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A STRATEGY FOR TRAINING YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERS TO HELP
ADOLESCENTS RESPOND TO NATURAL DISASTERS

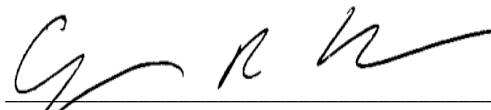
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and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Ministry

has been accepted by the Faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary
upon the recommendation of the undersigned readers:


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A STRATEGY FOR TRAINING YOUTH MINISTRY LEADERS TO HELP
ADOLESCENTS RESPOND TO NATURAL DISASTERS

A MINISTRY FOCUS PAPER
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

MARTIN WHITNEY ALEXANDER
DECEMBER 2014

ABSTRACT

A Strategy for Training Youth Ministry Leaders to Help Adolescents Respond to Natural Disasters

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2014

The goal of this study is to explore strategies for assisting youth ministry leaders on how to respond to natural disasters with the goal of helping students encourage the hearts of others who have suffered greatly in such disasters. The loss of human life among children, adolescents, and adults in recent natural disasters has stirred my heart to develop a strategy for youth ministries and how they may respond appropriately. The youth ministry can play a vital role in encouraging the hearts of others who have lost everything and have been displaced from their homes temporarily or permanently.

Today's demands on all students may be overwhelming, yet these young followers of Jesus Christ are receptive to helping others who may have lost everything. Youth pastors are in a powerful position to help young people live out the second greatest commandment given to them: "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:38). Loving our neighbor is a mandate given to all who love the Lord Jesus Christ with heart, soul, and mind.

The target audience of this ministry focus paper consists of rising sixth-graders through graduating college seniors to help adolescents live out the Great Commission as well. The transformation of each adolescent during these ten years is quite dramatic. The foundation and commitment to serve Christ gives students the opportunity to become real during these years when choosing to put the interests of others above one's own. Youth mission does take place in a dynamic and ever-changing environment.

Theological Mentor: Kurt Fredrickson, PhD

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INTRODUCTION

On Monday, August 29, 2005, “the lives of everyone in southeastern Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast region – including the New Orleans area were impacted by Hurricane Katrina.”¹ On that day, one of the largest and strongest hurricanes on record slammed into a region of the US with a population of over 1.5-million people. Hurricane Katrina made landfall at 6:10am at Buras, Louisiana near the mouth of the Mississippi River. Erasing the fishing community near the mouth of the river and the levees that offered brief resistance to the surge, housing was reduced to splintered debris, as were the fishing workboats and pleasure craft that had been the town’s lifeblood. Jed Horne writes in *Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City*, “All told, coastal Louisiana’s losses in fishing workboats and trawlers would come close to three thousand vessels.”² Three-hundred wrecked vessels would have been catastrophic. Horne states, “The loss of ten times that many was unimaginable.”³

Within an hour of landfall, Katrina chased its own winds and surge on a northerly tangent that swelled the waters of the two vast, shallow lakes that lay between the open gulf and the marshy shores of St. Bernard and Orleans parishes. The surge of water pushed across Lakes Maurepas and Borgne and through a narrow inlet, the Rigolets, which led to an even larger lake, Lake Ponchartrain. Adjacent to Lake Borgne, another wall of water shot into the Mississippi River Gulf Outlet, a shipping channel built forty

¹ Curtis Scott Drumm, *Providence through the Storm* (Metairie, LA: Journey Publications, 2009), 1.

² Jed Horne, *Breach of Faith: Hurricane Katrina and the Near Death of a Great American City* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2006), 41.

³ *Ibid.*, 42.

years earlier as a shortcut from the Intracoastal Waterway to the open Gulf of Mexico. Horne continues, “As the channels narrowed against steeper levees on their approach to downtown New Orleans, the surge sloshed higher and harder, bursting into the Industrial Canal with the force of a water cannon that, blew down the concrete flood walls above the earthen levees.”⁴

As Horne adds, “This surge sent a Niagara of water thundering onto the streets and through the doors, windows and cracks in the houses of New Orleans.”⁵ Elsewhere, the surge knocked down miles of giant fifteen-foot levees as though they were nothing more than the walls of a child’s sand castle on the beach. Within an hour or two, all of St. Bernard Parish was underwater, as was most of the long, swampy extension of the city called New Orleans east. On the north side of the city, the lake levees held, but the surge forced its way into the three major drainage canals that were not intended to guard against rising water in Lake Ponchartrain. Instead they provided an aqueduct for the riptide of water propelled back into giant pumps struggling to keep the streets from filling up. Horne writes, “The rising water in those drainage canals shoved aside levees and the concrete flood walls that had been added above them for an extra margin of protection and water swept through the Lakeview neighborhood and on to Gentilly, until it backed up against the undamaged west wall of the Industrial Canal.”⁶

It will never be known exactly how many people died in New Orleans during the next week. Horne notes, “The best estimate placed the death toll at about 1,100 people

⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

with another 231 lost on the coast of Mississippi.”⁷ Nor was it clear what proportion of the casualties died immediately, leaving the rest to a lingering demise, by drowning, from exposure, from medical conditions that worsened as men, women, and children attempted to wade or swim to dry ground, perched on rooftops awaiting help that never came, or succumbed to infernal temperatures and dehydration in attics where the floods had chased them. An estimated 275,000 homes were flooded in New Orleans.

Those of a religious persuasion prayed the city would be spared. This was a moment of quiet supplication that quickly yielded to Christian guilt. The reality is there are multiple reasons why responding to the worst disaster in mainland America was so heavy on the minds of people. One may live far away from Louisiana and Mississippi, but everyone will face some form of hardship. The question that needs to be asked is: What is the theological basis for a response from the Church during a natural disaster?

As citizens of Louisiana and Mississippi recovered from one of the worst natural disasters in American history, three ideas for recovery were immediately evident. The first is to release the grief. Many wept as God’s creation witnessed horrible losses and property damage in Louisiana and Mississippi. Some lost family members, homes, or businesses. It is normal to feel all sorts of emotions: fear, anger, worry, depression, resentment, helplessness and grief. It does no good to deny that emotions exist. God created emotions, and does not expect people to act happy when they grieve.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted,” means it is okay to be honest about grief (Mt 5:4). Psalm 62:8 also regards comfort: “Pour out your hearts to

⁷ Ibid.

him, for God is our refuge.” God wants to comfort his creation in tragedy. The heavenly Father is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

The second idea for recovery is to receive help from others. It is a mistake to isolate oneself when going through a crisis. People need support, encouragement and the presence of other people, particularly in the aftermath of tragedy. Paul reminds believers to “carry each other’s burdens, and in this way, fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal 6:2).

The third idea for recovery is to reject the urge toward bitterness. Some people become bitter when faced with hardship, but bitterness is a choice. One does not have to be angry. If one chooses to be angry, they will only end up hurting themselves, and shut the door on happiness, because one cannot be happy and bitter at the same time.

After a catastrophic event such as Hurricane Katrina, one’s response to disaster is a choice. As the television news broadcasts interviewed victims of the flooding in New Orleans, these were the types of things heard: we lost it all, and we are sad, but we are still together as a family, and we are going to work together to rebuild. Yet others said: my life is over, I just cannot see how I can go on from here; I do not think I can ever recover from this. It will not be an easy choice, but it is a choice between believing God is in control and believing any certain individual is.

Joy comes from God and not from crazy circumstances. There is absolutely no correlation in life between one’s circumstances and joy. Joy comes from the Lord. James 1:2 says, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds.” Many people who faced such turmoil were able to choose joy.

As this hurricane disaster ended, my extended family had lost material possessions in New Orleans and Metairie. Our family expressed to God that we were

thankful for what He had given to us through this unusual set of circumstances. We made a list of all the family members in our lives and contacted them immediately. Personally, it was impossible to be grateful and depressed at the same time.

It is worth asking why theological and biblical responses are even necessary at times like these. In order to answer such thoughts, three related questions will be answered using the model of practical theology found in *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World* by Chap Clark and Kara Powell. These three questions are: “What type of transformation is God bringing about now? What is creating space for God’s transformation now? What is hindering God’s transformation now?”⁸ These are vital questions to this topic and will be approached through a study of the Word of God.

It is wise to ponder God’s intent, the type of transformation he may be bringing about. In looking at this transformation, other important questions should be considered: Is pain necessary? Does pain have a purpose? How do people respond to pain and suffering? What is the role of the Church during any natural disaster? One of the purposes of this ministry focus paper is to encourage the Church as it helps transform the city of New Orleans, the Louisiana coastal communities, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The Church’s response has encouraged many families and kept them from giving up.

A biblical exegesis is beneficial for a theology of pain and suffering at such a time. The Word of God helps bring understanding to pain, suffering and the grief journey that many individuals experience. Scripture says, “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time” (Rom

⁸ Chap Clark and Kara Powell, *Deep Ministry in a Shallow World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 30-31.

8:22). Pain and suffering from the transitions and uncertainty of life often leave people bewildered, confused, angry and in a state of grief. Those times when pain seems to have no end adds to a sense of helplessness. Instead of asking why God allows suffering, it may be more appropriate to ask if pain is necessary and if it has a purpose. Every individual in the path of Hurricane Katrina has asked these questions many times.

It can be argued that pain is necessary. When people endure sleepless nights and agonizing days because of unending pain, they become acutely aware that creation was not designed for this. While in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve experienced a life free of pain, insecurity and anxiety. In the Garden, they enjoyed the unbroken presence of God. Michael Card writes, “Then in a moment when the Presence seemed somehow impossibly absent, in some forgotten corner of the garden, Satan, the Accuser and ultimate cause of all lament, called into question the *hesed* of God. His *hesed*, an untranslatable Hebrew word often rendered ‘loving-kindness’ was a given.”⁹

The serpent hissed at Eve: “Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?” The accuser longed to deceive Adam and Eve into believing that in order to know God, they only needed to know and receive his gifts. The great lie was that God’s gifts were all that he was. Card adds, “The temptation was to believe that if the gift could not be had, then it was somehow not really real and neither was God’s love.”¹⁰ These whisperings from the accuser sound all too familiar for those who are in pain.

When it seemed his presence was absent, the accuser charged God of acting in a way inconsistent with his loving-kindness. Card writes, “After all, God, who is truly

⁹ Michael Card, *A Sacred Sorrow* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), 15.

¹⁰ Ibid.

loving does not keep good gifts from His children, does He?”¹¹ So the bite was taken, and as Card writes, “It was not simply the bite itself that caused the Fall and gave birth to the first groaning of lament from both creature and creation.”¹² The bite of the fruit was only a consequent act of disbelief. It was the denial and the doubting of God’s loving-kindness that led to disbelief that caused the two prodigals to be driven into the wilderness of his absence. Card notes, “As the two outcasts made their way stumbling out of the garden, the *hesed* of God caused an innocent animal to be sacrificed to make garments to cover the nakedness of the first couple, so they would know they were naked.”¹³ By such sacrifices, Adam and Eve’s sins would be covered until the time they would be washed away by the loving-kindness of Jesus Christ on the cross at Golgotha, as one who would cry out in lament to His Father.

Facing the fallen world requires courage and a belief in life beyond this earthly existence. One idea is that pain and negative emotions are absolutely essential to draw attention to God and things eternal. At the close of his dialogue with God about suffering, Job stated, “My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you” (Job 42:5). Even death is necessary outside of Eden. Without death, creation would be doomed to live forever in a world full of suffering. Card continues, “If we dig deeply enough, we will discover at the heart of every lament, from Job to Jesus, two fundamental questions of complaint: God, where are you? And God, if you love me, then why?”¹⁴

¹¹ Ibid, 16.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., 17.

Pain is purposeful. A corollary to this idea invites a discussion concerning the goodness of God. In *The Problem of Pain*, C. S. Lewis writes, “If God were good, he would wish to make his creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty, he would be able to do what he wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both.”¹⁵ This is the problem of pain, in its simplest form. Instead of resolving this question, Lewis takes the route of qualifying both of the key concepts. Lewis adds, “Omnipotence, he firmly believes, is appropriately predicated of God, but it does mean that God can do anything at all.”¹⁶ Paul insisted in Romans 8:28, “All things are possible with God.” God cannot exclude the prospect of pain and suffering.

In Romans 8, Paul equates the groaning and suffering of creation with childbirth, not death. This might be a clue about pain’s purpose. As intense and powerful as the pain of childbirth is, it is usually relieved the moment a baby is placed in the mother’s arms. Pain, like that of childbirth, exists for what comes after the pain. Creation often forgets that God knows what that is, and it is not easy to trust Him in the midst of the pain.

In *God Doesn’t Make Sense*, James Dobson writes, “People who are suffering are often filled with questions about life and death, about good and evil, and about the nature of God. Why do bad things happen?”¹⁷ Nothing could be more senseless than purposeless pain. Again, pain and suffering are purposeful. Christians experience pain and eventually realize that this pain-filled life is short in comparison to a pain-free life of eternity with God. Pain reveals the heart’s desires, especially as I visited the hospitals and the River

¹⁵ C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: The Centenary Press, 1940), 14.

¹⁶ Douglas John Hall, *God and Human Suffering* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986), 159.

¹⁷ James Dobson, *When God Doesn’t Make Sense* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers), 117.

Center shelter in Baton Rouge during frequent visits. The visits indicated after extensive conversation if the individuals' hearts were prepared for eternity. During this time, there were many individuals who turned their hearts to God.

It is an awesome privilege to stand by people who are grieving and experiencing pain. In such moments of loss, compassionate individuals have rich opportunities to share God's love and comfort. In those rare moments, God can reach people who might otherwise be too busy, too proud or too uninterested to respond to his love. In the moments of broken-heartedness during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, people turned to God in confusion, despair, loneliness and pain. As one of the pastors of First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge, helping displaced individuals who lost everything was a privilege. Being an encourager during this time of crisis in south Louisiana was healing for my soul. My childhood home stood two feet under water.

Transformation is slowly occurring in the all of the neighborhoods of New Orleans. Yet, it is hindered today because of the lack of leadership throughout the region of south Louisiana and the gulf coast of Mississippi. A part of my heart drowned during Hurricane Katrina's flooding of my hometown. The little boy who grew up in the streets of New Orleans felt great loss by such devastation.

Life is full of losses that must be acknowledged and grieved. On Palm Sunday, March 27, 1994, Kelly Clem referred to the loss of her four-year old daughter from a tornado that tore her church to shreds. She said, "There is nothing that we can do to protect us from death. We are human beings living on this earth, and we are not immune

to the wrath of nature.”¹⁸ At many of life’s changes and transitions, people experience loss and need the grieving process to deal with the experience. This experience was relived many times over in New Orleans in the fall of 2005.

In the midst of crisis, people find out who they really are. A library of books could add little to the experience provided by Hurricane Katrina. People are heroes and cowards, saints and thugs. People are compassionate and selfish, proud and then prayerful, lovers of others while sorting them with prejudice. The confusion and struggle of the weeks following Hurricane Katrina revealed individuals’ true selves. There are no easy answers to the questions raised in Katrina’s aftermath. Perhaps the best explanation is found within the opening pages of the Bible. People were made in the image and likeness of God but have fallen far from that. Instinctively people know that if hope is to be found, its sources must reside outside them.

Hurricane Katrina has passed, but the disaster is far from over. In the words of survivor Angelique Levy, “After Hurricane Katrina, I got stuck in a nightmare of rebuilding the city and couldn’t wake up. And I’m still not able to wake up.”¹⁹ The task of putting lives back together begins with hope. Hope is confidence in the future, and people do not usually move from despair to hope overnight. The first two chapters will look at theological and biblical reflections of human suffering.

¹⁸ Ted Steinberg, *Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 150.

¹⁹ Billy Graham, *Higher Ground: The Journey to Hope* (Rapid Response Team, 2007) 2.

PART ONE
MINISTRY CONTEXT

CHAPTER 1

REFLECTIONS ON HUMAN SUFFERING

The Psalms are filled with raw emotions, screams of “Why?” and “When will you rescue us?” Yet the thread that runs through them is hope that God is in control, cares and will deliver and work out things for good if people genuinely trust him. People through the ages have continued to pray, asking God for solace and pleading with him to take action. To echo them is to join voices with millions of fellow sufferers and great saints.

The prayers of the Psalmists provide numerous examples. Two follow:

Save me, O God, for the waters have threatened my life. I have sunk in deep mire, and there is no foothold; I have come into deep waters, and a flood overflows me. I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; my eyes fail while I wait for my God. Deliver me from the mire and do not let me sink; May I be delivered from my foes and from the deep waters. May the flood of water not overflow me, and may the deep not swallow me up, and may the pit not shut its mouth on me. Answer me, O Lord, for thy loving-kindness is good; according to the greatness of your compassion, turn to me. (Ps 69:1-3; 14-16)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (Ps 23)

It is difficult to progress toward hope when plagued with doubts and questions. The Bible has a great deal to say about suffering, although it does not answer every question; but it gives enough insight to clear a path for hope. The Bible makes it clear that suffering was not part of God's original design. Rather, suffering is a consequence of human sin that affects what God created. Suffering is an experience of disharmony: humankind among themselves, humankind with nature, and humankind with himself or herself. Each of these is the result of a more fundamental kind of disharmony: a broken fellowship with God. Once that relationship was ruptured, all the other ruptures followed.

In the Gospels, through the stories of Jesus' life, people see how often Jesus felt compassion for the suffering of others. For instance, when he encountered a widow mourning the death of her only son, the Gospels record that "his heart went out to her and he said, 'Don't cry'" (Lk 7:13). Jesus Christ deeply cares about people and is moved by suffering, hardships and the burdens they must individually bear.

God allows suffering, and it is of value to ponder his reasons. The Bible offers a beautiful picture of God comforting all suffering at the end of time: "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Rv 21:4). In other words, there will be a day when God sets all things right. Until then, suffering is part of all struggles and stories. Though God does not approve of sin and its consequences, suffering is here by his permission. Scripture affirms that people do not have a capacity to grasp a part of suffering.

As finite beings, people cannot see the future, understand the spiritual realm or know the mind of God. Yet God allows his people to see the faint outline of his purposes

for allowing suffering. His first reason is so people might return to him: “Return to me, and I will return to you” (Zec 1:3). Lewis wrote, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”¹ People do not, and cannot, know all of God’s reasons for allowing suffering. But the Bible is clear that one of them is for spiritual well-being, that humanity might cry out and return to God.

Happy and contented people often do not see their need for God. Only desperate people do. Trauma and calamity shake the foundations of lives and force people to reexamine themselves, their beliefs, their lifestyles and their choices. For this reason, the greatest struggles can carry with them unforeseen blessings.

A second reason for allowing suffering is to develop character. The Lord’s brother James wrote, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (Jas 1:2-4). People witness true courage in disastrous sets of circumstances. The world is far from perfect, but it is ideal for the task of creating souls.

The third reason for allowing suffering is to produce blessing. As the apostle Paul wrote, “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him” (Rom 8:28). The promise is simply this: no matter what happens, God is able to make it work for good in people’s lives with the condition that people love and follow him.

Psalm 27:13 declares, “I would have despaired unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.” There is hope in the wake of a

¹ Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 90.

catastrophe. People long for assurance of some future blessing, and yet hearts and minds will not allow them to cling to vain hopes and empty promises. They need something genuine: a hope that will not fail or disappoint. God has provided a pathway to hope, a pathway that has been tried and tested by countless people throughout the ages and found to be true. This pathway can lead to real hope too.

The pathway to hope leads beyond humanity's circumstances. Jesus does not promise a trouble-free life. In fact, he assured his followers that they would endure trials and hardships: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33). People need a hope that rises above and goes beyond circumstances. One ancient prophet expressed his confident hope when his people faced foreign invasion and the destruction of their nation: "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior" (Hb 3:17-8).

The pathway to hope leads to God's Word. The one sure place to turn in times of trouble and turmoil is the Bible. God can be trusted, his words are true and his promises will not fail: "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Nm 23:19). In addition, the pathway to hope leads to God himself. As humanity relies upon God's word, it leads people to God himself. His unfailing love and kindness are promised to those who seek him. He is the source of true hope: "This I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions

never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him” (Lam 3:21-23, 25).

The pathway to hope also leads to God’s Son. The ultimate proof of God’s love is found in Jesus. As Paul writes, “God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8). When Jesus died on the cross, he bore the penalty for sin, suffering on humanity’s behalf. Because of sin, humanity is unworthy of God’s love and goodness, deserving only his wrath and anger. Yet God’s justice was satisfied by the death of Jesus, so that people can now experience his love and grace through faith in Christ: “He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things?” (Rom 8:32).

When Jesus rose from the dead, he conquered death and sin. He now reigns as Lord of all, acting on behalf of all who trust him. Paul writes that this is humanity’s great hope: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ‘As it is written: For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom 8:35-37). The pathway to hope leads to Jesus: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Mt 11:28-30).

In Hebrews 13:5, the author writes, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” Faith is in God’s Word, not in feelings. True hope comes on the basis of God’s promises. Peter adds, “And the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in

Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will restore you and make you strong, firm, and steadfast” (1 Pt 5:10). When people experience loss, they are often distressed to find they are numb, exhausted, confused or feeling guilty about some aspect of their loss. Individuals may be frightened or shocked at their behavior and ask, “How could I, a faithful Christian, be angry and depressed about this?” The answer is that they are not only people of faith, but people of God given human emotions.

Jesus knows how people feel because He experienced this wide range of emotions himself. Jesus wept with Mary and Martha when their brother and his friend Lazarus died (Jn 11:35). Jesus was angry when the Pharisees led people away from God (Mt 23:1-36). Jesus’ tender heart compelled him to touch and heal people and forgive their sins (Mt 9:1-8). God is not shocked or confused by the emotions surrounding grief and loss. When grieving people are willing to bring their emotions to God, he can comfort and heal.

The Cultural Context of New Orleans and Baton Rouge

In helping others deal with grief from Hurricane Katrina, great discomfort arises through the fear that counselors and friends might say the wrong thing. The opportunity came for me to return to New Orleans to officiate a memorial service for my kindergarten and third grade teacher, Martha Hart, who died in the aftermath of the storm at Memorial Hospital in New Orleans. The power went out at the hospital, and it was only a couple of days before she died as she lived on oxygen and was not rescued in time. The memorial service was a testimony to a Christian woman who lived her sixty-six years well, and made a difference in the lives of her students and others. While reading from several Psalms, I tried to keep my composure and then just let it go. I knew I was making

everyone uncomfortable but remember thinking, “They get to cry so why not me? Why am I the only one not permitted to weep?” I wiped the tears, got my voice back, and continued with the Scripture readings and the rest of the memorial service.

My heart broke when the home of my sister and brother-in-law, Judi and Allen Jackson, flooded four feet in the Gentilly section of the Crescent City on the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary campus. Also, my elderly aunt and uncle experienced two feet of flooding in their Metairie home. Thus, the first week after the storm was a blur, as I attempted to care for the daily needs of my extended family. My wife, sons and I were not able to improve these situations by giving advice or telling our extended family members what to do next. The pain and loss of material possessions caused them to grieve. Each day we brought a humble servant’s heart to this painful situation, and assisted these relatives in providing necessities for daily living. This experience will always be a reminder of God’s faithfulness to his children.

Judi and Allen’s two children, Aaron and Sarah, experienced the same sadness, fear, anger and other emotions that grieving adults feel while experiencing numbness over the sudden loss of everything materially. Aaron and Sarah were enrolled into a new school within a week of the storm, and experienced loneliness in the beginning. My elderly Aunt Helen and Uncle Matt were brought to our home for a day before finding a temporary residence in Baton Rouge for their needs. They stayed for two months at a friend’s guest cottage, while Judi and Allen lived in Baton Rouge for nearly a year while their home was being rebuilt in New Orleans.

Although many people would like to have a simple road map showing them the journey through grief, no such thing exists. While most people prefer to move in a linear,

orderly fashion from loss and confusion to hope and recovery within a predictable timeframe, each person's progression through grief is quite unpredictable. After a person has passed through one stage and moved to the next, he or she may well revisit that stage. Progress for many in New Orleans came in tiny steps and seemed unachievable. If there is any forward movement at all, the person is indeed moving toward recovery. Timetables need not be the primary concern; grief takes as long as it takes.

