Willis' book on how we can love our neighbors in simple, tangible and practical ways. They define hospitality without lists. Their premise is daunting—almost everything in our culture is set up to hinder us from pursuing biblical hospitality. But their solution is simple—anyone who lives in a dorm, house, high-rise or apartment can pursue it.

They call hospitality "a theology of recognition where, through simple acts, we convey the truth that wayward sinners are made in the image of God [and] where we say to those who might doubt their worth or purpose, 'I see you! You are welcome here ... pull up a chair.'"

After reading this book, I know hospitality can open doors to new relationships. If you're looking for practical ways to display the gospel, *The Simplest Way to Change the World* will help you get started.

Danny Franks is the Connections Pastor at The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina.



A simple act of obedience

By Jeff Christopherson

The kingdom of God is not complicated. The Lord simply requires obedience. He takes our mustard seed of faith and places it in the soil of His providential desire. The wonders that God performs with our mustard seed are a revelation that awaits in heaven. But from time to time, God allows us to take a peek.

My father possessed an eighth-grade education and worked as a laborer cleaning beer storage tanks. His life's trajectory was not promising.

One weekend, my parents decided to see a film produced by Billy Graham called *The Restless Ones*. As they

watched the movie, my parents found themselves confronted with their personal sin and desperate need for a Savior. When the film concluded, a man walked to center stage and explained that if anyone wanted to respond to Christ, then they could come forward and pray with him. No one responded, and my parents made their way back to their car. There, in the parking lot, my parents surrendered themselves to the saving power of Jesus Christ.

Fast forward 35 years. My father helped organize a Franklin Graham crusade where he shared how the



ministry of Billy Graham had impacted his life. He told the audience about his encounter with Christ in his car, the church he planted after following Jesus and the churches his children had also began because of *The Restless Ones* film. He ended his personal testimony with, "I do not know how many hundreds of lives are now in the kingdom because my wife and I went to the movies that day."

A hush settled in the room until a man in the audience stood and introduced himself. "My name is Tom Dice, and God asked me to bring that movie to your city. I expected great things to happen. Night after night I played the movie and asked the audience to respond. Night after night, no one responded, and I went home

disappointed. I thought it was a failure." Through tears Tom said, "Now I see that it wasn't a failure."

Neither my parents nor Tom Dice orchestrated these events. Each simply invested their mustard seed as God nudged their hearts. The eternal garden was planned and cultivated by an all-seeing Designer who merely asked the question, "Will you trust Me?" **[OM]**

Jeff Christopherson is the Vice President of Send Network at the North American Mission Board.

Give your time away

By Joel Southerland

One of the reasons why so many of us have trouble sharing Jesus verbally is because we haven't shown people what makes us different from the rest of the world. We contribute to causes with our wallets, but we often don't back that up by investing our time, energy and love into people. What would it look like for us to physically extend a helping hand ourselves rather than give money for someone else to do the work? What would it look like, in those moments of love and care, to share the gospel with someone who is hurting?

It's time to refocus our attentions.

While giving financially is crucial, serving is as well. In those times, we have opportunities to share the gospel with people we otherwise wouldn't have access to. Have you ever considered going out with your family and building relationships with the homeless? Have you ever considered regularly sacrificing a weekend or evening regularly to serve your community?

As believers, it is our privilege to share Christ through our words and actions. No matter what a person's circumstance is, God wants everyone to know they are loved by Him.

During His ministry, Jesus cared for outcasts, adulterers, the poor, hopeless and even the demon possessed—people whose lives were in disarray. He was not hesitant to serve or get His hands dirty, and we shouldn't be either. It's time for us to sacrifice, to invest in our communities and to love on those who have never seen, heard or experienced the love of Christ. Not only will this help us learn how to share the gospel more effectively, it will help change the lives of those in need around us.

You can volunteer with other believers or by yourself in whatever way the Holy Spirit guides you. The purpose is simply for you to give a bit of your time to help change the life of someone else.

I pray that we all are obedient to His commandment and love one another even more. **[OM]**



Learn how your church can reach the lost through church planting at namb.net/SendNetwork.



Learn more about mercy ministry opportunities for yourself or your church at SendRelief.org.



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