David Kessler and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross note five stages of grief that every individual experiences at some point. In the first stage, there is shock, denial, numbness and disbelief: "When we are in denial, we may respond at first by being paralyzed with shock or blanketed with numbness."² This is God's anesthesia: people began describing the day their homes were flooded or burned down. Katrina victims housed at the Baton Rouge River Center repeatedly stated, "I was there, yet, I really wasn't," or "It was like a dream." Many victims had been at the Superdome or the New Orleans Convention Center, some of them plucked off the roofs of their homes during the flooding. Kubler-Ross notes, "Denial is usually a temporary defense and will soon be replaced by partial acceptance."³ The victims of Hurricane Katrina were in a temporary state of shock from which they have begun to recuperate. Victims of these hurricanes began to talk about the reality of their situation and the fact that they would have to move to a new community. This first stage of grieving helped everyone to understand and survive the losses in New

² David Kessler and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Grief and Grieving* (New York: Scribner, 2005), 8.

³ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 40.

Orleans. Kessler and Kubler-Ross add “in this stage, the world becomes meaningless and overwhelming.”⁴

Second, there are emotional outbursts at unusual moments. When the reality of loss begins to sink in, a person may try to reverse the loss by the force of his or her anger or by dramatically expressed grief: “When the first stage of denial cannot be maintained any longer, it is replaced by feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment. The logical next question becomes: why me?”⁵ Such strong emotions may be directed at God for seeming not to care, other people for negligence, or one’s self for perceived wrongdoing.

During the aftermath of Katrina, this stage of grief was evident everywhere in the world, especially in this country. Americans were outraged at the handling of human life, and the fact that it took five days to reach the people of New Orleans with water and food. Seven blocks from First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge, thousands of evacuees settled into the River Center; anger and resentment began to surface after a week of very crowded conditions. People were angry at God and the nation’s leaders, and they resented that they had to sleep on cots with no privacy in a facility holding ten-thousand strangers. Kubler-Ross suggests, “The reason for this is the fact that this anger is displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment at times almost at random.”⁶

This stage of anger is difficult to cope with from the point of view of family. Allen and Judi experienced so much pain; it was difficult to pretend understanding their frustration and anger. Anger does not have to be logical or valid. Kessler and Kubler-

⁴ Kessler and Kubler-Ross, *On Grief and Grieving*, 10.

⁵ Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

Ross write, “It is important to remember that the anger surfaces once you are feeling safe enough to know you will probably survive whatever comes. Anger is a necessary stage of the healing process.”⁷

In the process of grief over the loss of personal possessions, there were visits with anger in many forms. Kessler and Kubler-Ross write, “Anger affirms that you can feel, that you did love, and that you have lost.”⁸ The anger and feelings underneath bubbled to the surface on numerous occasions as people realized the tremendous losses in the community. Anger is used to avoid the feelings underneath the surface.

Kubler-Ross adds, “Another problem is the man who has been in control all his life and who reacts with rage and anger when he is forced to give up control.”⁹ Being forced to live in very confined quarters at the River Center in Baton Rouge caused many to lose their tempers. Many individuals had to abide by rules given by law enforcement agencies called to keep peace in chaos. People walked around angry because they were no longer in control of their personal situations. It was their dissatisfaction and frustration for a perceived lack of care, which led to rage and hostility at moments in River Center.

Third, there is fear, searching, panic, guilt and bargaining. As Kubler-Ross notes, “Maybe we can succeed in entering into some sort of an agreement which may postpone the inevitable happening: ‘If God has decided to take us from this earth and he did not respond to my angry pleas,’ he may be more favorable if I ask nicely.”¹⁰ Parents are

⁷ Kessler and Kubler-Ross, *On Grief and Grieving*, 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁹ Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

familiar with this reaction when observing their children first demanding, and then asking for a favor. I asked God nicely to spare my elderly aunt and uncle, who did not leave Metairie before Hurricane Katrina, but moved from their home to the fifth floor of the Day's Inn before the hurricane. I was fearful for Helen's life as she lay in bed in 100-plus temperatures without electrical power for a few days. God kept them safely in his arms.

As the truth of this hurricane's loss began to deepen, the grieving persons at the River Center continued to try to reverse this catastrophic event by thinking, "If only I had or hadn't," becoming obsessed with ideas about what might have prevented their losses. After a catastrophic loss, bargaining with God is not uncommon and is a temporary truce. Accompanying this idea may be dreams about life before the hurricane or panic attacks that necessitate visits to an emergency room. Bargaining is really an attempt to postpone dealing with the unimaginable disaster and the pain of losing all of life's possessions. Kessler and Kubler-Ross write, "Guilt is often bargaining's companion."¹¹ Thoughts of "if only" can cause people to find fault with themselves and what they think could have been done differently. The people at River Center were doing anything they could not to feel the pain of horrific loss of life and property.

Kubler-Ross affirms, "Most bargains are made with God and are usually kept a secret or mentioned between the lines or in a chaplain's private office."¹²

Psychologically, promises may be associated with quiet guilt. For the first month, everywhere at the River Center, people met with pastors, physicians and social workers

¹¹ Kessler and Kubler-Ross, *On Grief and Grieving*, 17.

¹² Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 84.

to assist and assess needs of each individual who may have felt some guilt for whatever the reason might have been.

Fourth, there is loneliness, isolation and depression in the lives of many who lost everything. After bargaining, attention moves squarely into the present. Kessler and Kubler-Ross add, “Empty feelings present themselves, and grief enters our lives on a deeper level, deeper than we ever imagined.”¹³ As the irreversible nature of this loss became evident to those who were grieving, these individuals at the Baton Rouge River Center became deeply sad, had little interest in social activity and concluded that life would never be the same again.

This depressive stage feels as though it will last forever. It is important to understand that this depression is not a sign of mental illness. The overwhelming sadness is actually the beginning of recovery. As it becomes evident to the grieving individual that what has been lost will never be recovered, energy previously spent in denying and resisting can be redirected toward rebuilding his or her life. There may be the added loss of a job and the inability to function. The need to sleep during times of depression helps to avoid the pain. Kubler-Ross states, “An understanding person will have no difficulty in eliciting the cause of the depression and in alleviating some of the unrealistic guilt or shame which accompanies the depression.”¹⁴ Pastors and social workers can be of great help during this time in assisting in the reorganization of a household, especially when children or lonely older people are involved for whom eventual placement has to be considered. Since New Orleans was flooded for two weeks and Katrina destroyed nearly

¹³ Kessler and Kubler-Ross, *On Grief and Grieving*, 20.

¹⁴ Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 86.

two-thirds of the city, nearly every person and family had to be relocated to a new home in a new city. Kubler-Ross suggests, “The first type of depression is reactive and we try to alleviate the unrealistic guilt or shame which often accompanies the pain.”¹⁵

The author adds, “The second type of depression is one which does not occur as a result of past loss but is taking into account impending losses. Our reaction to sad people is usually to try to cheer them up, to tell them not to look at things so grimly or so hopelessly.”¹⁶ The pastoral team at First Presbyterian attempted to encourage everyone they came in contact with at the River Center to look at the blessing of a temporary home with meals being prepared three times a day. Many individuals knocked on the church gymnasium doors looking for help immediately. The initial offer of help at First Presbyterian ensured every person had coupons needed for meals at McDonald’s. This simple gesture was met with hundreds of people thanking the church for meeting immediate needs. Clothing was given away to anyone who asked for it.

In listening to the stories of each individual during this post-hurricane time, there is little need for words: “It is much more a feeling that can be mutually expressed, and is often done better with a touch of a hand, a stroking of the hair, or just a silent sitting together.”¹⁷ This is the time when an evacuee may ask for prayer, when he or she begins to be occupied with things ahead rather than behind. Too much interference from visitors may hinder people’s emotional preparation rather than enhancing it. Every opportunity to

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 87.

pray with the church's new friends from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast region was a blessing to the volunteers serving at the church or the Baton Rouge River Center.

Fifth, there is reentry, rebuilding, reconciliation and acceptance. At this stage, the grieving person fully realizes what has been lost can never be recovered. It is possible to live without it, him or her. There is a sense that the grieving person has learned and grown from the experience of loss. As hope is restored, grieving persons want to serve others who have experienced a similar loss.

Kubler-Ross writes, "Acceptance should not be mistaken for a happy stage. It is almost void of feelings. It is as if the pain had gone, the struggle is over, and there comes a time for the final rest before the long journey ahead. This is also the time when the family usually needs more help, understanding, and support."¹⁸ Behavioral changes should alert people to the evacuees trying to recover from an overwhelming amount of pain. It is not human nature to accept the finality of death without leaving the door open for some hope.

First Presbyterian provided encouragement with two huge Carnivals of Hope at the River Center shelter, one week and one month after the storm for ten thousand people. Two-hundred-fifty people from First Presbyterian came to the downtown shelter and cooked burgers for ten hours, while providing hope through worship and a children's carnival for the new residents in Baton Rouge. Feeding ten thousand people was no easy task, but every burger and hot dog was consumed by the new friends whom staff and volunteers had just met. There was no place to go for most individuals in the River Center, but they had to wait for direction from the Federal Emergency Management

¹⁸ Ibid., 113.

Agency, and as people know, this process took a while to get going. Kubler-Ross notes, “It is this glimpse of hope which maintains them during days, weeks, or months of suffering. It is the feeling that all this must have some meaning.”¹⁹

The one thing that usually persists through all these stages is hope. The conflicts people saw at River Center were in regard to hopelessness. The most painful experience was realizing someone’s family member had died, and the anguish came from the family’s inability to accept this fact. Families clung to hope to the best of their ability daily in their new surroundings.

The five stages of grief people went through when faced with the tragic news of Hurricane Katrina’s aftermath and the human suffering that followed were unbelievable as people’s coping mechanisms dealt with extremely difficult situations. The stresses everyone faced being displaced by this disaster were astronomical, and the country rallied to show their support because so many experienced so much anguish. First Presbyterian provided hope for the residents of Louisiana by providing shelter for 250 US Marshals who helped keep law and order in the capital city for the next sixty days. These marshals slept in the youth building for two months and kept the city and church completely safe from any potential problems that might arise. In the church gymnasium, First Presbyterian provided shelter for three-hundred energy workers who came from all over the country to bring electricity back on for south Louisiana. There were two showers for 550 people. The line for showers was nonstop from 5pm until 5am each morning.

The congregation literally worked around the clock for sixty days, volunteering to house, feed, wash clothes and towels daily and care for the needs of public servants who

¹⁹ Ibid., 123.

came to help amidst pain and suffering. This time will forever be etched in the memory of the Body of Christ responding to the needs of others. This experience opened the eyes of the congregation that serving was not something to do occasionally as the church, but is central to the mission as a body of believers.

First Presbyterian was available to families to share in their pain, anger, grief and suffering concerning an unimaginable, indescribable loss that had taken place in their lives. Kubler-Ross writes, “When anger, resentment, and guilt can be worked through, the family will then go through a phase of preparatory grief, just as the dying person does.”²⁰ More than one thousand families experienced loss of life. She adds, “What I am saying here is, let the relatives talk, cry, or scream, if necessary. Let them share and ventilate, but be available. By help, I naturally do not assume that this has to be professional counseling of any form; most people neither need nor can afford this. But they need a human being, a friend, doctor, nurse, or chaplain—it matters little.”²¹

When my sister expressed herself towards me in frustration and anger, I could not feel her suffering in the same way, but I attempted to listen intently to her painful stories. Almost every item in her home was ruined and destroyed by the floodwaters, and the grief expressed from her lips during this time will never be forgotten. My availability was all that mattered at the moment in her deepest grief. We drove to Judi’s home four weeks after the hurricane, and spent one Saturday carefully salvaging all that she desired to keep. Allen and Judi filled a truck with dishes and items from their upstairs bedrooms to bring back to storage in Baton Rouge.

²⁰ Ibid., 169.

²¹ Ibid., 179-180.

This experience of grief was very painful. This was one of the toughest days as I watched Judi anguish in letting possessions go that had been ruined by the floodwaters. The most meaningful help that people can give is to share their feelings and to allow them to work through their feelings, whether they are rational or irrational. Kubler-Ross continues, “If we tolerate their anger and grief, whether it is directed at us, or at God, we are helping them to take acceptance without guilt. If we blame them for daring to ventilate such socially poorly tolerated thoughts, we are blameworthy for prolonging their grief, shame, and guilt which often results in physical and emotional ill health.”²² In *The Soul of Ministry*, Ray Anderson adds, “All ministry is first of all God’s ministry.”²³ This has significant impact for Christians who realize that every ministry helps others in their daily pain. The Church has been called throughout Scripture to encourage others.

First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge

First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge is a very conservative, traditional congregation that truly encourages others because they are becoming more missionally minded every passing year. Being transformed from a consumer-driven church to being a missional church is a strong possibility for a 190-year old downtown congregation in Baton Rouge. First Presbyterian leaders have begun leading by example in encouraging and directing the congregation to serve Jesus in a changing and sometimes hostile world.

The initial Sunday morning worship option is a liturgical service that begins at 7:45 in the Dunham Chapel with one hundred attendees encouraged by the Word of God,

²² Ibid., 180.

²³ Ray Anderson, *The Soul of Ministry: Forming Leaders for God’s People* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 5.

who leave with the task of being an encouragement to the world. At 8:45, the only contemporary worship service meets in the sanctuary with about 450 people, and blesses and encourages many families. At 11:00, a reformed, classic worship service follows in the sanctuary, preparing members to walk into the marketplace on Monday ready to stand up to a world that is indifferent and hostile toward Jesus. Then, at 11:15, in the church gymnasium, an acoustic liturgical communion service empowers its one hundred participants to spread the timeless message of Christ using traditional means.

The church mission statement is “deeper in Christ and further into the world.” First Presbyterian is seriously attempting to move from a consumer-minded congregation to being more missional. First Presbyterian supports the local Habit for Humanity, weekly provides more than one hundred tutors for Buchanan Elementary School, extends mentoring aid to the Gardere Christian Community School, serves through the Abounding Love Ministries’ Project Stars weekend tutoring program, and sends at least one hundred individuals on short-term mission opportunities in New Orleans, Mexico, Jamaica, Egypt, Romania and Russia every year. In the recent past, the church has sent missionaries to Rwanda, Kenya and Egypt to work providing clean water, assisting in sports ministry, presenting the Gospel throughout. The church sends out funds to more than twenty-five mission agencies around the world, fulfilling God’s call to be salt and light to a hurting world.

Many might perceive the missional church as very old, very fundamental and very much at the core of what it means to be the Church. The missional church is rooted in the New Testament church of Acts, but established in the mission of Jesus Christ himself. The missional church lives out the Church’s purpose: to be focused on God in worship

that is passionate, to be inwardly focused on community among believers, and to be outwardly focused on a world that does not yet know God.

Darrell Guder emphasizes that the term “missional” refers to the essential nature and vocation of the Church as God’s called and sent people. He emphasizes, “A missional ecclesiology is biblical, historical, contextual, eschatological, and can be practiced, that is, it can be translated into practice. The basic function of all theology is to equip the church for its calling. If that calling is functionally missional, then what we understand and teach about the church will shape God’s people for their faithful witness in particular places.”²⁴ A missional ecclesiology serves the Church’s witness as it makes “disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Mt 18:19-20).

Foreign and local missions have been a part of the First Presbyterian portfolio since its beginning, but traditional, liturgical worship and strong preaching is how people would describe this mainline denominational church to friends. Being missional is the essence of the Church, so it is prudent to ask why every church is not missional. One reason is churches have turned their attention to matters that distract them from going to the world to make disciples. Two ideas that distract a congregation’s missional experience are self-preservation and church growth.

If the Church is called to “go and make disciples” and encourage others no matter what the situation or human suffering that occurs, then people need to refocus on God’s activity in the world. Instead of focusing on the red brick building on North Boulevard in

²⁴ Darrell Guder, *Missional Church: a Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1998), 12-13.

Baton Rouge that will not last, focus is on whether churches can touch the world with God's love in a lasting way.

When the emphasis is on bringing the lost world to a local congregation, the Church's mission of going to the world can get lost. The overwhelming amount of hopelessness after Katrina enabled people to take the focus off themselves and as Jesus says in Matthew 28:19, "to go and make disciples;" yet most are more concerned about getting people to come into First Presbyterian's buildings to make disciples. But in most situations, people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. For the nine months following Katrina, First Presbyterian began shifting activity from getting people who come into the church, to going out to people in the community, then to Mandeville, and six months later to New Orleans for the next seven years.

After Hurricane Katrina, First Presbyterian responded to others away from the red brick buildings, to the needs of thirty-three churches in south Louisiana damaged by the storm. With the help of an RV driven from Cleveland, Ohio packed to the ceiling with emergency supplies, staff began delivering to churches in Mandeville, Louisiana for immediate needs. New Orleans was flooded for four weeks, so any immediate emergency help came from the federal government by way of the military and federal marshals.

The enthusiasm to encourage others who were suffering began to wane after a few months; however, the youth ministry has continued to assist and work alongside staff at Trinity Christian Community for the past seven summers, a mission outpost of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. One of the tiny churches was assisted in gutting, scraping walls and finally painting is located in Arabi, Louisiana (one mile from the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans). This area was heavily damaged, every building

submerged from the floodwaters up to fourteen feet for three weeks. Only 25 percent of this community has returned home in the past eight years, yet the desire to assist this church rebuild and complete these tasks kept the youth department motivated to return month after month. The twenty members who returned to Carolyn Park Presbyterian Church in Arabi have been excited to be back in their church, but attracting new people has proved very difficult. Their tiny congregation will need to become missional as they learn to evangelize their community in the next decade.

Obviously, attracting people to church is not necessarily wrong. In fact, churches ought to be attractive with an appeal to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Churches that do not draw people to the Gospel will not live out their biblical mandate because they will not be around for long. The problem arises when attracting people to the Church becomes the mission. The primary goal for churches is to serve, not to attract and become self-serving. The larger mission of the Church suffers, and can actually become less attractive when the focus is primarily on growth. Chris Hodges, of Church of the Highlands in Alabama, with ministry on eight campuses, mentioned that in his research he discovered three thousand churches close their doors each year, for many reasons.²⁵ Yet, in 2012, because Church of the Highlands is redirecting resources toward the world, there will be at least eighty new churches planted in the United States.

Becoming a missional church means redirecting resources toward the world. This requires church leaders to take a hard look at how money, time and energy are allocated. The First Presbyterian Church youth ministry budget directs \$22,000 to send twenty-four

²⁵ Chris Hodges, "Points of Passion, Part 2," sermon, Church of the Highlands, Birmingham, AL, November 20, 2011.

students and six youth leaders to the Jamaica mission trip every summer for twenty-four consecutive years with the students contributing \$775 each. For over twenty-five years students have gone to the mountains near Mandeville to build homes for the poor, care for terminally ill individuals and assist in running a children's outreach program in the local elementary schools.

In addition, in August 2009, 2010 and 2011, forty college-aged students and young adults flew to Cairo to proclaim the Gospel, helping to run a sports ministry camp in the Sahara sponsored by Kasr El-Dobara Evangelical Church. Coming from twenty-three Egyptian cities, 250 students come to the "Teen Games" held at the Beit el-Wadi sports camp. This facility is amazing, and nearly 80 percent of the camp prayed to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior during this camp experience.

The local church has a choice: invest solely in students and leaders in attendance, or purposefully invest in God's mission to the world. The encouragement given to students twelve-thousand miles across the world happens here as well. The students met in Egypt were genuinely interested in hearing about Jesus and asked questions whenever they had opportunity. The experiences here are just as life-changing as evidenced by opportunities to serve with students in north and south Baton Rouge. This community is filled with over one hundred opportunities to serve and give back to others.

The journey of First Presbyterian is being cultivated outwardly, shifting from being a staff led and consumer-driven church to being led by lay people. In such a context, staff members are becoming encouragers and equippers of church members. The best analogy of this is a football stadium: the majority of church members are in the stands watching and applauding the paid staff on the field. The church staff was worn out

from doing the ministry while the lay members were well rested but resistant to get in the game. That trend has reversed the past seven years at First Presbyterian.

Getting people active in the ministry can begin in worship, but it does not always happen like that. Attracting 250 church members to help run the first Carnival of Hope was not difficult. Members wanted to be personally involved at the River Center in September 2005. The people wanted something to do after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and immediate involvement was on the hearts of every church member. For example, washing five-hundred towels every day became the project of twenty-five members who wanted to be sure every individual had a clean towel to shower with.

Chad Hall writes, “Missional churches activate laity to carry out God’s mission in their various spheres of life. This creates a community of Christians who let the upward focus on God in the worship service impact their orientation and activity during the rest of their lives.”²⁶ It suggests people invite their neighbors or co-workers to join them for weekend worship. Communities would begin to change, and the transformation from reaching out to others would begin to have a ripple effect on how the church views itself. Guder adds, “It is not biblical, however, for particular communities of the visible, organized church to exist in isolation from one another.”²⁷ The people of God, in all their cultural diversity, may be understood as moving from Jerusalem to the larger church in Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). Even at First Presbyterian, the congregation was called to begin a new church in the nearby suburb of Prairieville on Christmas Eve in 2000, a fellowship called River Community Church. Six years later,

²⁶ Chad Hall, “Missional: Possible,” *Leadership* (Winter 2007): 37.

²⁷ Guder, *Missional Church*, 248.

River Community Church continued the Great Commission and planted a new church in Gonzales, Louisiana called River Church South, with lay members inviting friends from their neighborhoods to a local restaurant called The Cabin for worship. Seven years later, River Church South continues to worship in The Cabin with a mission to reach people with the Gospel.

Both of these churches reach out to Gulfport, Mississippi where many still suffer, helping in rebuilding from Katrina. The transformation of these new churches is in reaching the lost and understanding what it means to care for those who suffer from a lack of jobs and homes. Guder suggests, “The oneness spoken of here is a matter of obedience to the Lord of the church, obedience that centers on His mission, so that the world may know that you have sent me.”²⁸ The one Gospel relates all Christians to one another under one Lord and sends the Church into the world to the ends of the earth.

Guder affirms, “The task of transforming the connectional structures of the North American churches into missional structures is obviously daunting.”²⁹ But this task is necessary and unavoidable. Within sixty days after the disasters of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, six-hundred churches contacted First Presbyterian and wanted to contribute money and supplies. These churches wanted to help, and bring teams on short-term mission trips to south Louisiana. Quick connections among churches overwhelmed First Presbyterian with daily shipments of supplies and equipment. The encouragement from the Body was especially significant for those who lost everything. Supplies were stored in the church barn temporarily, to be given away to victims still living in the River Center.

²⁸ Ibid., 250.

²⁹ Ibid., 264.

The issues of hurricane relief began to hit church staff from every angle. There were cultural and environmental factors that influenced decisions from minute-to-minute. There were hindrances because First Presbyterian was not established to become a hurricane relief agency, and in a blink the church moved to care for others at breakneck speed. Issues ranged from receiving physical needs such as clothing and toothbrushes to the common request: "Please give me a ride to New Orleans to see my property." The professional church staff took over one-hundred phone calls a day and attempted to answer many questions, but at this moment the staff asked, "Is there someone we can hire to help coordinate all the daily requests, meet needs and answer questions from the hundreds of churches that call First Presbyterian on a daily basis?"

The decisions to do anything and everything were covered in prayer, and many vital questions came up daily. The benefit of hiring a seasoned hurricane relief coordinator from outside the city was huge. Kristin Menson served on college campuses around the country the previous five years. She took a short mission journey from Chicago and worked for the next sixteen months as the hurricane coordinator.

There were around 165 churches that brought short-term mission teams to Baton Rouge that she coordinated with ten New Orleans churches in need of help. The primary responsibility of the mission teams was to begin the gutting of homes and church facilities during the first year after Hurricane Katrina. The first location was Canal Street Presbyterian Church, which had five feet of floodwater in its facility. After fourteen weeks of intense effort, the Canal Street Presbyterian Church opened its door for worship on Christmas Eve. Many mission teams stayed across the city at Woodland Presbyterian Church in Algiers, a suburb of New Orleans that was not flooded by Katrina. After being

repaired, the next four years Canal Street Presbyterian Church hosted and housed at least 150 mission teams from around the US.

In Micah 6:8, the prophet asks, “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Menson did such as she relocated to Baton Rouge. This hurricane relief work needed someone committed to walking alongside hundreds of people, and she answered the call of God to come to Baton Rouge. She continued to line up work teams and met them at the airports if they flew in to Baton Rouge and New Orleans, providing incredible help needed at a crucial time in the lives of First Presbyterian Church.

In his Old Testament commentary, David Prior writes, “In other words, God wants our very selves, our lives, and our love for others.”³⁰ The sacrifice humanity can bring is a living sacrifice of souls and bodies. When God speaks to consciences, it is to call them to repentance and faith. Prior continues, “For repentance and faith are the necessary prerequisites for living with justice, faith, and humility before God as our priorities.”³¹ Micah’s friends decided to walk in pride without God. Until humanity applies the third quality, “to walk humbly with your God,” they cannot begin to practice the first two: “to do justice and to love mercy.” This Scripture really means to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself. The young people and their leaders who came to serve in New Orleans and the

³⁰ David Prior, *The Message of Joel, Micah, and Habakkuk* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1998), 176.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 177.

Gulf Coast region for the past six years have chosen to learn how “to walk humbly with your God.”

As recovery continues to move into the next five years of continued restoration of the city of New Orleans, the missional church is needed more than ever. There are many issues hindering the transformation of New Orleans. The people of New Orleans are weary from the slow-moving process of gutting and cleaning out homes. There are approximately 100,000 homes that have not been touched since the hurricane. The federal government has not moved quickly to assist many people with overwhelming needs. The needs are endless, and the Church is still being called to encourage others in need.

The psychosocial and developmental issues of early, mid, and late adolescents will continue to be unwrapped as families adjust to new homes, new environments and new communities. Thus, as David Elkind notes, “How children respond to chronic stress depends upon several factors, including the child’s perception of the stress situation, the amount of stress he or she is under, and the availability of effective coping mechanisms.”³² The families that have moved back to New Orleans during the past eight years have responded to chronic stress and have seen the city’s infrastructure decline with very little hope that the majority of poor families will ever return to their homes.

It is important to step back from this study and ask what Jesus did in these difficult circumstances. Whether or not Jesus Christ would choose to rebuild New Orleans, spreading the Gospel message through the volunteers who have continued to come humbly every day, week and month for eight years, is a question many still ask. The Kingdom of God places high value on people and relationships that have been

³² David Elkind, *The Hurried Child* (Cambridge, MA: DaCapo Press, 2007), 186.

altered forever. Jesus did. Christians should too, even though it is an immense challenge to be a missional community in the midst of so much pain and tragedy. Thankfully, God's Kingdom has responded in awesome ways the past eight years, encouraging thousands of families and hundreds of churches.

Throughout the opening chapter, the written word of God has been mentioned to encourage believers who have suffered a great loss. One Scripture passage that confirms what First Presbyterian is trying to be about is found in Matthew 28:19-20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." The Great Commission has been given to all churches to reach out to the world and make disciples even in difficult circumstances. Second, the Church is commanded to teach others in every culture as well as those with whom believers cross paths every day. The Church is continuing to nurture and care for the spiritual needs of all families. There will be many needs to address in the future, for this disaster will continue to be in the minds of all who continue to encounter the aftermath daily.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL STUDY OF HUMAN SUFFERING

This chapter is a scriptural study to encourage individuals who suffer. These Scripture passages are only a few that will help with encouragement daily. In Psalm 116:5, the psalmist writes, “The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.” God cares about people who suffer. The writer is aware that the Lord alone can help, as he is gracious, righteous and full of compassion, so as to protect the needy. Frank Gaebelein writes, “He is full of compassion in his tenderness and understanding of the limits of His children.”¹ God answers prayers and pleas for help at any moment, and because of his mercy, he listens with compassion. His goodness goes beyond the soothing word, for he is willing to act.

Psalm 116:15 includes the following promise: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” God considers each life precious and carefully notes the death of each of his people, who are called saints. Gaebelein adds, “The psalmist confesses the

¹ Frank Gaebelein, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 726.

great love of the Lord for his saints.”² God stays close even in death. When a loved one nears death some become angry and feel abandoned. All are precious to God, and he carefully chooses the time when all will be called into his presence. God sees everyone, and each life is valuable to him. As Michael Wilcock notes, “Verse fifteen is not looking for martyrs, but that to him it matters a great deal whether his servant lives or dies.”³

In Isaiah 42:15-16, the prophet indicates the Creator’s intentions: “I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along with unfamiliar paths I will guide them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them.” God promises that he will never forsake his people and will remove obstacles for his people’s deliverance to safety, to places exactly like the Baton Rouge River Center. In the passage, God’s people were repeatedly referred to as blind, and God led the hurricane victims through new experiences and to places that were pushing back the darkness. The unfamiliar paths everyone took during Hurricane Katrina’s aftermath remind students of Scripture of the story of Abraham, who went out not knowing where God would take him. In his commentary, Franz Delitzsch suggests, “The grace of God helps the blind, scatters the darkness, and removes all hindrances and obstacles.”⁴ God works on behalf of humanity every day, and is committed to lead his people in ways that are mysterious.

In Isaiah 43:1-2, the great Old Testament prophet offers the following:

But now, this is what the Lord says, He who created you, O Jacob, He who formed you, O Israel: Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;

² Ibid., 728.

³ Michael Wilcock, *The Message of Psalms 73-150* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2001), 187.

⁴ Franz Delitzsch, *The Prophecies of Isaiah* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1894), 175.

and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you blaze.

God personally took care of displaced individuals and invited them to trust him, not be afraid even as New Orleanians experienced flooding in 80 percent of the city. Passing through rivers of difficulty will either cause people to drown or force them to grow stronger. If the displaced proceed in their own strength, they are more likely to drown. If they invite the Lord to go with them, he will protect them.

God created the people of Israel, just like he created the displaced along the Gulf Coast, and he redeemed them and still calls them by name today. God protected Israel in times of trouble, and will protect New Orleans in future hurricanes. In a tender expression God spoke to his children, he said, “You are mine.” Isaiah 61:1-3 underscores that sentiment:

The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.

God will give joy and praise-filled hearts to those who grieve at such a time. Jesus quoted these words, offered in Luke 4:18-19, and the commentator Barry Webb notes their importance: “The displaced people are under God’s favor, who grieves with them at this time. Here is the great theological breakthrough of Isaiah’s vision and the heart of his gospel. The Messiah must suffer and rise again.”⁵ It is small wonder Jesus took up the scroll of the prophet Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth and read this passage at the

⁵ Barry Webb, *The Message of Isaiah* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1996), 234.

beginning of his ministry. Jesus knew that Isaiah's vision of a suffering Messiah was to be fulfilled in him.

In Jeremiah 29:11, the prophet affirms God's purposes: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." It is God's intention to walk alongside his people in every circumstance. As long as God provides for the future, and goes with followers as they fulfill his mission, displaced individuals will have boundless hope. This does not mean that any will be spared pain, suffering or hardship, but that God will see people through every set of circumstances. Derek Kinder wisely writes, "God's plans went deeper and further, as they still do, than prosperity."⁶ His plans promise to give a hope and a future.

The disciple Matthew recorded the Savior's promises in his Gospel account. In Matthew 5:4, he writes, "Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted." Louis Evely notes, "Blessed are those who, in the worst bitterness, are audacious enough to believe in the tender solitude of the Father, who are audacious enough to think themselves blessed and not punished."⁷ "Blessed" means more than happiness. It implies the fortunate state of those who are in God's Kingdom. The Sermon on the Mount does not promise laughter, pleasure or earthly prosperity. Many victims realized grieving is not a sin. God blesses and comforts those who mourn the loss of loved ones and possessions.

In Romans 8:35-39, Paul writes,

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be

⁶ Derek Kidner, *The Message of Jeremiah* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1987), 101.

⁷ Louis Evely, *Suffering* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 105.

slaughtered.” No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul claims that it is impossible to separate his children from the love of Christ. John Stott affirms the following reality: “Paul mentions seven possibilities of adversities that might be thought of as coming between us and Christ’s love.”⁸ Believers have always faced many hardships: persecution, illness, imprisonment, famine and nakedness, even death caused by an ungodly and hostile world. Powers are unseen forces of evil in the universe, forces like Satan and his angels. Christ’s love protects from any such forces. These verses contain one of the most comforting promises in all Scripture: the sufficiency of God’s love—steadfast, faithful and persevering.

In 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Paul writes, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of all compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.” God comforts people in their troubles so they are equipped to comfort others. Many think that when God comforts people, their troubles should go away. The more they suffer, the more comfort God gives humanity. Every trial people endure helps comfort others who suffer similar troubles. Paul Barnett writes, “In the midst of acute suffering, Paul had experienced the comfort of God, and for this, he devoutly declared his blessing on the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort.”⁹

⁸ John R.W. Stott, *The Message of Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1994), 257.

⁹ Paul Barnett, *The Message of II Corinthians* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1988), 29.

While imprisoned, Paul offered the following reminder, recorded in Philippians 4:13: “I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” God gives Christians strength and contentment in any situation. The power received in Christ is sufficient to do his will and to face the challenges that arise from commitment to doing his will. As people contend for the faith, they will face troubles, pressures and trials. As these trials come, wise believers invite God to strengthen them. J. A. Motyer suggests, “No circumstance could ever arise which would be too much for Paul’s God, and therefore no circumstance could ever beat Paul. Here is vigorous faith.”¹⁰

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, Paul writes, “Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.” Grieving Christians have hope because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Paul wanted the Thessalonians to understand that death is not the end of the story. When Jesus returns, all believers will be reunited, never to suffer or die again. In truth, all 1100 New Orleanians who died in Hurricane Katrina will one day meet their Creator: those who professed faith in him, and those who did not.

In 2 Thessalonians 2:16, Paul adds the following encouragement: “May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and work.” Jesus Christ is the source of encouragement and hope. Paul knew that the Thessalonians would face pressure from persecutions, false teachers and worldliness, plus they would be tempted to waver from the truth and be prompted to leave the faith.

¹⁰ J.A. Motyer, *The Message of Philippians* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 219.

His message to his spiritual son Timothy offers the following promise, recorded in 2 Timothy 2:13: “If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.” Even when displaced individuals (or any who suffer) doubt and stray, God keeps his promises. Jesus is faithful, and will stay by humanity’s side even when people have endured so much that they seem to have no faith left. The faith of many will be challenged, but Jesus is faithful to his promise to be with them. Refusing Christ’s help will break communication with God, but he will never turn his back on the faithful even though they may turn their back on him. Stott adds, “But one thing is certain about God beyond any doubt or uncertainty whatever, and that is, he cannot deny himself.”¹¹ God remains forever true to his person and his character, fulfilling his promises and giving life to those who die with Christ.

The author of Hebrews 2:15 writes, “And free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.” One of Christ’s purposes was to free those who are enslaved by their fear of death. Only then can Christ deliver those who had previously lived in constant fear and free them to live for him. The faithful who belong to God need not fear death, because death is only the doorway into eternal life (1 Cor 15:54-58). Death has been defeated, and followers of Christ have hope beyond the grave. Thus, death is no longer a source of dread or fear. Christ overcame death, and one day believers will also. In his commentary on Hebrews, Raymond Brown offers the following: “Jesus did not live a detached life, free from adversity and trouble. He experienced first-hand its hazards and hardships, and went through anguish we shall never have to contemplate, and

¹¹ John R.W. Stott, *The Message of II Timothy* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1973), 64.

he did it all for us.”¹² The one who endured the world’s greatest suffering is certainly able to help all who turn to him and free them from the fear of death.

In chapter 12, verses 7-11, the author of Hebrews continues,

Endure hardships as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Brown adds, “First of all, the Father treasures his children and is treating us as sons.”¹³ God is not punishing people but training them during hard times. The writer of Hebrews sets out still another reason why Christians should cheerfully bear affliction when it comes. The writer urged the Hebrews to bear it because the great saints of the past have been disciplined as well, yet there is no real comparison to the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The Great Instructor, God teaches through the hard times. Brown offers, “The person who has not experienced the Lord’s discipline may question whether he truly belongs to Him.”¹⁴

In Revelation 21:4, John writes, “He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” In heaven, God will wipe every tear and there will be no more death or mourning. Tears, grief, crying and pain are gone forever. Death, too, shall be gone, as the

¹² Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1982), 72.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

prophet Isaiah indicates in Isaiah 25:8: “He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces,” and in 65:19: “I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.” This is a future promise. But even in the present those who mourn are blessed, for they will be comforted, and death is swallowed up in victory for those who know Christ, the fellowship of his sufferings and the power of his Resurrection (Phil 3:10).

As recorded in Luke 13, Jesus responds to a question with which many have wrestled: Why does God allow seemingly innocent people to suffer? Jesus was asked about a barbaric act in which Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, had slaughtered a number of Galileans—people from Jesus’ homeland, and the soldiers desecrated the Jerusalem temple with the martyrs’ blood. In his response, Jesus did not try to explain or justify the suffering and death. He did not question God or blame the victims. Instead, he used the occasion to issue and repeat a solemn warning: “Unless you repent, you too will all perish” (Lk 13:3). It is likely few of his listeners expected such an answer from Jesus. Repentance necessitates a turning away from sin, and a turning to God. That was the heart of his message.

There are no guarantees in this life. Some people die in infancy; others live to a ripe, old age. Some die in excruciating pain from disease, while others pass from this life quietly. Scripture offers many references concerning at what age, and through what means, people died. Yet, the message of Scripture is very clear: the ultimate issue is what happens to the soul after death. Some will be ready to face God, but many will not. Those who die in peace have turned from the futility of sin toward the Savior in saving faith.

According to 2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” In John 3:16, Jesus makes a similar distinction: “That whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Death is inevitable, at least until the Lord returns. Jesus makes it clear that there is an eternal difference between a body dying and a soul perishing. To be born again is to release any fear of the second death: eternal separation from God and torment in hell, the ultimate place of unending suffering.

All who listen to the whisper of Jesus’ voice will experience some degree of suffering: physical, emotional and relational. The suffering servant and savior, Jesus Christ, understands the sinful plight of humankind, and provides reconciliation and redemption through the cross. Though humanity still faces tribulation in this world, people have the Lord’s mighty help and comfort (Jn 16:33). One day, all who have believed in his name will live eternally in the beauty of heaven: “God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Rv 21:4).

Scripture brings hope to all difficult situations, emphatically comforting the reader. David writes, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Ps 34:18). It is encouraging that the very presence of the Lord is near to those who are wounded and discouraged. If only the hurting could fully comprehend how deeply they are loved, they would never feel alone again. David returns to this thought again in Psalm 103:11: “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him.” God loves his own so deeply, they will never fully comprehend the depth of his devotion.

After Hurricane Katrina, many individuals felt alone but remained hopeful in a difficult situation. They needed words of encouragement from whomever God brought across their paths, and they found it in the Bible. Volunteers from churches across America served as Christ's ambassadors, and the Word of God was extended to those who needed encouragement the most, every day. Scripture passages like the many listed above brought comfort, hope and encouragement to the thousands displaced from their homes in Louisiana and across the Gulf Coast region.

The Word of God offers the message of Jesus, the lasting hope and greatest news found in John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." The entire Gospel comes to focus within this verse. God's love is not static or self-centered. God's love reaches out and draws others in. To love someone dearly and purposefully suggests a willingness to give freely to the point of self-sacrifice. God paid dearly with the life of his Son. Jesus Christ accepted humanity's punishment and paid the price for their sins. Then Jesus offered the eternal life that he had bought for them. When Christians share their lives and the Gospel with others, they are commanded to offer a similar love—the love of Jesus.

One of the most remarkable stories in all the Old Testament records the patriarch Job's consuming experience with grief. Job lost everything, including his possessions and children. Upon learning of this disaster in his life, the Scriptures note Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship and said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

The wisdom of worship at such a time is telling. But, as Card writes, “Job must become our first precious mentor of lament.”¹⁵ It is perhaps no accident that, before the reader enters the world of the Psalms, Job is introduced and provides a primer for lament. When teachers struggle to explain a difficult topic like prayer, faith or servanthood, they frequently name a person who comes closest to an appropriate ideal. Card suggests, “If we want to talk about personal holiness we inevitably speak of a Mother Teresa. When we seek to understand discipleship we think of someone like Dietrich Bonhoeffer because his life and death validated everything he spoke about in his writings.”¹⁶ However, in Job, the reader discovers a person who will simply not let go of God despite death, disease, isolation from friends and perceived abandonment by God.

Job loses everything including his health and feels abandoned by God, yet as Card writes, “Death is mysteriously denied him.”¹⁷ Without this pain, Job might have never realized the depth of a relationship with God and perhaps never would all who read and teach his story. Job’s friends turned their backs on him. In such a situation, anyone might feel abandoned by God. The Word of God offers hope. Scripture emphatically states that the Lord will never leave or forsake his chosen ones.

Job’s distraction should serve as a serious caution. Job was wrong to take his eyes off the God he could not see. Card adds, “Job calls out to those of us who are in the wilderness, ‘Beware!’ It could be that our undoing will not be caused by death, disease,

¹⁵ Card, *A Sacred Sorrow*, 37.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 38.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 43.

cancer or the failed marriage. Our worst enemies could be disguised as our friends.”¹⁸

True friends are willing to sit in silence for as long as it takes. Real friends encourage mourners to keep talking, crying out to God and arguing with him. As an innocent sufferer, Job becomes a forerunner of Jesus. The author adds, “Job’s life whispers the truth that would be shouted from the housetops of Jesus’ experience; that only suffering can save us. Job is a ramp leading up to the man of sorrows.”¹⁹

The wilderness struggles of the life of David become the major themes of his own poetic psalms of lament. He was confronted often with death and disease and would find comfort with his simple, ten-stringed lyre. “As David felt the strings on his fingertips, he found the words to cry out to the God he knew held the power over death,” Card writes, “Out of the shadows of his solitary life, he discovered solace and a path back to intimacy with God through the laments he began to create and sing, when he was a lonely shepherd boy.”²⁰ As David faced the many adversaries life hurled in his direction, lament provided a bridge back to the safe presence of God. Jesus must have sensed in David’s soul something that resonated with his own feelings of rejection.

The story of David began on an interesting note. As recorded in 1 Samuel 16, at God’s direction, the prophet Samuel invited Jesse and his seven sons to help him affirm the Lord’s anointed. In turn, the Almighty rejected each of the eldest sons as unfit: “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at

¹⁸ Ibid., 56.

¹⁹ Ibid., 60.

²⁰ Ibid., 67.

the heart” (1 Sm 16:7). God looked upon the hearts of the seven men and found them wanting. But Jesse had one last, overlooked son. His heart had been shaped in the wilderness, formed in lonely places. As Card writes, “He is not the oldest, nor the tallest, and not the strongest. He seems to be the least promising of all Jesse’s sons. David is sent for and is the boy with the shepherd’s staff and sling.”²¹

Samuel produces his horn filled with anointing oil and pours it on David’s head. “From that day on the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power” (1 Sm 16:13). This was the beginning of a king who would live long, but it would be twenty difficult years before he would take his God-given throne over Israel. David’s life was indeed fashioned for lament. Card affirms that timeless reality: “The truth is, all our lives are. Seen or unseen, we have enemies that loom sometimes like Goliaths on the horizon. We are tempted to lose hope and to let go. We face the enemies of disease and death. The terrible truth is we are, all of us, alone.”²² If only God’s people might join David in lament, they might realize as they cry out to God, they cry out with him.

Psalm 13 echoes David’s frustrated cry: “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?” Card adds, “This Psalm is one of the best examples of the resolution that occurs in every lament psalm except one, Psalm 88. It marks the transition from despair to hope and from complaint to praise.”²³ David felt abandoned by God. Many express the same thoughts as the great poet and king still.

²¹ Ibid., 69.

²² Ibid., 71.

²³ Ibid., 78.

David crossed the line from the fear of his enemy to trust the unfailing love of God. David passed from complaining about abandonment to consuming, heartfelt worship. Lament is the means of crossing over from anger to mercy. If Christians are ever to move away from hating enemies toward loving them as Jesus commands, they must first cross this bridge. Christians must be submissive to God while he is in the process of perfecting their hearts. Until this occurs, it is useless to stand in his presence pretending to love and forgive others.

Abandonment and alienation are especially painful for the young. After the hurricanes, many children felt abandoned because they were no longer with their familiar school and neighborhood friends. Many were relocated far away, to new communities across the nation. Sadly, parents in New Orleans were accused of abandoning their children for many years before the storms. In Chap Clark's *Hurt*, he explains, "The adolescent world appears to be relatively stable and healthy. Yet underneath the calm waters presented by positive empirical data there is turmoil that is difficult, painful, lonely, and even harmful to our young."²⁴ Adults are not present in their homes, and children are forced to survive on their own.

In the year before Katrina made landfall, 70 percent of all New Orleans births were to unmarried women; that total compares to 29 percent in the United States as a whole. Adult couples are not present in the homes of their children, thus abandonment issues have been prevalent throughout New Orleans for years. In many respects, New Orleans was an unhealthy place, increasingly judged unfit for human habitation by its more sensitive citizenry. A burgeoning welfare population caused white flight from

²⁴ Chap Clark, *Hurt* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 42.

residential areas, widespread abandonment of the public school system, and soaring crime rates. New Orleans was, and is still known today, as the murder capital of America.

Parker Williamson offered the following tragic commentary:

Sixty-two percent of the city's children lived with a single parent in 2004, compared with forty-three percent of all children living in Louisiana and just 31 percent of all children in the United States. Before Hurricane Katrina hit, barely more than fifty-five percent of persons age 16 and older were working. Twenty-eight percent of New Orleans teenagers lacked a high school education, had bailed out of school and had no job, versus 13 percent in the United States. Thirty-eight percent of children under 18 lived below the poverty level in New Orleans, compared to the national average of eighteen percent. More than 25,000 students, nearly one-third of the New Orleans school population, fled to the more than ninety-two private schools that offered a quality education.²⁵

David Elkind stresses the tendency to “hurry” children. Chap Clark prefers the label “abandoned.”²⁶ In New Orleans, children drop out of school much earlier than young people in most communities, and are responsible to feed, clothe and shelter themselves. Abandonment takes place at a ridiculously young age in Louisiana, and children must fend for themselves. Many of the problems that ensue are directly related to the breakdown of marriage and family in New Orleans, and a vicious cycle begins anew.

The Center for Disease Control and other agencies have demonstrated a clear correlation between the state of marriage and the quality of life in American communities. Again Williamson writes, “In measurements of child poverty, incidents of abuse, physical and mental health, school performance, truancy and anti-social behavior, children from single-parent homes score significantly worse than those from married-

²⁵ Parker Williamson, “New Orleans: Scene of Multiple Disasters,” *The Layman* 41:2 (Spring 2008): B3.

²⁶ Clark, *Hurt*, 43.

couple families. The percentage of poor children, for example, is 62 percent in single-parent families compared with 28 percent in married-couple families.”²⁷

Kathryn Newmark and Veronique De Rugy wrote that Katrina’s destruction, “terrible as it was,” may prove to be the salvation of a school district that was drowning for years.²⁸ Politicians, educators and parents, long frustrated with the state of public education in New Orleans, suddenly had the opportunity, as waters receded, to build a new school system almost from scratch. Months before Katrina struck, Adam Nossiter wrote, “In the dismal gallery of failing urban school systems, New Orleans may be the biggest horror of them all.”²⁹ Hurricane Katrina severely damaged forty-seven schools, and thirty-eight schools suffered moderate damage. Students and teachers were displaced. The resulting demographic shifts reshuffled power blocs, opening the door for reform.

A \$20.9 million grant from No Child Left Behind charter school program reopened existing charters and established ten new ones. As charter schools took hold, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as well as other major foundations, entered the picture. There is clear momentum in post-Katrina New Orleans for the establishment of progressive charter schools. In June 2006, the federal government awarded \$24 million to create more. *The New York Times* indicated New Orleans is becoming “the nation’s preeminent laboratory for the widespread use of charter schools.”³⁰

²⁷ Williamson, “New Orleans: Scene of Multiple Disasters,” B10.

²⁸ Kathryn Newmark and Veronique De Rugy, “Hope After Katrina: Will New Orleans become the New City of Choice,” *Education Next* 6:4 (Fall 2006): 3.

²⁹ Williamson, “New Orleans: Scene of Multiple Disasters,” B11.

³⁰ Susan Saulny, “U.S. Gives Charter Schools a Big Push in New Orleans,” *New York Times*, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/13/us/13charter.html> (accessed December 6, 2011).

In 2007, former teachers called the charter schools “a massive takeover experiment with the children of New Orleans at a time when most parents and students were widely dispersed in other parishes around Louisiana and in the forty-nine states.”³¹ This abandonment of young people widely dispersed throughout the country is felt everywhere, as young people are prone to develop their own networks no matter where they live but may be hesitant to do so. Clark notes, “Young people who have been abandoned and left to themselves are understandably wary and tentative, trusting little, and withholding commitment.”³²

Displaced by Katrina, my own high school niece and nephew moved from New Orleans and lived in Baton Rouge for one year. They struggled to find new clusters of friends with whom they might identify and did not trust new acquaintances easily. Few of their friends from New Orleans attended the same high school with them in Baton Rouge, as they had moved to different communities altogether. They chose a public school near where they moved over the private school their cousins attended. One year later, faith-motivated volunteers had rebuilt their home, and they returned to New Orleans.

The number of faithful volunteers who chose to serve in New Orleans has been impressive. According to a *USA Today* story from January 2008, Habitat for Humanity recruited 71,412; the Southern Baptist Church dispatched 175,378; the United Methodist Church sent 56,656; the Presbyterian Church USA sent 29,345; the Lutheran Church sent 26,585; and the Episcopal Church sent 18,303. Nearly 400,000 faith-motivated volunteers

³¹ United Teachers of NOLA, “No Experience Necessary: How the New Orleans School Takeover Experiment Devalues Experienced Teachers,” (June 2007), 16.

³² Clark, *Hurt*, 61.

chose to affirm their brothers and sisters in need, making sure they do not feel abandoned during the first six years of restoration to an amazing city.³³

Even though Katrina has moved off the public's radar screen, the flow of faith-motivated volunteers continues. Fueled by an extraordinarily generous Presbyterian public, there is much money set aside for continued recovery efforts. Even though 100,000 homes have been abandoned by renters and owners in the New Orleans area, the progress being made is inspiring. The Church's call to help when suffering occurs is incredible. New Orleans residents sense the city's rebuilding efforts would not have progressed this far without faith-motivated volunteers.

In Matthew 26, a woman came and poured an expensive bottle of perfume over Jesus' head. Those around him rebuked the woman for wasting the perfume and not selling it to benefit the poor, but Jesus announced that the poor would always be around though he soon would not. The greatest value in the involved presence of faith-motivated volunteers is similar. Their primary goal is not simply to help the poor. That will happen, but the primary goal is to help students and adults see Jesus Christ and his Kingdom.

Mission experiences move faith-motivated volunteers out of their comfort zones and help them better appreciate the blessings and talents they have received. One of the key reasons to involve students and adult volunteers in mission work is the idea of "reverse mission." When many people first volunteer, they generously plan to serve those with whom they come in contact. This may be through some sort of construction project, health clinic or Vacation Bible School, and they plan accordingly. It could be argued,

³³ Rick Jervis, "Faith-based Groups Man Recovery Front Lines," *USA Today*, http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/charity/2008-10-07-charity-disaster_N.htm (accessed December 6, 2011).

however, as a result of life-changing situations and experiences involving those to whom they minister or simply due to their separation from the known and comfortable, the faith-motivated volunteers themselves experience the greatest impact.

For First Presbyterian, summer 2013 included the eighth annual New Orleans Mission Trip. Each summer, young men and women and their sponsors have worked in stifling heat, gutting churches and homes and clearing lots of debris. Their intense work ethic is a reminder of their parents' training and their concern for the welfare of others. In a recent summer, students painted two huge sheds, requiring twenty-five gallons of paint. The students were amazing painters. Scott Meier writes:

If we keep in mind that a good portion of our youth ministry is intended to help young people become life-long disciples of Jesus Christ, then we need to create opportunities that will let them see themselves as disciples. Mission experiences can be an extremely powerful way to do that. When Jesus proclaimed the Great Commission that we should go to the entire world to share the Gospel, the known world was relatively small. Jesus wasn't just talking about the physical planet; he was also talking about the diverse cultures, religions, and inhabitants that made up the world.³⁴

Mission experiences offer an expanded view of the world. The internet and 24-hour news channels place the world at people's fingertips, yet that is only part of experiencing what God has created. Several years ago a group of students and adults looked intently into the sky on the annual trip to Jamaica, experiencing something different. Traveling to a new place, this group was experiencing the stars from an island near the ocean. Meier identifies: "There's an awesomeness to God's creation that is waiting to be experienced and lived. There are people from different backgrounds and

³⁴ Scott Meier, "The Real Truth about Short-term Mission Trips," *Youthworker* (May/June 2001): 25.

lifestyles that will mean more to us if we come into direct contact with them.”³⁵ In order to truly understand other people and their cultures, it is not enough to merely hear about them on CNN. Last summer at the Wadi Camp in the Sahara desert, the Egyptian students participating in sports ministries were very appreciative and returned encouragement all week. Americans who entered into Egyptian culture experienced a fulfilling camp regardless of the language barrier.

God’s people must envision what other cultures see and meet them face-to-face, to live as they live. Only then can believers truly understand such diverse needs and the ways they can be addressed. First Presbyterian youth experienced this in Zambia, as well. Group leaders could have taught lessons concerning the suffering Zambian people, but traveling there and living in tents in the Zambian bush for fourteen nights provided all the teaching required. Students observed the people, talked with them, and became servants to them, greatly impacting all involved.

Families at First Presbyterian still talk about Jamaica 2003, a favorite mission trip for many. The expedition to the bush in Zambia will be long remembered because of the unique ways Jesus chose to answer many prayers. The Egyptian Sports camp is a favorite mission experience because the Gospel crossed language barriers, and four of every five attending the camp prayed to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior. A fourth mission trip, one to Romania to minister with gypsy children, offered similar experiences.

Meier suggests universal truths shape a truly successful mission experience:

First, it must move youth out of their comfort zones and take them to new places. This idea of moving out of what is comfortable shouldn’t just be a physical experience but an emotional and spiritual one as well. Second, mission

³⁵ Ibid., 26.

experiences must challenge young people's preconceived notions and make them think. Many students I run into think that a homeless person just needs to get a job to better his or her situation. It's not until the students begin to understand the disparity between what a minimum-wage job pays and what it costs for basic living expenses that a young person can change his or her thinking. Third, mission experiences cannot just be about building a house or working in a soup kitchen. They must include a time of teaching about circumstances that many of God's children face. Fourth, if we want our teens to really understand the needs of those who suffer, mission experiences cannot be once-a-year events. In order for our youth to grasp that service is a lifestyle, we must provide a variety of opportunities throughout the year.³⁶

This lifestyle of service begins everywhere on a daily basis. Youth and adults minister to the poor in downtown Baton Rouge on the first Sunday of the month at Open Air Ministry which has two-hundred participants. Joseph Moore has preached at this outdoor service for the past nine years, and ten churches have supported his ministry with people and resources.

Jim Hancock writes, "The Bible says God has done something for the poor and is doing something for the poor by giving the responsibility to the men and women and children who are called his people. The question is: if God were to actually give me something to share, if he gave me the impulse to share it, would I be willing to trust him enough to let it go?"³⁷ It depends on where and how the Christian is growing. God is likely to give strength to give away to someone else. More than two hundred First Presbyterian members have been willing to share their time, talents, and resources for God's kingdom at Open Air Ministry for the past nine years. First Presbyterian has opened its doors to serve the indigent community in downtown Baton Rouge sixteen

³⁶ Ibid., 28.

³⁷ Jim Hancock, *Compassionate Kids: Practical Ways to Involve Your Students in Missions and Service*, (El Cajon, CA: Youth Specialties Books, 1995), 87.

meals the past two years. Caring for the poor is a responsibility mandated by God's Word, and First Presbyterian Church will be held accountable how they loved their neighbors in downtown Baton Rouge. Compassion from First Presbyterian members has changed dramatically since Hurricane Katrina. Every member has been challenged by God's Word to participate in his kingdom work.

Hancock gives this illustration:

Here's a partial list to give away to someone else: God may give me enough time to share with others. Or he might teach me to use my time well enough so that I can give some of it away. God might give me enough money to share with others. Or he might teach me to live on less so that I can create a surplus from what I already have. God might give me extra creativity to share with others. Or he might teach me to use the talent he has given me more creatively than I have yet to imagine. God might give me a team with whom I can work to serve others. He might even take some of my present relationships and help us blend our lives so that good things spring from our partnership—things that change the world. God might give me a vision for making the world what it could be. Or he might call me to help fulfill the vision he is giving someone else who sees a hope and a future. God might give me compassion. Compassion is made of the prefix *com*, meaning "with," and the word *passion*, which means "suffer." God might give me the capacity to identify with others so much that I participate in their pain as Christ has entered into my pain.³⁸

One of the many areas First Presbyterian has shown compassion is through inviting Moore and the Open Air Ministry participants to cut grass for members of the congregation. This relationship has deepened because trust has begun between people of different races and backgrounds. Many poor people in Baton Rouge are willing to serve diligently and work alongside the church family. Hancock concludes, "There is something in the mind and heart of God that is set on including you and me in his work in

³⁸ Ibid., 88.

the world. I don't understand it, yet I find myself drawn into it bit by bit, year-by-year. It seems we are destined to join him in his generosity."³⁹

For Christians to become less judgmental they must understand what causes many in the world to live in such profound need. People can read and talk about poverty, hunger and despair all they want, but when young people come face-to-face with the circumstances faced by billions of real hurting people, they are changed in ways that last a lifetime. Not everyone will become an international missionary, but through life-changing mission experiences most will begin to appreciate what they have and be more willing to serve others on a daily basis. Every time First Presbyterian youth and sponsors coordinate a mission trip, those who take part come home better prepared to serve wherever God calls them. They appreciate all they have, and want to share it. In the process, they encounter Jesus, and that is the true purpose of serving others.

³⁹ Ibid, 89.

PART TWO
FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER 3

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

Mission is a word that currently possesses a particular resonance in the secular world. Every business and institution has designed its own mission statement. It is no longer thought of as the Church's activity overseas or in another culture. Mission is "quite simply what the Christian community is sent to do, beginning right where it is located."¹ Though fulfilled in different ways according to particular local circumstances, the obligations of mission are the same wherever community is established.

Mission is at the heart of the Church's life. According to Andrew Kirk, "The church is by nature missionary to the extent that, if it ceases to be missionary, it has not just failed in one of its tasks, it has ceased being the church."² Thus, the Church's "self-understanding and sense of identity (its ecclesiology) is inherently bound up with its call to share and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth and the end of time."³ Mission is the reality of Christian life - "We are Christians because we have been

¹ J. Andrew Kirk, *What Is Mission? Theological Explorations* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 24.

² *Ibid.*, 30.

³ *Ibid.*

called by God to work with him in the fulfillment of his purposes for humanity as a whole.”⁴ Life in this world is life in mission bearing witness to God’s activity in the world by its communication of the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and deed. God’s calling to mission is a calling to service. Kirk writes, “Service is not so much a function as a definition of the Church. The community Jesus founded is *diakonia* (Mark 10:43-5). God’s people are judged not by their formal piety, but by the spontaneous compassion they show or fail to show to those in need with whom Jesus Christ identifies himself (Matthew 25:44, Acts 11:29, 12:25).”⁵

The making of community cannot be a side issue or optional for Christians. Gilbert Bilezikian writes, “Without community, there is no Christianity. Community is central to God’s purposes for humankind.”⁶ Christians are under obligation to make community happen, and “personal growth does not happen in isolation.”⁷ In order to become true oneness, community is to be built by people who accept each other as Christ accepts them. Scripture says, “If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple” (1 Cor 3:17). Bilezikian concludes, “The making of community requires work and community does not just happen.”⁸ As Kirk writes, “There is good evidence for Jesus’ belief that those whom he called to be with him would continue His mission of proclaiming and performing God’s rule on earth.

⁴ Ibid, 31.

⁵ Ibid., 32.

⁶ Gilbert Bilezikian, *Community 101* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 35.

⁷ Ibid, 54.

⁸ Ibid, 66.

It would be virtually impossible to imagine any other reason for the existence of the new community of Christians in Jerusalem and Judea and its survival under the pressure of persecution.”⁹ The preaching of the nearness of the Kingdom of God, the call to repent and believe the Good News (Mk 1:14-15) is now further extended by the commission to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins in the name of the crucified and risen Messiah (Lk 24:46-7).

The Church’s mission requires “communicating the good news of Jesus and the kingdom (Acts 28:30) (evangelism), insisting on the full participation of all people in God’s gifts of life and well-being (justice), providing the resources to meet people’s needs (compassion) and never using lethal violence as a means of doing God’s will (the practice of nonviolence as a means of change).”¹⁰ The Church’s mission is to be an instrument of God’s righteous and compassionate governance in the world. This means, the Church is:

To be involved in every action that restores, even partially, wholeness to human life. In the area of physical healing, the Church will share in the overcoming of illness by teaching and enabling a healthy way of living. Where people are suffering from mental distress, often caused by a lack of love and security, God’s people will open themselves, their homes and their churches to the disturbed and abused. Jesus’ disciples are to believe the best rather than the worst of people, and the Church will help to give people the dignity of self-confidence through appropriate education.¹¹

The Church’s mission is evangelism yet “whereas non-Christians can and do become involved in many worthy activities on behalf of oppressed and needy people,

⁹ Kirk, *What Is Mission?*, 52.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

only the Christian community can tell the story of Jesus Christ with conviction.”¹² That is the Church’s fundamental task. Every Christian is called by God to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. This scenario of telling the story of Jesus Christ with conviction is seen every Sunday afternoon from noon to 2 pm by Joseph Moore of Open Air Ministry. Moore preaches outdoor messages fifty Sunday’s per year through rain, sleet, heat or cold weather. Telling the Gospel message and baptizing the street people every week has been in his heart for thirty years. First Presbyterian and many churches from all traditions (Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Lutherans, Pentecostals and non-denominational) participate in this local mission outreach every month.

So, if “Christians ever had to choose between evangelism and service, between communicating the Gospel in words or manifesting its reality in deeds, they would be bound to choose the first. So for Christians, mission is wider than evangelism: it is everything the Church is sent into the world to do.”¹³ It is necessary to stress that there can be no authentic evangelism apart from a living testimony to the transforming power of the Gospel in action. The purposes for which the Christian community undertakes evangelism should not be defined too narrowly. There is “an emphasis on seeking a response from individuals to the offer of forgiveness and a new beginning with God, often called ‘conversion’ but this is only one aspect. Conversion is a decisive moment of turning from a self-centered life to one centered on God (Acts 26:18, Ephesians 5:8, Colossians 1:13, Galatians 4:8).”¹⁴ Conversion is an ongoing experience, a growth

¹² Ibid., 57.

¹³ Ibid.

process to Christian maturity. The believers' mission begins at home. The Church is at the heart of God's mission, and it is "the Church that evangelizes, finds appropriate cultural channels to express the faith of Jesus Christ, participates in the struggle for justice and the care for the environment"¹⁵ and realizes mission is the reality of the Christian life. Without a mission, one may have no purpose.

Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross, editors of *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* write, "The first mark of mission is to proclaim the good news of the kingdom."¹⁶ This proclamation is first and foremost what a community of disciples should be doing as a church family. This mandate from God's Word ought to draw believers to participate in mission activities. In a vibrant, Gospel-preaching church, parishioners are excited to leave the pews and go proclaim the Good News to their community. Kirk writes, "The community of disciples that Jesus drew around himself and sent out to be witnesses to God's mighty acts had an openness to all people."¹⁷ The relationship modeled between Jesus' disciples and God was one of intimacy. The disciples relied on God for their security and nothing was too insignificant for Him (Mt 6:8, 32 and Lk 12:30).

God the Father is the source and initiator of missions: "For those who have been the recipients of missionary activity, it is easy to fall into the trap of seeing only to the

¹⁴ Ibid., 68.

¹⁵ Ibid., 205.

¹⁶ Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross, eds., *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008).

¹⁷ Kirk, *What Is Mission?*, 209.

narrowness of historical lenses that the gospel came through the missionary agents.”¹⁸

Communities begin to change when missionary activity affects all the participants.

Families come together to reach the lost with the Gospel message through a variety of ways. At Open Air Ministry with Moore, the community has embraced his mission to the poor in Baton Rouge every Sunday afternoon.

However, “A theological perspective helps to liberate the gospel from the sometimes painful associations with the historical transmission process, which, like all human endeavors, is tainted with sin.”¹⁹ Or as Tommy Tennent writes, “This is why it is so comforting to hear the African theologian John Mbiti poignantly remind us all that the missionaries did not bring God into Africa, it was God who brought the missionaries to Africa!”²⁰ This is a vital distinction, as it unhinges the Gospel from mere human agency, with its undue emphasis on human initiatives and returns the focus to God’s initiative.

Indeed, as Kwame Bediako observes, “Only the mission of the triune God can rescue Christianity from the western possessiveness of it.”²¹ Thus, rooting missions in God the Father as the source and originator of mission “delivers all past, present, and future missionary agents of the gospel from a sense of triumphalism.”²² Mission is ultimately the work of the triune God, initiated by God the Father for his eternal glory.

¹⁸ Timothy Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: a Trinitarian Missiology of the Twenty-first Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2010), 75.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: the Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995), 122.

²² Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 76.

Again, Tennent writes, “God the father is the sender, and therefore, the ultimate source of all missionary sending.”²³ The Father sent his word through the prophets. He sent miraculous signs and wonders to reveal his glory. Ultimately, he sent his son as the greatest revelation of himself. When the Church sends out missionaries into the world, they are not only obeying the command of Jesus Christ, but “are also reflecting the glory of the Father, who is the ultimate source, initiator, and sender.”²⁴

Lesslie Newbigin provides a brilliant analysis in his book, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, how Christians can confidently affirm their faith in such a context. This work by a missionary pastor who served in India from 1947 to 1957 offers numerous key insights into missions. He writes, “The primary task of ministers in missions is to enable grass-roots participation of all the congregation.”²⁵ Churches are looking for ways of developing missionary congregations. This work begins in communities as they reach out to neighbors who are desperately in need of the Savior.

Christians must ask: what is the Christian message in a society marked by religious pluralism, ethnic diversity, and cultural relativism? Newbigin offers this: “Our large cities have communities of Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Muslims. Their neighbors soon discover that they are more godly, more devout, and more pious than the average native Christian.”²⁶ Evangelism in this type of society must be understood. One suggestion for ministers and missionaries is to go to lunch with the Oman in their Muslim

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 77.

²⁵ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Eerdmans Publishers, 1989), viii.

²⁶ Ibid., 4.

community. The importance of building a friendship is one key to winning the right to be heard. Anything less than going humbly will be interpreted as arrogance. After twenty-two mission trips overseas, the attempt to walk humbly with the Father in heaven is difficult as humanity walks on holy ground.

One of the most fascinating thoughts in Newbigin's book was that mission is about Jesus and his redemptive life, and the Church's role in witnessing to that truth. How Christians treat the neighbor that walks up to the church and asks for help is key as they witness about Jesus and his desire to know each person intimately. Mission is about the "finality of God's irrevocable act in Jesus."²⁷ Loving one another in the name of Jesus is difficult for many congregations as evangelism and missions stir strong feelings.

Missionaries are both bearers of a message and embodiments of that message. Whenever a missionary crosses cultural boundaries, learns a new language and seeks to communicate the Gospel, "this is a reflection of the Incarnation itself."²⁸ The story of the Incarnation is not merely that God became a man, but "that God became a particular man."²⁹ Christians should realize they are the only embodiment of Jesus many will see. To write the whole history of Christian mission is a difficult task. In this chapter, there is a brief discussion of areas in which mission work has occurred. The desire and hope is to convey a sense of each movement and leading to present day.

Tennent writes, "God's covenant with Abraham, found in Genesis 12, is such a remarkable event in the history of redemption that Paul describes it as God preaching the

²⁷ Ibid., 140.

²⁸ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 83.

²⁹ Ibid., 85.

gospel in advance to Abraham (Galatians 3:8).”³⁰ Genesis 12 becomes the cornerstone of God’s covenant with the Jewish people. The Abrahamic covenant serves as “the foundation upon which missions in the New Testament is built and engaged.”³¹

The covenant of Genesis 12:1-3 begins with an imperative. God commands Abraham to “get up and go.” It is an imperative that suggests decisive action in sending Abraham out to that which is unknown. God commands Abraham saying, “leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s house and go to a land that I’m going to show you” (Gn 12:1). As Abraham obeys, God declares a series of blessings that he will bring about. In Genesis 12:2, God says, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great.” Tennent argues that, “God is promising to bless not only Abraham the nation of Israel but also, through Abraham’s obedience, all the nations of the world.”³² The Abrahamic covenant reveals God’s heart for all nations.

The Church is characterized by mission. According to Tennent, “The Church has its ultimate identity in the person and work of Jesus Christ and that our Lord has given us a missionary mandate.”³³ Without Jesus Christ as the identity of what the Church represents, there is not a reason in the world to leave community and go make disciples of all nations. It is fundamental to Christian identity to proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The term “Great Commission” refers to the final commission of Jesus Christ to his disciples. The Great Commission encapsulates multiple texts in the Gospels as well as

³⁰ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 106.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 108.

³³ Ibid., 126.

the book of Acts. These texts are found in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-49, John 20:19-23; and Acts 1:7-8. Tennent writes, “It is important to remember that these passages are all post resurrection sayings of Christ given at various times and places. The fact that these passages are all uttered by the risen Lord, is sufficient reason to refer to these commissions with the adjective great, especially given the narrow forty-day time frame and how little is recorded of the post resurrection discourses of Jesus.”³⁴

Jesus repeats various versions of the Great Commission with different emphases:

Matthew’s commission takes place in Galilee some weeks after the Resurrection. The setting of Mark’s commission is difficult, if not impossible, to determine and is part of the larger textual difficulties that are present in the various endings to Mark’s gospel. Luke and John’s commissions occur in Jerusalem on the very night after the Resurrection. The commission in Acts takes place forty days after the Resurrection in Bethany, not in Jerusalem.³⁵

The final commissions given by Jesus Christ and recorded in all four Gospels reveal that the Great Commission is actually multifaceted. Tennent concludes, “Only by listening to the distinctive message of each do they collectively provide the theological basis for the wide range of redemptive works that the church engages in, which we call missions.”³⁶

Tennent concludes:

Matthew emphasizes the role of discipleship and planting the church across ethnic and cultural boundaries among every people group in the world. Although we do not have the original words of Mark’s commission, the received version is consistent with Mark’s emphasis on perseverance in persecution and the central role of proclamation. Luke’s commission emphasizes the importance of Spirit-empowered, holistic missions as we bear witness to the ongoing, mighty deeds of God. John’s commission emphasizes the sending role of the church. Taken collectively, the commissions demonstrate the Father’s initiative in missions. The

³⁴ Ibid., 129.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 157.

father imparts all authority to Jesus in Matthew's Gospel. In Luke, the church fulfills only what the father has promised. In John the Father sends the Son, who, in turn, sends the church. Thus, all the commissions are set within the larger context of the *mission dei* and God's original promise to Abraham that he would bless "all nations on earth."³⁷

Most religions have been local and even tribal, in their character. Micah 4:5 says, "For all the peoples walked each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." As in old days every city had its temple and its god, to this day among simple peoples every tribe and every clan worshipped. These ideas are found throughout the Old Testament. When David is driven out of Palestine, he can no longer worship Israel's God: "they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, go serve other gods," (1 Sm 26:19).

Three religions seem to have been missionary and universal in their outlook from the beginning: Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Each traced to a definite beginning in time and the origin of which can be attributed to an identifiable founder. Stephen Neill writes, "Each of the three great teachers believed himself to have received a revelation which is of universal significance for mankind. Each commissioned disciples to go out and proclaim the message as widely as they could."³⁸ Buddhism has always been an Eastern religion. Islam is a religion of the desert and the Middle East and it stretches today from Morocco to Western China, from Albania to Indonesia, and is making inroads into Africa. Christianity alone has succeeded in making itself a universal religion. This does not of course mean that everyone in the world has become Christian; but in fact, Christianity has now found a home in almost every country in the world.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1964), 14.

From the start of the spread of the Gospel circumstances were unfavorable for worldwide expansion. In the time of Jesus, the Jews withdrew behind intellectual and spiritual defenses. Jesus was born a Jew and never pretended to be anything else: “His native language was Aramaic. It is almost certain that he could read the Old Testament Hebrew. It is likely that he knew a little Greek, perhaps some words of Latin.”³⁹

The Church of the first Christian generation was genuinely missional. There were full-time workers, such as Paul and Barnabas. Paul had his helpers, whom he trained and sent out to be the founders of churches (Epaphras for Colossae). Tennent writes, “Apart from these special workers, the closet. The church could count on the anonymous and unchronicled witness of all the faithful.”⁴⁰ The first mention comes in Acts 8:4, where many were scattered after the persecution following the death of Stephen. According to Neill, “Some of them have made Christian history at Antioch by preaching directly to Gentiles. But these were far from being the only volunteer missionaries.”⁴¹

When Paul came to Rome he was welcomed by believers. How they got to Rome is not told. There was much coming and going on the great trade routes and the Roman roads of the Mediterranean world. Some Christians were slaves, as indicated in Paul’s epistles. Neill writes that, “Some Christians were probably merchants and traveled in the interests of their trade.”⁴² What is clear is that every Christian was a witness. Where there

³⁹ Ibid., 16.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁴¹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, 24.

⁴² Ibid.

were Christians, there would be a living, burning faith, and before long an expanding Christian community.

In later times great churches were set on claiming apostolic origin—to have an apostle as a founder was a recognized certificate of respectability. Neill adds,

But in point of fact few, if any, of the great churches were really founded by apostles. Nothing is more notable than the anonymity of these early missionaries. . . . In the second century there were three outstanding centers of Christian life in the Mediterranean - Antioch, Rome, and Alexandria. Peter and Paul may have organized the church in Rome they certainly did not found it. The foundation of the Church of Alexandria we know nothing at all.⁴³

Legend affirmed that the founder of the church in Alexandria was Mark the evangelist, but there is no historical evidence. Luke does not mention the name of a single missionary who laid the foundation of the church of Antioch.

The Church of those days was the Body of Christ indwelt by the Holy Spirit. What Christ began, the Church continued, through all the days and unto the uttermost parts of the earth until his unpredictable but certain coming again. The world to which early Christians came was in many respects favorable to the preaching of the Gospel.

Neill continued, “The Roman Empire had imposed on a large area of the world such a massive unity as it had never known before.”⁴⁴ The Church in its earliest years spoke Aramaic, the common language of Palestine. But almost from the start it was a Greek-speaking Church. The Roman Empire accepted Greek as a language of trade between all educated men. One who knew Greek could go anywhere and find friends to whom he could talk.

⁴³ Ibid., 24, 25.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 26.

Neill points out that, “The presence of Jews in large numbers in every part of the Roman Empire was as high as seven per cent of the total population. These Jews were a vigorous, active, and at times turbulent people.”⁴⁵ They came to exercise a remarkable influence on their neighbors, and attracted a considerable number of them to the Jewish faith - “The class of wisdom was an ancient passion with the Greeks, always in search of something new. The synagogue offered a profound and moving wisdom more ancient even than that of Homer. Some Gentiles submitted to the rite of circumcision and became part of the people of the Jews.”⁴⁶ With this step, many Gentiles took one more step and accepted the faith of Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

It was in this group that the preaching of the Gospel found its most ready and immediate response. Without Luke’s writings much of early church history would be lost. Because of Luke, more is known about Paul than anyone else. Paul tends to dominate the scene, and readers are inclined to think of him as the typical missionary. Neill writes, “Paul was the greatest, and probably the most systematic, of all the early missionaries. It was his aim to preach through all the Gentile countries to the utmost ends of the world.”⁴⁷

Antioch was the second home of the Church. It was here that the disciples were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). Staggeringly, “Towards the end of the fourth century, the population of Antioch was not less than half a million, and possibly half of the residents at that time were Christian.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 32.

The Roman Church grew by conversion and

About A.D. 166, the number of Christians had already surpassed that of the Jews. . . . It is certain that the gospel came very early to Egypt, and especially to the busy and thriving port of Alexandria. From its foundation in the days of Alexander the great in 332 BC, Alexandria had been a thriving commercial metropolis, a center for trade with both East and West. Its people were diligent, intelligent, and eager to understand new ideas.⁴⁹

Christianity in Egypt was not limited to those who spoke Greek. Neill continues,

By the third century, the deserts began to be filled by companies of monks and hermits. The majority of these desert dwellers spoke Coptic and new little, if any, Greek. Cyrene, west of Egypt, is mentioned in four crucial passages of the New Testament. Simon of Cyrene carried the cross of Jesus. Cyrenians were present when Peter delivered his first sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10), and were among those who disputed with Stephen (Acts 6:9). Cyrenians took part in the step which carried the gospel out of the field of Israel into the Gentile world (Acts 11:20).⁵⁰

By the end of the third century, there was no area in the Roman Empire that had not been Asia Minor, Egypt, and North Africa.⁵¹ A great number of the earliest Christians had a burning conviction to preach to the poor. Then, leaving their homes, they set out to fulfill the work of an evangelist, making it their ambition to preach the word of the faith to those who had heard nothing of it.

The new Christian communities were filled with ordinary men and women living in the midst of a corrupt society and exposed to all its temptations. The first epistle to the Corinthians shows plainly how hard they found it to live up to their new aspirations. But in those days to be a Christian meant something. Christians were taught to regard their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. Throughout this period, the majority of the believers

⁴⁹ Ibid., 34, 35.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 36-37.

⁵¹ Ibid., 39.

were simple and humble people—slaves, women, soldiers and petty traders. According to Neill, “In the year 500, the church could look back on five centuries of miraculous success. The church had drawn into itself. It had drawn into itself the best of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. The church had shown its ability to survive the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.”⁵² The Gospel had spread to the needs of people on different levels of civilization.

Inwardly, the Church had defined the limits of the Scriptures and had given to the New Testament equal canonical status with the Old Testament: “Through the work of the great councils, the church had settled many questions of doctrine. The church had developed a system of worship in spite of troublesome disputes-Antioch against Alexandria and at times, Rome against all the rest.”⁵³ Christians may have believed themselves to be one with all other Christians in the world. In reality, in the year 500 the Church was about to enter a period of bitter and disheartening conflict:

The year 500 marks the beginning of what has been called the thousand years of uncertainty. From 500 to 1000 AD, this long time of movement and countermovement, destruction and chaos, was commonly known as the Dark Ages. . . . In A.D. 622, Mohammed declared he is the prophet of God. Islam was a new religion, and the Muslims were dedicated to carrying out the will of God as they understood it. By A.D. 650, Persia, Jerusalem, Caesarea, Palestine, Syria, Alexandria and the whole of Egypt were added to the Muslim domain.⁵⁴

Christian tradition has drawn a tragic picture of the fate of Christians in the face of the Islamic advance. Naturally, conquest is unpleasant business for those who are on the receiving end of it. There were occasional massacres, and no doubt much casual loss

⁵² Ibid., 59.

⁵³ Ibid., 59-60.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 60-63.

of life. There were steady losses of Christians through conversion to Islam. But the most surprising thing about these invasions is that the loss of life was so small and the collapse of Christian civilization so rapid. A great many Christians lived on. They suffered hardships, and endured loss of equality and privilege. They were second-class citizens and taxpayers, and could never hope to rank with the Muslim overlords. The Muslims needed the Christians to cultivate their lands. They needed educated Christians to serve as clerks and translators, and to carry out all the minor obligations of government.

The Muslim conquest was a major disaster for the Christian world. Neill writes, “The ancient Eastern churches lost their dominant position in government and in the world of thought. They were constantly drained of their resources through the defection of so many of their young men.”⁵⁵ The Muslim conquests extended to all the great trade routes of the ancient world by land and sea, which included the Suez Canal by Egypt.

According to Neill, “Christianity became an almost completely European religion, while the Muslims controlled the North African region.”⁵⁶ The greatest of the Dark Age missionaries was “Wynfrith of Crediton, later known as Boniface (680-754), the apostle of Germany, who had a deeper influence on the history of Europe than any Englishman who has ever lived.”⁵⁷ The next influence in the Church and the world was Charlemagne, who had an interest in theology and in learning, but whose acts of violence and cruelty towards the Saxons are legendary. Missionaries, priests, and monks were martyred during this time, and resistance to the Gospel grew weaker by the time of Charlemagne’s death.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 65.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 74.

Neill writes, “The year 1000 was marked by widespread fear and anxiety throughout every part of the Christian world. It was believed that the period of the church was to last just 1000 years.”⁵⁸ Yet, the early European expansion into Christianity reached Scandinavia: Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Greenland and Sweden from 1000-1200. By 1200 almost all of Europe was in a measure Christian: “There was one corner of intensely obstinate paganism: to the south and east of the Baltic lived Prussians, Lithuanians, and a mass of other races, united in only one thing - their determination never to be Christians.”⁵⁹ Martyrs were many on this frontier of the Christian world.

From the early-1300s through the 1500s, the Crusades left an almost indelible stain on Christian history. As Neill explains, “The Crusades left a trail of bitterness across the relations between Christians and Muslims that remains as a living factor in the world situation to the present day.”⁶⁰ Muslims still think the West is the great aggressor today. “The Christian world discovered a new menace, Genghis Khan. Khan was a barbarian with the Mongols, and he laid it down that all religions were to be respected.”⁶¹ At the end of the fifteenth century, “Christianity was almost wholly a European religion. It had not completely died out in Asia, but everywhere it was on the wane. In certain areas it had been completely exterminated.”⁶²

⁵⁸ Ibid., 99.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 109.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 114.

⁶¹ Ibid., 120.

⁶² Ibid., 132.

Missionaries were for the most part isolated and remained unvisited for years on end. The loss of life was high, both through the violence of the barbarous tribes and through the natural hazards of travel in unknown regions and exposure to unfamiliar climates. Missionaries attempted to convert the world by preaching, but also through the shedding of tears, blood, labor and many times through a bitter death. Between 1500 and 1787, the Church faced the great religious systems of the Far East, India and the Muslim world: “Europeans are beginning to think that their civilization is the only one in the world that is worthy of the name Christian.”⁶³ In the seventeenth century, Pope Gregory XV declared, “That all Roman Catholic missions must be brought under the guidance and direction of the central authority in Rome.”⁶⁴

From the early-1700s, America was at this stage of its development a mission field rather than an exporter of missionaries. Yet in America, the sense of the nearness of Christ’s return, and the spirit of revival, awakened the sense of missionary obligation. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), theologian and revivalist and later president of Yale College, always included missions in the center of his ministry, and associated it with the idea of prayer for missionary work.

Books have frequently spoken of William Carey (1761-1834) as the father of modern missions, and of the work that he brought into being as the first Protestant mission of modern times. Carey’s life has been expressed in his own immortal words:

⁶³ Ibid., 176.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 178.

“Expect great things from God, and attempt great things for God.”⁶⁵ Four-fifths of the world’s missionaries today are English speaking, and Carey opened the door for thousands of missionaries the next two-hundred years all around the world. He spent the majority of his missionary life in India. Deauville Walker writes:

William Carey never used the expression “Great Commission” in his famous mission’s treatise known as *An Enquiry*. Its first appearance in print seems to be in the three volume *History of the Church Mission Society* published in 1899. The term often is identified specifically with Matthew 28:18-20, and unfortunately, is frequently treated as an isolated periscope, separated from the rest of the gospel.⁶⁶

In the mid-nineteenth century, Hudson Taylor went to China to preach the word of God “but returned to England in ill-health, and there was no particular reason to suppose that he would ever see China again. . . . In 1865, unknown, and without the support of any denomination, Taylor was led to undertake single-handed the foundation of what for a time was the largest mission in the world, China Inland Mission.”⁶⁷ The primary aim of the mission was widespread evangelism. In thirty years, the mission had “641 missionaries drawn from many lands. Most of the early missionaries have been drawn, like Taylor himself, from comparatively humble stations in life.”⁶⁸

Youth ministry began in England during the Industrial Revolution in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Children were employed in factories and young people moved to cities to obtain jobs, which were no longer available in rural areas. Mark Senter writes,

⁶⁵ F. Deauville Walker, *William Carey: Father of Modern Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 9.

⁶⁶ Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions*, 127.

⁶⁷ Neill, *A History of Christian Mission*, 333.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 335.

Concerned over the ragamuffins who worked 12-to-14 hour days, six days a week, Robert Raikes popularized a ministry to children in Gloucester which came to be known as Sunday school. Its mission was to teach children to read and behave properly using the Bible as a textbook. This occurred in 1780. Within five years the idea had spread to Virginia, and by 1790, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and a host of other cities were imitating Raikes' ideas.⁶⁹

Children were not given toys and nintendos to occupy their time, but were a part of the labor force before Raikes popularized a ministry to children. As the Industrial Revolution continued in England, "something needed to be done to redeem the youth of England."⁷⁰ George Williams was a prime mover in responding to this need. Senter explains, "As a dry goods merchant he began a Bible Study for apprentices, clerks, and young male assistants in the dry goods industry. From this modest beginning in 1841 came the founding of the Young Men's Christian Association on June 6, 1844 in London."⁷¹ This outreach ministry involved many men interested in studying God's Word. City ministry literally began with the founding of the YMCA.

Like Sunday school before it, the YMCA quickly found its way to North America and by 1851 the ministry had established roots in Montreal and Boston. The Young Women's Christian Association came to America in 1858. From 1857 to 1859,

Unlike other spiritual awakenings in the United States, this revival found momentum in prayer rather than in preaching. Churches and YMCA's became places where men would gather during their noon hours for prayer and the Spirit of God would drive them to repentance and public confession of sin. Within six months 10,000 businessmen were gathering each day for prayer in New York and within two years a million converts had been added to the churches of America.⁷²

⁶⁹ Mark Senter, III, *The Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992), 56.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 92.

Though the YMCA of the late-twentieth century is thought of primarily as an athletic facility with camps and services, its original objectives were distinctly Christian - Bible studies and prayer meetings, training classes for Sunday school teachers, even athletic competition were seen as ways in which to reinforce Christian beliefs and values. Christianity was the strength of the YMCA in the beginning years, but by the early-1970s, only one of eight YMCA's had Bible studies. And,

By the nineteenth century, feelings of self-sufficiency had begun to evaporate. Even adults responded as college students paved the way for modern missionary enterprise. Influenced by the organizational structures of the Methodists, as well as the success of the YMCA/YWCA movements, new systems were created for working with young people. A new day had dawned in the concern to bring the light of the Gospel to youth.⁷³

The early foundation in youth missions and ministry was to get children off of the streets and to teach them to read, to cope with the decreasing emphasis on child labor. Early emphasis was still on children, as most teenagers still entered the work force relatively early. Yet, the first public high school opened in 1875.

Senter stated, until 1875,

Adolescents were either older children or younger adults. There was no category in most people's thinking for "adolescence" until G. Stanley Hall popularized the concept with his book by that name published thirty years later in 1905. The United States Supreme Court completely changed the definition of youth by permitting tax money to be used to fund public schools. By the turn of the century, public school enrollment had grown from 80,000 to half a million. These were people who, as G. Stanley Hall would point out, had adult bodies but were still undergoing a transition from childhood.⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 93.

Throughout the nineteenth century individual churches in a wide variety of denominations provided activities for their youth but “it was a visionary pastor named Francis Clark who put together the ideas for a youth society in his own church and then successfully promoted the idea to a nation which was waiting.”⁷⁵ Francis Clark founded the Christian Endeavor Movement in 1881. Clark’s youth society required a pledge of all members which was very demanding. It emphasized daily Bible reading, prayer, weekly attendance at the meetings, and regular reports on progress in one’s Christian endeavor.

This movement had high accountability and was very popular in 1895 with “56,425 delegates registered at a convention in Boston.”⁷⁶ Francis Clark taught the following principle: “I want to come not with a tithing-man’s stick, with which to rap naughty boys over the head, but rather with a shepherd’s crook wherewith to guide them into the green pastures of loving service.”⁷⁷ Francis Clark’s approach of loving young men unconditionally to bring them to Jesus was very successful in the late-nineteenth century. Many youth pastors today could learn much from this approach with students.

Francis Clark resigned from the pastorate in 1887 to work full-time with the Society for Christian Endeavor with his wife Harriet. Though the accountability was very high, seventy young people heard the constitution and signed the pledge to be present at every meeting and take part in every meeting. Failure to do so meant removal from active status in the society: “Though the language of the pledge was masculine, the society was comprised of young people of both sexes. Harriet Clark had balked at the idea of girls

⁷⁵ Ibid., 53.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 59.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

speaking in front of the boys when her husband first suggested the idea but soon affirmed the wisdom of the mutual accountability.”⁷⁸ This may have been the first coed youth group with boys and girls

Beginning in the twentieth century, church-based youth ministries and parachurch clubs began in fervor. In 1930, Sunday evening fellowship meetings began to replace youth societies. Local churches began to take charge of all church-related youth activities: “In 1933, Evelyn McCluskey founded the Miracle Book Club in Portland, Oregon. She is considered the mother of parachurch movements.”⁷⁹ Jim Rayburn (Young Life) and Al Metsker (Youth for Christ) were both teachers of the Miracle Clubs, but they proved too radical for McCluskey, as they would not use her materials. Incarnational strategies involved youth attending club meetings and homes was McCluskey’s idea.

Evangelistic rallies birthed the Youth for Christ movement in 1934 on Saturday nights. Billy Graham was the first full-time staff person for Youth for Christ. The founder of “Young Life Campaigns” was Rayburn, and these rallies featured a higher percentage of youth in audiences. Allen Jackson and Dwayne Ulmer write, “Young Life was founded in 1941, and a different strategy was used: leader centered, evangelism focused, messages had conversational approach, and emphasis on relational contact work.”⁸⁰ This was the beginning of the teenagers telling teenagers movement. This relational approach has been effective for the past seventy-five years in Young Life. The movement of

⁷⁸ Ibid., 99.

⁷⁹ Jackson and Ulmer, *Introducing the 21st Century Teenager*, 30.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 31.

Young Life has touched the lives of millions of students in clubs, contact work, campaigner Bible studies, and camps worldwide.

Senter wrote, “The Youth for Christ Clubs first employee, Billy Graham, traveled 135,000 miles during the 1945-’46 school year covering 1400 cities.”⁸¹ Graham had a fervor to preach the Gospel message wherever he went. Youth for Christ changed to Campus Life clubs in the 1960s. Campus Life is still very strong in many communities in the United States today.

In a few communities, youth ministries began mission outreaches: “Beginning in the 1950’s, it became common in some medium and large churches to have a youth director. Often, the youth director was responsible for activities for the entire church.”⁸² This youth director organized every activity, retreat, meeting, summer programs, Vacation Bible School and compassionate outreach to the local community. The compassion ministries of the Salvation Army and the YMCA have grown in the last fifty years. Churches like First Presbyterian Baton Rouge support and even participate in mission projects like donating coats in the winter for the homeless and hygiene kits.

Since 1983, First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge Youth Ministry has participated in numerous local, regional and foreign mission projects. Since the mid-1980s, the youth ministry worked in the inner-city tutoring children in a program called Glory House. Since 2005, the youth ministry has spent thousands of hours at Trinity Christian Community rebuilding homes in the Hollygrove neighborhood of New Orleans. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, First Presbyterian Church of Baton Rouge

⁸¹ Senter, *Coming Revolution in Youth Ministry*, 80.

⁸² Jackson and Ulmer, *Introducing the 21st Century Teenager*, 31.

participated in the rebuilding of New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Over 500 students have volunteered to work in New Orleans during the past nine years.

First Presbyterian Church has historically been involved in youth missions since the early-1980s. The FPCBR youth ministry has participated in regional mission work in Jackson, Mississippi; Dallas; Houston; Atlanta; Ocean Springs, Mississippi; and New Orleans. First Presbyterian's historical involvement in foreign missions with students has included Mexico, Jamaica, Russia, Zambia, Romania, Egypt, Columbia, Haiti and Belize. Many of these youth mission trips were sponsored by Youth Conference Ministries' Son Servants program. The youth ministry program participated in building homes in Jamaica from 1986 through 2013. During these 27 years students built nearly one hundred homes.

Several hundred students from First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge have received discipleship since the mid-1980s from the Jamaica mission trip. Many of these student's lives have never been the same after returning home from a short-term mission trip. Jackson and Ulmer write, "One reason why the body of Christ invests in short-term mission is because it is an exceptional discipleship and mission education experience."⁸³ A good short-term mission experience will lead people to reflect on several challenging questions. These eight great questions are challenging to reflect on all mission trips:

What can I learn about myself? What can I learn about God? What can I learn about the people of God, about the church, and about the community? What can I learn about how culture affects the way we live and understand the gospel? What can I learn about justice, economics, poverty and politics? What can I learn about discipleship? What can I learn about a globally appropriate lifestyle? What can I learn about my own vocation?⁸⁴

⁸³ Tim Dearborn, *Short-Term Missions Workbook: From Mission Tourists to Global Citizens*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 17.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

In the summer of 2003 these questions were presented, and the team reflected on them every day of the trip. These questions challenged readers to think about others in a deep and profound way. These eight great questions transformed into:

Who am I? What can I learn about myself? Who is God? How has my understanding of God changed? Who are we? What can I learn about community and the church? What is the impact of culture on faith? How do I see life and the gospel differently because of what I have experienced? What is wrong with the world? What can I learn about justice, poverty, and the causes of suffering? What does it mean to be a follower of Christ? What can I learn about discipleship? What's of value? What can I learn about my lifestyle? Where am I going? What might God call me to be and to do as a result of this experience? What can I learn about my vocation?⁸⁵

These questions challenged the approach for the subsequent short-term mission trips at First Presbyterian. These are great questions for everyone to answer before leaving on any short-term mission trip. Often, church members want to go out of the country for wrong reasons, and quickly learn to depend on one another in new surroundings.

According to Tim Dearborn, “The quality of preparation, the time of service, integration and debriefing after returning home, and the ongoing impact in the coming years has deepened our understanding of the gospel, of God’s mission in the world, and of cross-cultural ministry.”⁸⁶ It is essential to bring the mission team back together to process all that has transpired in our hearts. Hearts are usually transformed by the work of the Holy Spirit on every mission experience.

Yet, the struggle of doing short-term missions without doing long-term harm is a concern. Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert add, “There were 120,000 short-term

⁸⁵ Ibid., 98-100.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 102.

missionaries in 1989, 450,000 in 1998, 1 million in 2003, and 2,200,000 in 2006. The numbers reflect a tsunami of epic proportions, a tidal wave of American short-term missionaries flooding the world.”⁸⁷ The numbers are staggering as more people go overseas every year. Churches need to look at the resources spent on mission trips.

Statistically, “Americans spent \$1,600,000,000 on short-term missions in 2006 alone.”⁸⁸ The phenomenal growth of high school students on short-term mission trips at First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge to Jamaica was about three hundred participants from 2000 to 2012. This was due to the positive impact on those who go, especially in terms of their becoming further engaged in missions especially at home. Three hundred hearts have been transformed in the past thirteen years due to the Holy Spirit working in each individual on the mission field.

Middle school students here have been going on mission trips to Trinity Christian Community in New Orleans for nearly ten years. Hurricane Katrina opened the floodgates of participants, and approximately five hundred middle school students from Baton Rouge have gone to New Orleans on numerous mission trips. In 2006 alone, there were ten trips to the city averaging about 35 participants each time.

Corbett and Fikkert write,

Very few short-term mission trips are done in situations in which relief is the appropriate intervention. Even when a natural disaster has occurred, by the time the short-term mission team arrives it may well be that ‘the bleeding has stopped’ and the rehabilitation phase has begun. . . . Furthermore, most of the time, short-term missions to materially poor communities are not even done in postdisaster

⁸⁷ Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 161.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

situations but rather in communities experiencing chronic problems that need long-term development.⁸⁹

Unfortunately, short-term missions rarely diagnose the situation and often pursue a relief approach, even though this is seldom the appropriate intervention. For example, after Hurricane Katrina wreaked havoc along parts of the Gulf Coast, tens of thousands of Christians rushed to assist. Even so, “This aid took many diverse forms and in many ways it was a great testimony to the beauty of the body of Christ.”⁹⁰

Corbett and Fikkert tell of one particularly telling trip: “One particular short-term mission team made up of young people went to the New Orleans area very soon after Katrina hit and worked hard to clear roads and homes of debris. The same short-term mission team returned about a year later to help with the rehabilitation of some of the damaged homes.”⁹¹ By this time residents were returning to the area. The short-term mission team was asked to work on restoring the house owned by a family that included several young adult males. While the short-term mission team worked hard every day tearing out sheet rock, carpeting, and more, the young men living in the house sat back and watch the short-term mission team all day long. Leadership is important when pouring out the body and soul during a short-term mission trip. Asking the young men to participate in restoration of their home would have been an appropriate question to ask.

The first trip was an appropriate short-term mission response, applying relief in a context in which it was needed. The second trip, while well-intentioned, was an incorrect

⁸⁹ Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert, *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty without Hurting the Poor and Yourself* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 166.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

response. The homeowner's family had the capacity to participate in the renovation of its house but was unwilling to do so: "It would have been better for the short-term mission team to go back to the local ministry and ask to be reassigned to work on another house whose owners were open to helping with their own recovery."⁹² Even when relief is the appropriate intervention, the short-term mission team might not be the best group to provide this relief. When local ministries are willing and able to provide the necessary relief assistance, it is preferable to let them do so. They have the local knowledge about who really needs help and who does not, and they are the ones who will still be there conducting ministry long after the short-term mission team has gone.

Trinity Christian Community in New Orleans has done a remarkable job in providing leadership on the rehabilitation of their neighborhood called Hollygrove. Four hundred homes have been rehabilitated thus far. Corbett and Fikkert write,

Short-term mission teams want to use their time wisely, getting as much done as possible. The team's expectation is that many evangelistic meetings will take place, that the building project will be completed, or that health checkups will be given to hundreds or even thousands of people. But getting things done quickly is simply not what development is all about. Development is a lifelong process, not a two-week product.⁹³

While short-term mission teams are in high gear, the receiving culture is working at a slower pace. The reason for restoration in the Hollygrove neighborhood the past nine years was due to the leadership of Kevin and Sandy Brown, and thousands of volunteers and fifty AmeriCorps workers who came to New Orleans to rebuild and restore this great community. Corbett and Fikkert continue:

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 168.

Getting the job done is less important than being together and getting to know one another. This can cause frustrations for the short term mission team members, as they watch the seconds tick away while little is getting done. It is not long before many of us start to look down on our brothers and sisters, quickly deciding that they are inept or even lazy. We take over and do everything because otherwise it just won't get done, which would be a disaster from the perspective of many short term mission teams.⁹⁴

While in Jamaica for ten years in a row, the relationships were more important than the building of homes. The first trip to Jamaica taught the importance of relationship with a Jamaican homeowner. Many long-term friendships still exist today because the team took the time to get to know one another. The relationship with Cliff and Tessa Mitchell in Jamaica is strong because time was taken to listen to their concerns.

In New Orleans, the relationship with Kevin and Sandy Brown from Trinity Christian Community will forever be strong because of the time spent laughing, crying and caring for each other. A personal relationship with Kevin's dad, Bill Brown dates back to 1963 when Trinity Christian Community was founded in New Orleans. These relationships are consistent with the process of development, and this takes time to cultivate.

Short-term mission teams "who recognize and mobilize the natural, material, social, knowledge, and spiritual resources of individuals and communities before trying to determine what additional resources might be needed from the outside" are usually successful in building relationships long-term.⁹⁵ Relationships are paramount in building strong mission trips. How Christians treat one another and love each other will have a long lasting effect on their hosts.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 169.

In his high priestly prayer (Jn 17:20-23), Jesus set out the purpose of the Church as the community of communities. This prayer defines “the purpose of the relatedness of the church. It teaches us the missional connectedness of the church is a matter of obedience to the Lord of the church, obedience that centers on his mission, so the world may know you have sent me.”⁹⁶ The Church has been called into the world to the ends of the earth to love one another.

This chapter has shown briefly a history of mission and an exploration of the development of team dynamics in general terms. The focus of the doctoral project however relates this explicitly to youth. The next chapter focuses on the characteristics of early, mid and late adolescence, and the psychosocial/environment of human suffering and abandonment in natural disasters.

⁹⁶ Darrell Guder, ed., *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 250.

CHAPTER 4

HISTORY OF EARLY, MID, AND LATE ADOLESCENCE

This chapter begins with the characteristics of children, adolescents and emerging adults over the past fifteen years at First Presbyterian Baton Rouge. It has been a privilege to watch hundreds of students grow from age nine in January 1999, and see them grow into emerging adults during this time. Being embraced into the life of First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge and examining their culture firsthand, a foundation has been laid where participation in this process of development is occurring still with college students and young adults.

Having worked with students since 1976, the changes in adolescent development has been incredible. Youth ministry leaders from the late-1960s through 2003 (ie, Mike Yaconelli) have encouraged thousands of youth workers at conventions to persevere in loving Christ and sharing the Gospel with their students. Allen Jackson and Dwayne Ulmer have also resourced youth workers with a book, *Introducing the 21st Century Teenager* to understand adolescents from their perspective.

They write,

When adolescent development is discussed, the lens is often the big five of human development: spiritual, physical, mental, social, and emotional. Picture the

equalizer on a soundboard or stereo. It looks like a bar graph with the bars constantly moving up and down. Adolescence (and every other age) is similar. Each aspect of development is a bar on the graph fluctuating rapidly at times and appearing stationary at others.¹

Jackson and Ulmer continue to share how the subtle shift of adolescence began to take place in the first few decades of the twentieth century. Individuals and families started moving in substantial numbers to the cities. For further insight and information on early, mid, and late adolescence from Jackson and Ulmer, please refer to Appendix A.

This chapter will discuss the history of adolescence in relation to several key issues: human suffering, abandonment, manipulating academic systems and helping emerging adults thrive on their own. This chapter will include research from Jeffrey Arnett, Michael Berzonsky, Urie Bronfenbrenner, Chap Clark, David Elkind, Erik Erikson, G. Stanley Hall, Denise Pope, John Santrock and others. This chapter will not be an exhaustive list of all possible issues during adolescence.

John Santrock described adolescence as “a transitional period in the human life span, linking childhood and adulthood.”² The academic discipline of adolescent psychology originated in the twentieth century. Many researchers have written volumes on this topic, and “our historical view of adolescence begins with an overview of how adolescents were perceived by the early Greeks and then turns to perceptions of adolescents during the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment.”³ People made distinctions among children, youth and adults before the modern era in the early years of America.

¹ Jackson and Ulmer, *Introducing the 21st Century Teenager*, 13.

² Santrock, *Adolescence*, 3.

³ *Ibid.*, 8.

In early Greece, both Plato and Aristotle commented on the nature of youth. Plato described “three facets of human development (or, as he calls it, the soul): desire, spirit, and reason. Plato does not think reason develops in childhood, but rather first appears at about the age period we call adolescence today.”⁴ Plato argued “that because reason does not mature in childhood, children’s education should focus on sports and music.”⁵

Michael Berzonksy writes, “Plato (427-347 BC) suggested that because boys were so excitable they should not be allowed to drink until they were at least 18 years of life. Since rational thinking developed during the teens, Plato advocated that mathematical and scientific instruction should be emphasized during that phase of life.”⁶ Plato argued “that serious education should begin only at adolescence, ages 14-21, when the mind is finally ready to apply reason in learning these subjects.”⁷ He believed “that character, not intellect, should be developed in the early years of childhood. Even though Plato stressed the importance of early experience in the formation of character, he nonetheless pointed out that experiences in later years could modify character. Arguments about the importance of early experience in human development are still prevalent today.”⁸

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Michael D. Berzonksy, “Theories of Adolescence” in *Adolescent Development: Essential Readings in Developmental Psychology*, edited by Gerald Adams (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 11.

⁷ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 2.

⁸ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 8.

Jeffrey Arnett writes, “Aristotle, who was a student of Plato’s during his own adolescence, had a view of adolescence that was in some ways similar to Plato’s. Aristotle viewed children as similar to animals, in that both are ruled by the impulsive pursuit of pleasure.”⁹ Aristotle argued “that the most important aspect of the age period we now call adolescence is the development of the ability to choose, and that this self-determination becomes the hallmark of maturity. He believed that, at the onset of adolescence, individuals are unstable and impatient, lacking the self-control to be a mature person.”¹⁰ Aristotle’s view is not unlike some contemporary views, “which use labels like independence, identity, and career choice to describe the importance of increased self-determination in adolescence.”¹¹

According to Santrock, “Aristotle was one of the first to describe time periods for human development by defining three stages: infancy (first 7 years), boyhood (from 7 to puberty), and young manhood (puberty to 21).”¹² Aristotle viewed adolescents as being impulsive, moody and controlled by their passions. He stressed the need for adolescents to learn volitional control.”¹³ Santrock continues, “It is only in adolescence that we become capable of exercising reason and making rational choices. He argued that it takes the entire course of adolescence for reason to become fully established.”¹⁴ At the

⁹ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 3.

¹⁰ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Berzonsky, *Theories of Adolescence*, 11.

¹⁴ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 3.

beginning of adolescence, in his view, “The impulse remains in charge and even becomes more problematic now that sexual desires have developed.”¹⁵ It is only toward the end of adolescence, about age 21, “that reason establishes firm control over the impulses.”¹⁶

One of the most influential books of early Christianity was Saint Augustine’s autobiographical *Confessions*, which he wrote in about A.D. 400. In *Confessions*, Augustine described:

His life from early childhood until his conversion to Christianity at age thirty-three. A considerable portion of the autobiography focused on his teens and early 20’s, when he was a reckless young man living an impulsive, pleasure-seeking life. He drank large quantities of alcohol, spent money extravagantly, had sex with many young women, and fathered a child outside of marriage. In the autobiography, he repents of his reckless youth and argues that conversion to Christianity is the key not only to eternal salvation but to the establishment of the rule of reason over passion here on earth, within the individual.¹⁷

From Augustine’s time through the Middle Ages, the historical record on adolescence is sparse: “Society’s view of adolescence had changed considerably by the Middle Ages, when the child was viewed as a miniature adult. Children and adolescents were believed to have the same interests as adults, and they were treated with the same strict, harsh discipline. In the Middle Ages, neither the adult nor the child was given status apart from the adult.”¹⁸

Beginning about 1500 until about 1800,

Young people in some European societies took part in what historians term life-cycle service, a period in their late teens and twenties in which young people would engage in domestic service, farm service, or apprenticeships in various

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 8.

trades and crafts. Life-cycle service involved moving out of the family household and into the household of a master to whom the young person was in service for a period lasting typically seven years. Young women were less likely to engage in life-cycle service.¹⁹

This service was “common in the United States in the early colonial period (17th century) in New England, but usually took place in the home of a relative or family friend.”²⁰

In the early United States, the nature of adolescence, soon began to change. Life-cycle service “faded during the 18th and 19th centuries as the American population grew, and the economy became less based in farming and more industrialized.”²¹ In the cities, without ties to a family or community, “young people soon became regarded as a social problem in many respects: high rates of crime, premarital sex, and alcohol use increased in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.”²² In response, new institutions of social control developed: “religious associations, literary societies, YMCAs and YWCAs opened where young people were monitored by adults.”²³ This approach worked well, and many problems began to drop sharply.

During the eighteenth century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau offered:

A more enlightened view of adolescence. Rousseau, a French philosopher, did more than any other individual to restore the belief that a child is not the same as an adult. He argued that treating the child like a miniature adult is harmful. Rousseau believed that, up until the age of 12 or so, children should be free of

¹⁹ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 4.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

adult restrictions and allowed to experience their world naturally, rather than have rigid regulations imposed on them.²⁴

Rousseau, like Aristotle and Plato, believed that development in childhood and adolescence occurs in a series of stages. He described “four stages of development: infancy (the first 4 to 5 years); savage (5 to 12 years); stage 3 (12 to 15 years); and stage 4 (15 to 20 years).”²⁵ Rousseau’s “ideas about adolescence were speculative, and other individuals in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had to bridge the gap between the ideas of philosophers and the empirical approach of scientists.”²⁶

The most important period of the nineteenth century was the final twenty years. In the United States these years were “crucial in establishing the characteristics of modern adolescence. Key changes during these years included the enactment of laws restricting child labor, new requirements for children to attend secondary school, and the development of the field of adolescence as an area of scholarly study.”²⁷ Historians call the years between 1890 and 1920 the Age of Adolescence. A number of psychologists, urban reformers, educators, youth workers and counselors began molding the concept of adolescence. At this time, “young people, especially boys, no longer were viewed as decadent problem causes, but instead were seen as increasingly passive and vulnerable.”²⁸ When G. Stanley Hall’s book was published in 1904, it played a major role

²⁴ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 8.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 9.

²⁷ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 4.

²⁸ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 9.

in restructuring thinking about adolescence. Hall said “that while many adolescents appear to be passive, they are experiencing considerable turmoil within.”²⁹

The view of adolescence in American culture has been influenced greatly by the writings of Hall. He has been called the father of the study of adolescence because of his 1904 release of the two-volume set entitled *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*.³⁰ Hall described the intense growth and change of the adolescent body as a time of “storm and stress.”³¹ According to Hall, adolescence is “strewn with wreckage of body, mind, and morals. There is not only arrest, but perversion, at every stage, and hoodlumism, juvenile crime, and secret vice seem not only increasing, but develop in earlier years in every civilized land.”³² Very likely Hall believed that the teenager was “a cross between a savage and a civilized man because this period of life was stormy and stressful. The adolescent’s more primitive impulses and his more humane ones would inevitably come into conflict, Hall reasoned.”³³

Hall believed the maladjustment of adolescence was more pronounced in his lifetime because of “increasing urban life with its temptations, prematurities, sedentary

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 6.

³¹ G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*, vol. 1 (New York: D. Appleton, and Company, 1916), xiii.

³² Ibid., xiv.

³³ Judith Gallatin, “Theories of Adolescence,” in *Understanding Adolescence: Current Developments in Adolescent Psychology*, 3rd ed., edited by James F. Adams (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1976), 30.

occupations, and passive stimuli.”³⁴ Despite Hall’s attempts to include literature and research from many cultures, his perspective is primarily a Western view. Hall’s view of adolescence has been persistently accepted in American culture.

Hall believed “humans were born first as members of the animal kingdom with selfish drives, needs, and survival concerns. During adolescence they were ‘reborn’ as members of a civilized species concerned with social responsibility and the rights and welfare of others.”³⁵ Being responsible may require one to sacrifice and frustrate personal wants and needs. Thus, Hall viewed adolescence as a time of great stress characterized by “emotional upheavals and turmoil”³⁶ that lasted into the early twenties. Although Hall identified many of the dimensions of adolescent development: “intellectual development, sexual development, physical and mental diseases, and the like, his major emphasis was placed on the hypothesis that adolescence was universally an extraordinary turbulent and stressful period of life.”³⁷ Evidence about adolescents “obtained in America and other western cultures generally supported the storm and stress hypothesis.”³⁸

A surprising number of Hall’s observations have been verified by recent research, such as “his description of biological development during puberty, his assertion that depressed mood tends to peak in the mid-teens, and his claim that adolescence is a time

³⁴ Hall, *Adolescence*, xv.

³⁵ Berzonsky, *Theories of Adolescence*, 12.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

of heightened responsiveness to peers.”³⁹ Even though the quality of his research was suspect, Hall was “a giant in the field of adolescence. It was he who began the theorizing, the systematizing, and the questioning that went beyond mere speculating and philosophizing. Indeed, we owe the beginnings of the scientific study of adolescent development to Hall.”⁴⁰

However, in the 1920s, anthropologists and scientists began to study adolescents in non-western cultures. The findings led to the development of cultural theories. Although few contemporary people have heard of Hall and his theoretical contributions early in the twentieth century, he was one of the most well-known psychologists in the US. One-hundred-ten years later, his research has proven to be insightful and helpful to youth workers who engage adolescents regularly.

Margaret Mead was an early challenger of Hall’s idea of adolescence as a time of storm and stress. Mead dismissed much of Hall’s storm and stress model in her 1928 text stating, “Adolescence was a product of culture because she did not see these stormy and stressful tendencies in the more relaxed culture of Samoa.”⁴¹ Based on Mead’s study of adolescents on the island of Samoa, she asserted, “That adolescent stress was not a function of biology as Hall had taught but was rather sociocultural.”⁴² She “revealed that

³⁹ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 6.

⁴⁰ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 10.

⁴¹ Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization* (New York: W. Morrow and Co., 1928).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 2-4.

adolescent behavior varied considerably from culture to culture.”⁴³ According to Mead, “the stress is in our civilization, not in the physical changes through which our children pass.”⁴⁴ Mead’s dissertation was designed to test Stanley Hall’s hypothesis that adolescence is a period of storm and stress. The findings she reported “indicated that Samoan adolescents experienced few problems and difficulties.”⁴⁵

Mead concluded “that cultures that allow adolescence to observe sexual relations, see babies born, regard death as natural, do important work, engage in sex play, and know clearly what their adult roles will be promote a relatively stress-free adolescence.”⁴⁶ However, in cultures like the United States, in which “children are considered very different from adults and where adolescence is not characterized by the aforementioned experiences, adolescence is more likely to be stressful.”⁴⁷ More than a half-century later Mead’s work was criticized as biased and error prone. The current criticism also “states that Samoan adolescence is more stressful than Mead observed and that delinquency appears among Samoan adolescents, just as it does among Western adolescents.”⁴⁸ While Mead’s methods were criticized, her assertion on the role of culture in development raises significant questions still being considered.

⁴³ Berzonsky, *Theories of Adolescence*, 13.

⁴⁴ Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, 235.

⁴⁵ Berzonsky, *Theories of Adolescence*, 13.

⁴⁶ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 11.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Two important developmental theorists, Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget, described major theories of adolescent behavior. Erikson explored the ideas of Sigmund and Anna Freud. Many contemporary theorists “place less emphasis on sexual instincts and more emphasis on cultural experiences as determinants of an individual’s development.”⁴⁹ Erickson says, “We develop in psychosocial stages, in contrast to Freud’s psychosexual stages.” He also emphasizes “developmental change throughout the human lifespan, whereas Freud argued that our basic personality is shaped in the first five years of life.”⁵⁰

Erikson believed adolescence is primarily a search for identity. He described the beginning of the search as looking “most fervently for men and ideas to have faith in.”⁵¹ The adolescent then must begin “to will freely which of the avenues of duty or service he or she will pursue.”⁵² Finally, Erikson “taught the adolescent should take responsibility to make something work.”⁵³ Adolescents who choose to become responsible are able to find their identity as they work diligently towards independence.

Erikson insists that identity has a cultural component to it.⁵⁴ However, he admitted to some cultural bias. He wrote consistently about identity development in America and in other western cultures.⁵⁵ In American culture, the identity of what

⁴⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 45.

⁵¹ Erik H. Erikson, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1968), 128.

⁵² Ibid., 129.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1963), 283.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 277-402.

someone wears, drives, and goes to school are important instead of developing a meaningful philosophy of life: “In other words, money-seeking goals and meaning-seeking goals have traded places among those undertaking the transition to adulthood.”⁵⁶ The American college-educated population is far more interested in making money today. Andrew and Patrick have reiterated their purpose in choosing a career path that will look different than their youth pastor father.

James Cote writes, “From a psychoanalytic perspective, then, we can expect to see that a growing segment of the population has a poorly developed sense of conscience but a well-developed sense of pleasure and immediate gratification.”⁵⁷ The meaning seeking perspective has dramatically changed from the experience of college in the 1970s to this generation wanting everything now. The corporate world has sucked in the majority of children through manipulation of ads on television that everything can be enjoyed today.

In Erikson’s theory of human development, “each period of life is characterized by a distinctive developmental issue or ‘crisis’ as he described in his classic book, *Childhood and Society*. Each of these crises holds the potential for a healthy path of development and an unhealthy path.”⁵⁸ He describes eight stages of human psychological development, “each marked by a developmental crisis that had to be resolved before the

⁵⁶ James E. Cote, *Arrested Development: The Changing Nature of Maturity and Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 218.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adult*, 159.

individual could graduate to the next stage.”⁵⁹ For Erikson, this crisis “is not a catastrophe, but a turning point of increased vulnerability and enhanced potential. The more an individual resolves the crises successfully, the healthier that individual’s development will be.”⁶⁰ As he observed with each stage, “a sense of identity is never gained nor maintained once and for all . . . it is constantly lost and regained.”⁶¹

Cote adds, “an increasingly large segment of the population is not developing in significant ways the two primary ego functions that build the types of ego strengths that Erikson says are essential for passage through all eight psychosocial stages.”⁶² With the manipulations of consumer corporate society, more people have developed lower levels of confidence in taking action. People have been lulled into believing everything that on the television. Hesitancy in young college males to develop into authentic men is seen on nearly every large college campus. Working with forty young men every semester in an authentic manhood course, their decision-making has been difficult to observe.

According to Arnett, the most influential theory of cognitive development was developed by Piaget. He writes, “Piaget’s observations convinced him that children of different ages think differently and that changes in cognitive development proceed in distinct stages. Each stage involves a different way of thinking about the world.”⁶³ Piaget stressed, “That adolescents actively construct their own cognitive worlds, and he believed

⁵⁹ Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 51-107.

⁶⁰ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 45.

⁶¹ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 160.

⁶² Cote, *Arrested Development*, 217.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 60.

that we go through four stages in understanding the world. Each of the stages is age related and consists of distinct ways of thinking.”⁶⁴ According to Piaget, the driving force behind development from one stage to the next is maturation. Piaget’s emphasis on the importance of maturation “contrasted with the views of other theorists, who believed that there were no inherent limits to development or that environmental stimulation could override them. This contrasted with the view of other theorists such as the behaviorists, who saw the environment as acting on the child through rewards and punishments rather than seeing the child as an active agent.”⁶⁵

Piaget devised a theory of cognitive development to describe the stages that children’s thinking passes through as they grow up. Piaget termed

The first two years of life the sensorimotor stage: reflexes and motor schemes predominate during this stage; the next five years is the preoperational stage: children are beginning to mentally represent actions; concrete operations is the next stage, lasting from age 7 to about age 11: where mental actions are fully internalized and transformable; and the final stage of formal operations begins about age 11 and reaches completion between 15 and 20.⁶⁶

In solving problems, formal operational thinkers are “more systematic, developing hypotheses about why something is happening the way it is, then testing these hypotheses in a deductive fashion.”⁶⁷ Formal operational thinking emerges during adolescence, and “formal operators go beyond description and attempt to explain why things happened.”⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 47.

⁶⁵ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 61.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁶⁷ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 48.

⁶⁸ Berzonsky, *Theories of Adolescence*, 23.

One aspect of formal reasoning “has to do with the relationship between reality and possibility.”⁶⁹

A number of other aspects of formal operations focus “less on scientific thinking and more on logical or applied reasoning. These include the development of capacities for abstract thinking, complex thinking, and thinking about thinking (called metacognition).”⁷⁰ Piaget developed his ideas about moral development using several different methods. He watched children play games, such as marbles, to see how they discussed the rules. On the basis of his research, Piaget concluded that children have two distinct approaches to reasoning about moral issues: “Piaget’s interests in the rules of children’s games reflected his belief that moral development is promoted by interactions with peers. In Piaget’s view, peers’ equal status requires them to discuss their disagreements, negotiate with one another, and come to a consensus.”⁷¹

Piaget’s theory has been widely applied to education, although more extensively with children than with adolescents. Piaget was not an educator nor presented himself as one. He provided a sound conceptual framework from which to view educational problems. Santrock writes, “Two principles of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development can be applied to education: the foremost issue in education is communication. Second, adolescents are, by nature, knowing creatures. The best way to nurture this motivation for knowledge is to allow adolescents to spontaneously interact with the environment.”⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 63.

⁷¹ Ibid., 110.

⁷² Santrock, *Adolescence*, 114.

One main argument that has emerged from the application of Piaget's theory to education is "that instruction may too often be at the formal operational level, even though the majority of adolescents are not actually formal operational thinkers. That is, the instruction might be too formal and too abstract. Possibly, it should be less formal and more concrete."⁷³ Piaget discussed all of these capacities, but since, other scholars have done considerable research on them as well. Piaget was "a genius when it came to observing children, and his astute observations showed us inventive ways to discover how children, and even infants, act on and adapt to their world."⁷⁴ However, Piaget's theory has not gone unchallenged. Questions are raised "about the following areas: estimates of the child's and adolescent's competence at different developmental levels; stages; training children to reason at a higher level; and culture and education."⁷⁵

Santrock concludes:

Most contemporary developmentalists agree that cognitive development is not as grand-stage-like as Piaget thought. Neo-Piagetians are developmentalists who have elaborated on Piaget's theory; they believe that cognitive development is more specific in many respects than Piaget thought. Neo-Piagetians don't believe that all of Piaget's ideas should be junked. However, they argue that a more accurate vision of cognitive development involves fewer references to grand stages and more emphasis on the roles of strategies, skills, how fast and automatically children can process information, and the importance of dividing cognitive problems into smaller, more precise steps.⁷⁶

Children who are at one cognitive stage, such as preoperational thought, can be trained to reason at a higher cognitive stage, such as concrete operational thought. This poses a

⁷³ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 114.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

problem for Piaget, who argued that such training works only on a superficial level, and is ineffective unless the child is at a transitional point from one stage to the next. With cognitive growth, children and adolescents refine their thinking and move through a number of cognitive milestones.

Lawrence Kohlberg was inspired “by Piaget’s work and sought to extend it by examining moral development through adolescence and into adulthood. Like Piaget, he viewed moral development as based on cognitive development.”⁷⁷ Kohlberg “hypothesized three levels of moral development, each of which is characterized by two stages. A key concept is internalization, the developmental change from behavior that is externally controlled to behavior that is controlled by internal standards and principles. As children and adolescents develop, their moral thoughts become more internalized.”⁷⁸

The first level preconventional reasoning is based “on perceptions of the likelihood of external rewards and punishments. What is right is what avoids punishment or results in rewards.”⁷⁹ The second level conventional reasoning is “less egocentric and the person advocates the value of conforming to the moral expectations of others. What is right is whatever agrees with the rules established by tradition and by authorities.”⁸⁰ The third level postconventional reasoning is based “on the individual’s own independent judgments rather than on what others view as a right or wrong. What is right is derived from the individual’s perception of objective, universal principles rather than the

⁷⁷ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 110.

⁷⁸ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 406.

⁷⁹ Arnett, *Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood*, 110.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

subjective perception of either the individual or the group.”⁸¹ Responding to human suffering after the natural disasters in Louisiana in 2005 and 2008 was a definite crisis with periods of increased vulnerability for adolescents. Our two early adolescent sons at this time, Andrew and Patrick, sensed this pressure as their school doubled in size overnight with the addition of eight hundred students.

Another stress in adolescence is the manipulating of academic systems. Denise Clark Pope in her book *Doing School* offers a revealing and troubling view of today’s high school students and the ways they pursue high grades and success. A veteran teacher, Pope follows five highly regarded students through a school year and discovers that these young people believe getting ahead requires manipulating the academic system, lying, and cheating. This is a troubling portrait of the corrosive attitudes and expectations that students encounter.

This book raises disturbing questions about the kinds of high standards pushed in today’s. Pope presents ideas with clarity and this work provides a fresh perspective on the state of American education. Pope writes, “third-grade children at Faircrest speak in earnest of their hopes to attend a Stanford or Harvard when they grow up. The children say this because their parents attended the schools.”⁸² The majority of these children will not be admitted to Stanford or Harvard, and their parents may be setting them up for future failure.

⁸¹ Ibid., 111.

⁸² Denise Clark Pope, *Doing School: How we are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 167.

Pope adds, “The idea that good grades will eventually lead to great riches may be documented at the national level as well. A recent study by the American Council on Education shows that the number one goal for seventy-four percent of college freshmen is be very well off financially.”⁸³ This attitude represents a shift since the 1960s, when 82 percent of entering students said their concern was to develop a meaningful philosophy of life. Pope continues “the study also reported that more college freshmen were being admitted with high school grade point averages of 3.8 or better and that students today tended to be more practical and grade grubbing.”⁸⁴ Andrew and Patrick felt this pressure to complete high school with a grade point average of 3.75 for scholarship offers. The pressure was intense to do well without succumbing to cheating in the classroom.

The widespread cheating observed by Pope represents a classroom management strategy. She writes, “The more traditional forms of cheating: copying answers from peers test papers, plagiarizing, and relying upon forbidden aids such as cheat sheets were used to help students obtain high grades without spending as much time actually studying the material.”⁸⁵ For many students, cheating becomes a habitual crutch, enabling them to do the minimum to get by, even if the results are less than satisfactory.

As a substitute teacher at the Dunham School in Baton Rouge, some of the more creative forms for what might be called cheating is winging it in class discussions, missing class on test day to study, and relying on friends for assignments that should be

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid, 167.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 151.

done independently. All of this academic manipulation begins when children are pressured by their parents. Adolescents are struggling to figure out their future.

The lengthening of adolescence and adjusting to life is taking its toll on this generation. This generation is stressed with uncertainty in finding a job upon graduation from high school and college. It is time for culture to begin caring for these emerging adults or a catastrophe could be close behind, or as Chap Clark chronicles “the systematic abandonment of adolescents and the repercussions of that abandonment.”⁸⁶ After Hurricane Katrina, the culture changed for thousands of adolescents who felt abandoned.

The responsibility of preparing adolescents falls on the shoulders of parents. However, many adolescents have to figure out life on their own. The psychosocial environment of human suffering was tremendous during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. The problem was intensified by the breakdown of the support structures in the adolescent’s life. Clark continues, “The solution is for the adults to act like adults and be there for these adolescents, because their lack of presence or involvement is forcing adolescents to figure out how to survive on their own.”⁸⁷ As parents struggled in their responsibilities, very few people stepped in to care for the needs of adolescents. Chaos ensued in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina because many families’ support structures were torn apart by separation of all they knew.

⁸⁶ Clark, *Hurt*, 44.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

Santrock writes, “Identity formation neither happens neatly nor is cataclysmic;” rather, “identity development is done in bits and pieces.”⁸⁸ In the quest for identity development, “decisions are not once and for all, but must be made again and again.”⁸⁹ Identity development makes allowances for trial and error and small growth occurs over time. In the midst of Hurricane Katrina, many adolescents had to make decisions over and over again, usually alone. Consequently, Elkind notes that parental “abrogation of the responsibilities of adulthood is the single most powerful contributor to the new imbalance and to the stress that imbalance puts on children.”⁹⁰ In order for the imbalance to be corrected, parents will have to take responsibility and parent again. Survival was the key during the early months of recovery from the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Parenting was important in surviving difficult circumstances for early, mid and late adolescents.

Administrators, coaches, pastors, church members, teachers and relatives are responsible to assist parents. Youth pastors are an integral part of identity formation for all adolescents. The process of responsibility is difficult without guidance, and many adolescents are forced to figure this out alone. College students and postgraduate students are forced to figure out what they will do with their lives. Andrew and Patrick, are in this age group, and they believe they will figure it all out. By trial and error, they will see what works for them. Andrew has been given encouragement from former administrators, teachers, small group leaders and friends to continue this process of job hunting with great hope.

⁸⁸ Santrock, *Adolescence*, 153.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Elkind, *Ties That Stress*, 9, 227.

In *The Ecology of Human Development*: Urie Bronfenbrenner focuses on the individual having impact on his or her environment. Bronfenbrenner shares, “to describe the ecology of human development as psychology, sociology, or anthropology is to overlook the crucial part played in psychological growth by biological factors, such as physical characteristics.”⁹¹ Bronfenbrenner’s present work does not give biological influences their due, but this book offers a new perspective for research in human development. In Bronfenbrenner’s model, “Very few of the external influences significantly affecting human behavior and development can be described solely in terms of objective physical conditions and events.”⁹² Research has shown the impact of the environment on the individual is most powerful in shaping the course of psychological growth, and this has been seen in numerous natural disasters throughout history.

He writes, “What matters for behavior and development is the environment as it is perceived rather than as it may exist in objective reality.”⁹³ When a city is destroyed by a hurricane, the environment affects the process of cognitive development and learning. Early, mid and late adolescents become upset with the devastation of their home environment, and learning may become difficult in a new environment.

Moving to a new environment, adolescents are required to exert energy as they adapt to change and separation. Peter Blos views adolescence as a process of separation-individuation. His view is “that the totality of adolescence was the second separation-individuation process due to the psychological changes where an adolescent will draw

⁹¹ Urie Bronfenbrenner, *The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), 12.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

content, stimulation, aim, and direction from a complex interplay of inner and outer impingements.”⁹⁴ Blos calls attention to the acquired separation where he writes, “ego disturbances, apparent in acting out, learning disorders, lack of purpose, procrastination, moodiness, and negativism are frequently symptomatic signs of crisis or failure representing derailment of the individuation process.”⁹⁵ The distinction that Blos made is “when the adolescent begins to shed family dependencies, they will have periods of proverbial and transient self-centeredness and self-aggrandizement, as well as mood swings.”⁹⁶ Blos wisely recognized that an adolescent’s maturity requires consistent observation over time. Personal attention is important especially when an adolescent’s life becomes derailed by unusual circumstances such as being displaced.

With the lengthening of adolescence, researchers are trying to define adulthood. Education, career and marriage are no longer the markers. The age group of 18-to-25-year-olds may be called late adolescents on the basis of psychosocial development, yet many prefer the label “emerging adults.” Many emerging adults wait on marriage well into their early thirties. As a pastor who has performed 150 weddings in the last fifteen years, 50 percent of the weddings were couples in their thirties or early forties. The psychosocial development of emerging adults varies from person to person.

As this age group of eighteen-to-twenty-five year olds looks for identity formation, the wounds of abandonment are again exposed. Elkind explains “the process of identity formation requires an enveloping of adult standards, values and beliefs that the

⁹⁴ Peter Blos, *The Adolescent Passage: Developmental Issues* (New York: International Universities Press, 1979), 141-142.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 412-413.

adolescent can challenge and confront as he or she develops his or her own standards, values, and beliefs.”⁹⁷ Many emerging adults develop their own belief systems by living on their own during their college years. Patrick attended the University of Arizona, and lived on his own away from Baton Rouge. He wanted to confront his own standards, values and beliefs in a new environment.

Due to these variables, Chap Clark identifies “individuation as an internal process that is both fluid and complex.”⁹⁸ Elsewhere he and his wife Dee write, “The duration of adolescence has expanded dramatically since its inception. The data clearly shows that the onset of puberty (measured by the average age for females) is coming earlier in life.”⁹⁹ Before the 1900s, “the average age of puberty was fourteen years or older. In 1980, the average age had dropped to thirteen and further to twelve years of age in 2007. Those numbers marking the onset of puberty are discernible and objective.”¹⁰⁰

Prior to the 1900s, culture considered adolescence as ending around age sixteen. In 1980, culture extended the end of adolescence to eighteen years of age. In 2007, culture extended adolescence to the mid-twenties. All psychosocial development will have to address a number of issues.

⁹⁷ David Elkind, *A Sympathetic Understanding of the Child: Birth to Sixteen* (Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1994), 197.

⁹⁸ Chap Clark, “The Changing Face of Adolescence: a Theological View of Human Development,” in *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically About Youth Ministry*, ed. Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark and Dave Rahn (Grand Rapids, MI: Youth Specialties/Zondervan Publishing House, 2001), 51.

⁹⁹ Chap Clark and Dee Clark, *Disconnected: Parenting Teens in a Myspace World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007), 63.

¹⁰⁰ Clark, “The Changing Face of Adolescence,” 51.

Chap Clark offers “the illustration of a tightrope.”¹⁰¹ Each pole supporting the tightrope represents a stable time in the individual’s life. The left pole is the child’s home environment and the right pole is the individuated adult. Between the two poles, the tightrope exists in three parts: early, middle and late adolescent phases. This tightrope has one cognitive developmental marker: the transition to mid adolescence, in which the adolescent moves into abstract thinking. The tightrope itself represents the dangerous journey of adolescence, which must be walked alone, in striving for individuation.

However, as Clark points out, “this adolescent individuation involves separating from the role of child, not separating from the love, support, and nurture of the family system.”¹⁰² He continues,

The adolescent must be able to answer three questions in the process of becoming a unique individual. The first task is answering the question of “Who am I?” This answer yields one’s identity. The second task is answering the question of “Do I matter?” and “Do my choices matter?” This answer yields one’s autonomy. The third task is answering the question, “Where do I fit?” This answer yields one’s sense of belonging.¹⁰³

Once the adolescent has answered these three questions, he or she has crossed the tightrope and begins the transition into adulthood.

Every adolescent wants to find out who they are and understand their sense of identity. Chap Clark ascribes,

The same importance to this issue when he declares that the central task for the adolescent is to discover who they are as a person and then begin to assert his or herself into the adult society. As a dependent school-age child growing up in a

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 47-51.

¹⁰² Ibid., 53.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 55.

family, there has never been a need to question his or her identity because there is usually been a caring parent to intervene and make decisions.¹⁰⁴

With separation from the family of origin beginning to take place, the adolescent looks for help in this process outside of the home. Elkind notes “in order for individuation to occur, there must be an integrated sense of identity that brings together an entire set of attitudes, values, and habits that can serve both self and society.”¹⁰⁵ Clark understands how an adolescent copes by comparing it to a “vaudevillian plate spinner who is skilled at getting several plates to spin at once and even making it look easy at times.”¹⁰⁶ Everything may be spinning out of control because the stress is too much to handle. Moving to a new community after Hurricane Katrina was too much to ask for many adolescents because the stress created problems for early, mid and late adolescents.

Every adolescent matters, and the question, “Can I make a difference in this world and will my choices now really matter in the future” remains on their minds. Chap and Dee Clark note that, “Autonomy is about being trained to handle and then learn to accept personal responsibility.”¹⁰⁷ They continue, “the more developed our sense of personal power and ability and our willingness to take responsibility for our choices, the stronger our internal locus of control.”¹⁰⁸ These young emerging adults are willing to live with the consequences of their choices and decisions. This time of life is filled with many opportunities, and my two emerging adults want to make decisions that matter.

¹⁰⁴ Clark and Clark, *Disconnected*, 54.

¹⁰⁵ Elkind, *All Grown Up and No Place to Go*, 196.

¹⁰⁶ Clark, *Hurt*, 67.

¹⁰⁷ Clark and Clark, *Disconnected*, 56-57.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 57.

Adolescents want to fit into culture and feel a sense of belonging with their friends. Clark further argues “that the fundamental metanarrative in our culture shouts for individualism.”¹⁰⁹ In Western culture, self-reliance and independence is taught in families beginning in early childhood. My parents taught me this lesson at age 11, with a shiny red lawnmower under the Christmas tree as a present. Even as I desired to connect with others and fit in, my family was teaching self-reliance and individualism in the home.

Clark said in a lecture that in mid-adolescence, many groups were called clusters: “Clusters are gender specific and remain relatively small in size, ranging from four or five adolescents up to a maximum of eight to ten.”¹¹⁰ There is desire to fit in with a group through elementary, middle and high school. Sports and scouting were two clusters that included my energy in fitting in. As emerging adults, Andrew and Patrick, have clusters of friends walking through life with them. Nearly every one desires a sense of belonging with their friends even though the culture shouts for individualism.

While these two emerging adult sons are not asking for help, the Church has the privilege to stand alongside them because they matter and so do their choices. Sadly, many emerging adults have lost interest in church including these two. The Church has not included them; this is true of many emerging adults.

Emerging adults are reminded by Elkind that “the stress that they feel often leads them to do the same things adults do when they feel stressed, as they engage in actions

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹¹⁰ Clark, *Hurt*, 79-80.

that are destructive to themselves, to others, or to both.”¹¹¹ In working with late adolescents for the past thirty-seven years, it has been difficult as a few have exhibited destructive behaviors: self-injury and in rare instances, suicide. The stress felt by adolescents today is extraordinary compared to the early, mid and late adolescence of previous generations.

In moving back home after six months in Washington, D.C. for an internship, Andrew is experiencing a considerable amount of freedom and very little oversight. Research shows “that this environment is actually damaging for the emerging adult, as the quality of the parental relationship is inversely related to physical proximity with the parents.”¹¹² Andrew may be saving money on rent and food, but his relationship could deteriorate with his parents if this extends for a long period of time.

As a generation of emerging adults has been abandoned, the opportunity for community would bring structure to their life. Authentic community draws people into the Body of Christ. Ray Anderson realizes emerging adults are interested where “the continuing ministry of Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit,” allows them to serve.¹¹³ Emerging adults are coming of age, and are stressed wondering do they fit in with the local church and how to apply spiritual gifts to the Body of Christ.

One idea has been to include Andrew and his friends in the Monday community group at noon, and hopefully, the abandonment plaguing this generation, will soon

¹¹¹ Elkind, *Ties That Stress*, 188.

¹¹² Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, “Emerging Adulthood: A Theory of Development from the Late Teens through the Twenties,” *American Psychologist* 55:5 (May, 2000): 475.

¹¹³ Ray S. Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 29.

disappear. These emerging adults want to make a difference in their society. However, they are looking for authenticity from the Church. Chapter 5 discusses the practical theology of adolescent discipleship in the context of suffering. Students can become disciples through relationships with adult leaders.

CHAPTER 5

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF ADOLESCENT DISCIPLESHIP

After considering the characteristics of early, mid and late adolescence in relation to human suffering, this chapter defines and addresses a practical theology of adolescent discipleship in youth ministry. Chap Clark writes, “According to the New Testament, an easy definition of ‘disciple’ is a follower of Jesus Christ who walks as Jesus did:

“whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did” (I John 2:6).”¹ A disciple has responded to God’s love in Christ Jesus by believing in God and his word. He continues:

A disciple is therefore someone who expresses this belief by committing to and walking in a life of unconditional, sacrificial, sometimes illogical, and often unnoticed love. This is consistent and clear throughout the Scriptures. God calls men and women to trust him, and he then gives them the power to truly love. A disciple loves God, others, and even, made possible by the cross—himself: “the entire law is summed up in a single command: love your neighbor as yourself” (Galations 5:14).²

Youth workers must learn to lead and guide students to this discipleship relationship and lifestyle, to teach them, in words and actions, what it looks like to fully trust Jesus Christ and to surrender their lives for others in love. Clark continues:

¹ Chap Clark, *From Father to Son* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 17.

² *Ibid.*, 18.

What matters for authentic discipleship is what has always mattered to God, and it is summarized in Micah 6:8: “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” Although some may scoff at such a description of discipleship, to condense the essence of faith into “to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly” is not the same as watering down the gospel. Yes, disciplines such as knowledge, teaching, prayer, and fasting are important aspects of historic Christian faith. But these are not the central markers of a life led by the Father, filled by the Holy Spirit, and mediated by Jesus Christ. A changed character is what marks a follower of the incarnate Word. That is the key to training young disciples.

What matters to God is that his people would turn to him as God and follow him wherever and however he leads. And he calls those who love him so much a deeper, more pervasive and radical attachment to him and his purposes than what most believers refer to as discipleship. God is interested in the heart, and he won't stop pursuing his children until he has won their internal, authentic devotion.³

The faith relationship will focus “on a foundational journey, looking both toward the end product of the task of discipling another and toward what it means to live now as one set free by Christ in a dark, lonely, and at times hostile world.”⁴

The question is how the Church and their youth workers go about the process of making disciples. Youth workers are not much different than “Esau, who was tired and overwhelmed, goes for the immediate gratification, sells his birthright and settles down for a satisfying bowl of lentil stew (Genesis 25:27-34).”⁵ Youth ministers are not that far from Esau actually, beginning with the best of intentions and ending tired, seeking immediate gratification. Amy Jacober writes, “Our time goes to leaders and adolescents; we run from staff meetings to basketball games to the local hangout. And then when it comes time to pray, lead a group, teach on Sunday, give a talk or plan a retreat—let alone

³ Ibid., 20, 22.

⁴ Ibid., 22.

⁵ Amy Jacober, *The Adolescent Journey: an Interdisciplinary Approach to Practical Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 8.

have a one-on-one conversation with one of our students because we are weary.”⁶ Yet, in creating a practical theology of adolescent discipleship

Doing theology is like prayer. The busier you are, the less time you have for it. But the busier you are, the more you need to pray. Few youth workers have time to do theology, yet every youth worker is engaged in the theological task several times each day. We all act and think and critique and make decisions theologically, that is, with the heart and mind of God as the foundation. But when we fail to carefully reflect theologically, and we fail to take the time, even a few minutes, to develop a theological basis for ministry, we sometimes, or even often, fall into making doing bad theology! What is the difference between good and bad theology? Good theology is when what is believed to be said, done, or believed in the name of the biblical God is true to the Scriptures, take seriously the movement of the Holy Spirit in the world, and is in touch with the real issues and needs of people. Bad theology is when something is said, done, or believed about God at some level or in some way violates the intent of the biblical record, ignores or denies the work and/or movement of the Spirit in the world, or is not careful to recognize where every day people live, move, and think. It is true that after all is said and done, skilled, careful theologians can come to very different conclusions. But the bad theology discussed here is when there is little or no care given to the biblical record.” To create a good theology of youth ministry, one that upholds the veracity of biblical revelation, is cognizant of God’s mysterious work in the world, and cares for people where they are is not all that difficult an enterprise. But it does take a little work and some careful thought.”⁷

Anderson expounds on this:

The discipline of practical theology extends systematic theology into the life and practice of the Christian community. While it includes cognitive reflection on truth as doctrine, practical theology takes into account the truth of experience. Human beings are lovers and worshipers as well as thinkers, and all these aspects are potential sources of theological knowledge. Critical analytical thinking is important but it’s not the only source of truth.⁸

Practical theology demands a very specific understanding of the nature of theology: “That the theologian hold the practitioner accountable to the truth of God’s revelation in history

⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷ Ibid., 15, 16.

⁸ Anderson, *The Shape of Practical Theology*, 23.

and that the practitioner hold the theologian accountable to the truth of God's reconciliation in humanity."⁹ Clark gives five ideas for creating a practical theology for youth ministry: "Clearly define the issues, study the Bible, gather the information and synthesize into major themes, do analysis of the culture to determine both where people are and what God is doing to care for them, and create a theology of _____."¹⁰

Clark continues on how to build a practical theology. He writes that people must "consider the following four important issues: context, original intent, how does this fit in with the whole of the biblical teaching, and what has the church historically and currently taught on this subject/passage."¹¹ Pastors must also think through the core issues and look at relevant social data. Finally, Clark writes that pastors must "decide on a philosophical, structural, and programmatic course of action, which is, in effect, a practical theology. Everything you do must flow from this theological understanding of the given issue. Over time, as the environment changes, or God reveals new information, as the Spirit moves in the world, our practical theology must also be open to change."¹²

This brings about an important question: if youth workers are weary all the time, who will disciple students and what qualifies someone to be a disciple. Stott addresses this very issue: "During Jesus' three years of public ministry, the Twelve were disciples before they were apostles, and as disciples they were under the instruction of their teacher

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Chap Clark, "Creating a Practical Theology of Youth Ministry," lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA 1998, 17.

¹¹ Ibid., 18.

¹² Ibid., 19.

and Lord.”¹³ One wishes that the word “disciple had continued into the following centuries, so that Christians were self-consciously disciples of Jesus, and took seriously their responsibility to be under discipline.”¹⁴ Those who claim to be disciples of the Lord Jesus will provoke him to say again: “Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (Lk 6:46). For genuine discipleship is wholehearted discipleship.”¹⁵

Walter Henrichson writes that to “‘Make disciples’ is the mandate of the Master (Matthew 28:19-20).”¹⁶ Christians may ignore this mandate, but cannot evade it. As recorded in Matthew 28:19, “Jesus charged the Twelve to take the gospel through the world by making disciples.”¹⁷ Jesus expected his disciples to see the world through the disciples that they would produce: “Jesus’s vision of reaching the world through the use of multiplying disciples is a theme throughout the Scriptures. Jesus had the pattern for forming disciples. He gave his own disciples concrete things to do instead of things to store away in their brains and they obeyed him.”¹⁸

Leroy Eims writes, “The men whom Jesus chose were ordinary people—fishermen, tax collectors, and others like them. When it came time to choose those whom he would train, He spent the night in prayer.”¹⁹ Luke 6:12-13 says, “One of those days

¹³ John Stott, *The Radical Disciple* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 14.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶ Walter Henrichsen, *Disciples are Made—Not Born* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1975), 5.

¹⁷ Ibid., 7.

¹⁸ Juan Carlos Ortiz, *Disciple* (Lake Mary, FL: Creation House, 1975), 110.

¹⁹ Leroy Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making* (Colorado Springs, CO: Zondervan/NavPress, 1978), 29.

Jesus went out into the hills to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose 12 of them, whom he also designated apostles.” This is an important point in selection. Jesus did not hastily rush out and grab the first people who showed interest: “The consequences of Jesus ministry have continued to this day and by the grace of God will continue through our lives into the lives of thousands in the years to come.”²⁰

This begs the question, “Why did Jesus choose men with very human tendencies and failings.” Eims writes:

Suppose he had chosen only those who were highly cultured, of great intellect and wealth, who never had any nagging doubts or fears, men who never made mistakes or said things they later regretted, those who are strangers to desires, problems, and sins of the rest of us. Where would that put us? We couldn’t identify with people like that. We would be tempted to throw up our hands in despair, turn around, and continue in our mediocre ways. Not only were they common men, they were individuals. They were not all alike. They were not twelve wooden soldiers card from the same diagram.²¹

For example, Simon the Zealot hated the Romans who occupied Palestine, while Matthew the tax collector worked for them. This teaches the followers of Jesus that, “In our making disciples, we should not select only those who are like us and temperament and personality. Nor should we choose only those who act in a certain way that we find agreeable to our personal lives and acceptance standards. It would be a good idea to have some ‘roughnecks’ on the team as well as some scholars and quiet types.”²² The work of Christ is a many splendored thing, and

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 30.

There are times when the man who is rough and ready will be fit for a particular task than the philosophical theorist and vice versa. For what purpose did Jesus choose the twelve apostles? Jesus chose these men to be with Him. This was not a revolutionary idea in his day for there are numerous instances in the Old Testament where men were trained for the work of God by association with other men of God.²³

God had the prophet Elijah choose Elisha to help him and carry on after he was gone.

Elijah found him in the field working (1 Kgs 19:15-16, 19). The disciples also were called from their daily work to go be with Jesus (Mt 4:18-22).

Elijah did not command Elisha to go with him or use his prophetic office to force him against his will into the ministry: “Every person must count the cost and enter into discipleship training willingly.”²⁴ In fact, from the record of their discussion, it appears that Elijah was perfectly willing to let Elisha bow out if he wanted to. If he was to collaborate with him, he must learn from him voluntarily (1 Kgs 19:19-21). According to Eims, “It cost Elisha something to follow Elijah. He had to kill his oxen, his means of livelihood—a final act of total commitment—and went with Elijah (I Kings 19:21).”²⁵ Elisha found himself serving Elijah: “It is true that those who lead must first learn to serve, and it is equally true that to train men a person must be willing to spend time with those men in hours of conversation and association in the normal affairs of life.”²⁶ At Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho, Elisha was given the opportunity to quit, but he chose to stay by Elijah’s side (2 Kgs 2:1-6). Eims concludes, “Elisha had counted the cost and determined that this was for him. So in your choice of men and subsequent association

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 31.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

with them in the ministry, it is imperative that you allow those men to get the mind of God on the matter, to know exactly what's involved, and to realize that you're getting together is not primarily for your benefit but for theirs."²⁷

Ortiz writes, "Here is the first law of discipleship: there is no formation without submission. Submission is so obvious in the Bible. 'Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ,' says Ephesians 5:21. 'Obey your leaders, and submit to them: for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account' (Hebrews 13:17)."²⁸ The second law of discipleship according to Ortiz is, "There is no submission without submission. The person giving commandments to his disciples must be under the command of someone himself. He rebukes his disciples—who rebukes him? There is no submission if there is not submission at every level."²⁹

Every pastor has in her congregation those who today are merely spectators in the Kingdom of God, but who would pay any price to be involved with her in the real heart of the ministry. But it will cost them, and "Such men need his sermons and instruction, but he will have to share his life with them and that costs."³⁰ The apostle John said, "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 Jn 3:16).

Eims writes, "Jesus ordained twelve men that they should be in association with him and that he might send them forth to preach. Jesus would send them forth to preach

²⁷ Ibid., 32.

²⁸ Ortiz, *Disciple*, 111.

²⁹ Ibid., 113.

³⁰ Eims, *The Lost Art of Disciple Making*, 34.

to the high Council of the Jews, to the philosophers of Athens, to the worshipers of idols, to the wild barbarians, to Roman soldiers, and to anyone and everyone who would listen.”³¹ Jesus knew his training had to be in depth because these men would face formidable opposition. They would be stoned in the streets, beaten badly and thrown into prison. The preparation was vital and “Jesus knew shallow training and halfhearted commitment would not stand the test. These disciples were saved to save others, but it would be a rough and rocky road most of the way.”³²

Jesus prepared them to face opposition and rejection. He commended them: “If any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them” (Mk 6:11). When training potential disciples, some of the trials and tribulations of the ministry that have been faced will affect in counting the cost of discipleship.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes, “The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is a result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ: we give our lives to death.”³³ He continues,

Every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lust. But we do not want to die, and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life. The call to discipleship means both death and life. Suffering, then, is the badge of true discipleship. . . . The disciple is not above his

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 89.

master. Following Christ's means suffering because we have to suffer. That is why Martin Luther reckoned suffering among the marks of the true church.³⁴

If Christians refuse to take up their cross and submit to suffering and rejection at the hands of men, they forfeit fellowship with Christ and have ceased to follow him: "The opposite of discipleship is to be ashamed of Christ and his cross and all the offense which the cross brings in its train. Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer."³⁵

Bonhoeffer continues, "Through the call of Jesus men become individuals. Every man is called separately, and must follow alone. It is Christ will that he should fix his eyes solely upon him."³⁶ Luke addresses this facet of discipleship: "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, brother and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk 14:26).

Bonhoeffer writes that culture provides contrary messages in terms of true discipleship. He writes, "The call of Jesus teaches us that our relation to the world has been built on an illusion. Now we learn that in the most intimate relationships of life, and our kinship with father and mother, brothers and sisters, and married love, and in our duty to the community, direct relationships are impossible."³⁷ Though all have to enter upon discipleship alone, they do not remain alone. The reward for taking Jesus at his word and daring to become individuals, is the fellowship of the Church. Bonhoeffer concludes, "As if to bring home to them how serious was his call, to show them how impossible it was to

³⁴ Ibid., 90, 91.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 94.

³⁷ Ibid., 96.

follow in their own strength, and to emphasize that adherence to him means persecutions, Jesus goes on before to Jerusalem and to the cross, and they are filled with fear and amazement at the road he calls them to follow.”³⁸

The editors of this edition wrote of Bonhoeffer, “It was his brotherly love of his fellow-men which also cause Bonhoeffer to believe that it was not enough to follow Christ by preaching, teaching, and writing. No, he was in deadly earnest when he called for the Christian action and self-sacrifice. A Christian has then no other choice, but to act, to suffer, and if it has to be, to die.”³⁹ Before Bonhoeffer’s death, he composed in prison, when he realized that death was certain, this poem, “Stations on the Road to Freedom:”

Come now, solemnest feast on the road to eternal freedom,
Death and destroy those fetters that bow, those walls that imprison
this our transient life, these souls that linger in darkness,
so that at last we see what is here withheld from our vision.
Long did we seek you, freedom, in discipline, action, and suffering.
Now that we, die in the face of God himself we behold you.⁴⁰

Bonhoeffer’s life and death give a great hope for the future. He set a model for discipleship inspired by the Gospel and ready for martyrdom. Yet, “there is a failed defect in the life of Christ’s church in the twentieth century: a lack of true discipleship. Discipleship means forsaking everything to follow Christ.”⁴¹ But for many of today’s supposed Christians, while there is much talk about Christ and even much activity, there is actually very little following of Christ Himself. James Boice writes, “That means in

³⁸ Ibid., 101.

³⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Christ’s Call to Discipleship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1986), 13.

some circles, there is very little genuine Christianity.”⁴² Many who fervently call Him “Lord, Lord” are not Christians (Mt 7:21). This is not surprising, because Jesus himself said that this would be the case. But this should be a cause for distress.

There are several reasons this is common in today’s Church. The first is “defective theology that has crept over us like a deadening fog. This theology separates faith from discipleship and grace from obedience. It teaches that Jesus can be received as one’s Savior without being received as one’s Lord. This is a common defect in times of prosperity.”⁴³ In days of hardship, particularly persecution, those in the process of becoming Christians count the cost of discipleship carefully before taking up the cross. Boice continues, “Preachers do not beguile them with false promises of an easy life or indulgence of sins. But in good times, prosperous times, the cost does not seem so high, and people take the name of Christ, without undergoing the radical transformation of life that true conversion implies.”⁴⁴ In these times, preachers often delude them with an easy faith in order to increase the numbers on their church rolls.

However, Dietrich Bonhoeffer called this erroneous theology “cheap grace.” He said, “Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, absolution without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living and incarnate.”⁴⁵ The contrast is “costly grace.” He writes,

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 14.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 44-45.

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye, which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him. . . . Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock. Such graces costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. He concludes, “Above all, it is costly because it cost God the life of his son: ‘ye were bought at a price,’ and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his Son to dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God.”⁴⁷

A.W. Tozer declared,

The doctrine of justification by faith, a biblical truth and a blessed relief from sterile legalism and unavailing self-effort, has in our time fallen into evil company and been interpreted by many in such manner as actually to bar men from the knowledge of God. The whole transaction of religious conversion has been made mechanical and spiritless. Faith may now be exercised without a jar to the moral life and without embarrassment to the Adamic ego. Christ may be received without creating any special love for him in the soul of the receiver. The man is saved, but he is not hungry or thirsty after God. In fact he is specifically taught to be satisfied and encouraged to be content with little.⁴⁸

It is not only a false theology that has encouraged this fatal lack of discipleship. The error is due to the absence of what older devotional writers called a “self-examined life.” Boice writes, “Most Westerners live in a tragically mindless environment. Life is too fast, and our contact with other persons too impersonal for any real thought or reflection. Even in

⁴⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ A.W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1948), 12-13.

the church we are far more often encouraged to join this committee, back this project, or serve on this board than we are counseled to examine our relationship to God and his son Jesus Christ.”⁴⁹ So long as people perform for the church, few question whether their profession is genuine. Sermons should suggest that members of a church may not actually be saved, although they are members: “Teachers should stress that a personal, self-denying, costly, and persistent following of Christ is necessary if a person is to be acknowledged by Jesus at the final day.”⁵⁰ In the absence of this teaching millions drift on, assuming that because they made verbal acknowledgment of Christ ten, twenty or thirty years ago and have done nothing terribly bad since, they are Christians; when actually they may be far from Christ, devoid of grace and in danger of perishing forever.

Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee when he saw two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew. He said, “Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19). At once they left their nets and followed him. Jesus went a bit farther and saw two more brothers, James and John; and he called them in a similar manner, and they too left their boats and followed Him. Following Jesus occurs thirteen times in the Gospels, and it is worth stressing how much is involved in the words “follow me.”

Boice continues in great detail what it means to follow Christ: “He gives us five elements of discipleship: obedience, repentance, submission, commitment, and perseverance. All this is to say that discipleship is not simply a door to be entered but a path to be followed and that the disciple proves the validity of his discipleship by following that path to the very end. The true disciple follows Jesus to the end of

⁴⁹ Boice, *Christ's Call to Discipleship*, 15.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

everything.”⁵¹ David wrote about it in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path,” and ends in verse 112, “My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.” To be a Christian is no light matter and “it is a call to a transformed life and to perseverance through whatever troubles arise. It may be the hardest thing anyone can do. Yet anyone can do it, with Christ supplying the necessary strength. In the end it is the only thing that really matters.”⁵²

This transformed life may look different in adolescent culture. In the twenty-first century, there are many models of adolescent discipleship. Young Life, Campus Crusade for Christ and Inter Varsity models are strategic in personal growth and enabled adherents to grow in Christ. There is this myth of the perfect model for adolescent discipleship, but relational ministry is what spurs transformation to become like him.

Duffy Robbins sees organization of a youth ministry like a funnel. His strategy incorporates many levels, including:

- Come Level - an initial contact with the program
- Grow Level - a willingness to attend programs where spiritual growth is involved
- Disciple Level - a desire to take the initiative for their own spiritual growth
- Develop Level - a willingness to assume responsibility for other students' spiritual growth
- Multiply Level - an ability to assume some responsibility for a personal ministry.⁵³

In this template for youth ministry programming, Robbins states:

For a youth program to be well-rounded, accomplishing the purpose for which it was designed, there must be some type of formal or informal programming that will meet the needs of kids at each of these levels of commitment. There needs to be Come Level programs, geared to the students who is not into religion at all,

⁵¹ Ibid., 22.

⁵² Ibid., 23.

⁵³ Dean, Clark, and Rahn, *Starting Right*, 112.

and there needs to be programs that will motivate the forward progress and growth of those at the Grow, Disciple and Develop levels.⁵⁴

Chap Clark also has a Funnel of Programming model that is outreach and incarnational. He writes, “The keywords for outreach level programming are: going, relationships, time, investment, and adventure. These describe the essence of the task of reaching out to the severely disinterested student, the one who will not, for one reason or another, come to any kind of Christian meeting.”⁵⁵

However, “While Clark’s funnel of programming looks similar to the model in Duffy Robbin’s *Youth Ministry That Works*, there are several significant differences between the two models:

- Entry Level - students are willing to show up at a “Christianized” event
- Community Building/Discipleship Level - willing to participate in Christian lifestyle and activities
- Intimate Relationship Level - students are willing to connect with others in meaningful relationship
- Mentoring Level - students are willing to be loved and led by an adult usually in small groups.⁵⁶

Dean, Clark and Rahn conclude:

The model chosen is not ultimately what is important. What does matter is that students are taken seriously where they are in their theological and sociological journey of individuation. The Outreach Level students need friends who will pursue them; Entry Level individuals need programming that is surprisingly relevant and friendly; and the Community Building/Discipleship Level students need to be taught the truth, led into deeper commitment to and community with the greater body of Christ, drawn in to intimate relationships, and ultimately mentored by an adult who is invested in them as an individual. This is what the funnel of programming is designed to facilitate. . . . The funnel of programming is not another model of youth ministry. It is a sociological, developmental, and

⁵⁴ Duffy Robbins, *Youth Ministry That Works* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1991), 79-80.

⁵⁵ Dean, Clark, and Rahn, *Starting Right*, 119.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 118 - 119.

foundationally theological template that enables youth workers to bring young people into the “fold of faith” in a way that honors, respects, and nurtures them while they go through this relatively wild adventure called adolescence. . . . The apostle Paul not only encouraged the followers of Christ to “be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity” (Colossians 4:5), he lived it.⁵⁷

This was the method of Jesus to share life as well as the Gospel. And, “In the incarnation, Jesus visited us, not allowing our disinterest or behavior to hold him back or cause him to question his love for us.”⁵⁸ Paul and Peter remind Christians to go with gentleness and respect as a peace offering communicating God’s tender mercy and unfailing kindness.

Clark continues, “Trust in the incarnate God and not proven models: Jesus Christ is the Lord, and he is therefore Lord over methods, strategies, programs, and models. As long as he reigns on the throne of our ministry, his kingdom will come!”⁵⁹ Rather than seeing discipleship as a methodical program, it is beneficial to view discipleship as a relationship where lives are modeled. Jesus was able to share his life with twelve disciples, but modeled what an intimate relationship with God looks like. Chuck Neder shares in *Starting Right* how to act wisely in relationships: “The Bible lays out a clear priority of relationships for the youth worker. First and foremost is his relationship with the Lord (Matthew 6:33). Under his Lordship all other human relationships are aligned: family, church, staff, parents, and kids. When youth workers’ relationships are growing and healthy, then they can think more clearly and act more wisely in all areas of

⁵⁷ Ibid., 121.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 122.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 124.

ministry.”⁶⁰ The youth worker who models and chooses to do what is necessary in wisdom, will also participate in equipping and discipling young people to face the stresses of the world in which they live. Many are finally recognizing what it means to be missional as they live out the call to go and “make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19).

Clark and Powell write,

The word disciple is often thought of as some sort of hyperspiritual word that belongs only to Christians. But on the contrary, it is a rather common Greek word that means “learner” or “student.” The concept of “discipleship” is a lifelong process of learning what it means to conform ourselves to the purposes of God and his kingdom. Youth workers are only part of the lifelong process of making disciples of Jesus Christ. . . . Make disciples who are lifelong followers of Jesus Christ, there are two dynamic implications we must keep in mind. First, we are compelled to humbly admit, although we may play important roles in the process in young believers’ lives, we will not be the primary discipling presence throughout their lives. At best we are partners for a specific season along with the body of Christ. Since making disciples is a lifelong process that includes many different people and experiences, it makes sense that we should seek to help students recognize that the local expression of that body, the local church, is the community that God has chosen to do his discipling work. In making disciples, the trajectory of our goal must be to represent the church as we assimilate students into the larger local body of Christ by the time they graduate from high school.⁶¹

Some youth workers ask: “Why isn’t discipleship working like it used to?”⁶²

Clark’s response is: “Instead of being concerned primarily about students’ attendance and knowledge, we would be better off if we centered our attention on the essence of discipling adolescents for the long haul in a world that has abandoned them, the church is their home.”⁶³ As believers live out their daily lives, they are called to walk alongside people who cross their paths. Neder has been in youth ministry for fifty years, the last

⁶⁰ Ibid., 344.

⁶¹ Ibid, 78.

⁶² Ibid., 79.

⁶³ Ibid.

thirty-five as executive director of Youth Conference Ministries formerly known as PFR Youth Ministry (Presbyterians for Renewal) and has been called to walk alongside thousands of people since his early years as a volunteer leader with Young Life. Neder has, “Influenced youth work in the church, especially the Presbyterian Church, through his direct work with students as well as his preaching and teaching. He also has taken a careful and deliberate look at the goal of youth ministry, considering how it needs to change in both the ministry he leads and youth ministry at large.”⁶⁴

Clark asked Neder, “What was the goal when you began your career in youth ministry,” to which he replied,

To get and keep a job and to get a lot of kids to come to my events. I have come to realize that what we had been teaching kids about the Christian faith was more about the outside than the inside. I never talked about the journey of faith or suffering or finding your identity by being a member of God’s diverse family. I wanted them to look like good Christians and say, “Hey, they’re my disciples.” I knew they were actually Jesus’ disciples, but I felt like I was the one who had somehow made their compliance happen while they were in my ministry.⁶⁵

Neder’s response to this question is no different than most youth workers in the past fifty years. However, he has discipled many for the past forty years. He has mentored many youth workers for more than thirty years at camps, and deeply cares for them. Many of the spiritual disciplines that are being used by youth workers are because of the teaching received under his leadership.

In the Fuller Doctor of Ministry course, “Spiritual Development of Adolescents,” the cohort asked, “Just What is Adolescent Spirituality?” Each member of the cohort attempted to define “spirituality” and “Christian spirituality.” Clark writes, “Spirituality

⁶⁴ Ibid., 80.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 81.

is the pursuit of something spiritual in one's life, however one defined spiritual. Christian spirituality is pursuing a life of union in Christ. The massive difference comes from being created in the image of God. Christocentric is being transformed by the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁶

For example, it took years for Jacob and Esau to be reconciled and to grow in spirituality. Reconciliation is the work of God in the world. Amy Jacober writes, “Reconciliation doesn't just happen. It takes time and effort, and it takes the transformative work of Jesus himself.”⁶⁷ Jacob finds God and submits his life to humbly pursue reconciliation with his brother. She continues,

We might begin to think of Jacob as a practical theologian, and his reconciliation with his brother the ministry that pours out of his theology. Practical theology takes place when human experience and theological reflection intermingle. . . . Youth ministry over the years has put much emphasis on studying, analyzing, and learning adolescent culture. This work has often been motivated by a desire to better minister to adolescents. Yet in the process youth ministers have traditionally not been encouraged to take theology seriously. Thankfully this is changing.⁶⁸

This chapter addressed the cost of discipleship not only for the one being disciple, but the one providing discipleship. It addressed challenged specific to the adolescent context. Chapter 6 will define how the Church and in particular, youth ministry leaders are servants and encouragers through times of adversity and how spiritual growth matters in the Christian journey.

⁶⁶ Clark, “Spiritual Development of Adolescents,” 1-2.

⁶⁷ Amy Jacober, *The Adolescent Journey: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Practical Youth Ministry*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 11.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

PART THREE
STRATEGY

CHAPTER 6

THE ROLE OF CHURCH & YOUTH LEADERS IN ENCOURAGING GROWTH IN THE FAMILY OF GOD

During the easy days of life Christians can, with conscious effort, climb up several steps of Christian maturity. Eventually, everyone will reach a barrier and be unable to grasp deeper spiritual truths or walk more intimately with the Lord. In God's order of things, levels of spiritual maturity are available only to those who have faced adversity. Easy days are pleasant, but can lead to spiritual stagnation.

My family was reared in a home that encouraged church participation. During this time, my relationship with Christ began at a Young Life camp in 1974. College and seminary fell into place. A wonderful young lady fell in love with me and life was like a fairytale. We loved God, but we never knew some mysteries about him because the days were easy. Deeper growth waited on adversity. After five years of marriage, the fairytale ended. Our first son was stillborn, and we wept and cried to God for understanding.

In God's plan the greatest life goal is to bring glory to Him. This goal far outshines the shallow goals of being comfortable or happy. If Christians hunger to walk more intimately with Him, they mentally welcome challenges and pain as opportunities for growth.

Christians live in a fallen universe where pain and problems are the norm. Beyond comprehension God allows sin and its consequences to affect others. Losing our firstborn caused us to be angry and frustrated about the hard time we encountered. Phyllis and I chose to use this period as a time of growth. God deeply cared about our situation and friends who suffer pain. There is a story in the Old Testament of a young man who was forgotten in prison: “Joseph was in prison for two years and had plenty of time to grow bitter and cynical listening for God yet hearing nothing but silence.”¹ Joseph waited patiently for the prison master to come for twenty-four months and remained hopeful. Though not in prison, many may wait on God to answer their prayers. One of the classic verses in Scripture is Psalm 46:10, “Be still and know that I am God:” Max Lucado writes, “We can rest because God is busy and He never stops caring for His children.”²

All humanity is desperately looking for someone to love them unconditionally. Young people want to be accepted and valued even when they mess up. Youth who have watched parents walk away want a love that will last. In order to encourage students, church pastors must concentrate on making their love unconditional. Church ministry leaders must choose to love the student who may not be involved in anything at church as much as the one who serves and attends all the mission projects.

Robbins writes:

In youth ministry we aren't content with just defining teenage discipleship; we want to make it happen. That takes a long-term investment of nurture. Our mandate is to reach out and touch. We reach out to students to bring them into relationship with Christ. We help them to become strong and established in that

¹ Max Lucado, *You'll Get Through This: Hope and Help for Your Turbulent Times* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson), 61.

² *Ibid.*, 63.

relationship. Then we equip them to go out and reproduce that process of nurture in the life of another person.³

A ministry of nurture must have “arms wide enough to bring new kids into its embrace. The core of any ministry of nurture is relationships. If we’re completely honest, we would have to admit that this doesn’t come easy for many of us.”⁴ The job of the youth worker is to reach out and love people in Jesus’ name. This nurture will take plenty of commitment, energy and time.

The key in encouraging others is:

Talking about the hand and the heart that turn the wrench. If we don’t begin working from the inside out, we are in danger of functioning like an artificial fireplace flame - it’s quiet; it’s clean; there are never ashes or scorch marks; but neither is there any warmth. The warm heart makes a ministry work. We need church leaders and youth workers exercising their spiritual gifts because their hearts are stoked by the grace of Christ.⁵

Youth workers who are dedicated to Jesus Christ are able to offer unconditional love to their youth and will experience a noticeable change in ministry effectiveness. Church leaders and youth workers are not squeaky-clean people, but are to be encouragers through the good and the bad. There will be messy times.

Robbins again writes that, “Effective ministry comes not just through greater efficiency, but through Ephesians 2:8-9: For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works,

³ Duffy Robbins, *The Ministry of Nurture: A Youth Worker’s Guide to Discipling Teenagers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House), 179.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁵ Duffy Robbins, *Youth Ministry Nuts and Bolts: Mastering the Ministry Behind the Scenes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House), 19.

which God prepared in advance for us to do.”⁶ God’s grace enables Christians to love and offer themselves as living sacrifices for the people they are commissioned to lead.

Robbins continues, “The greenest of rookie volunteers and the most sage veterans of youth work have wondered if they are, in fact, suited to this perilous quest.”⁷ Youth ministry begins with people who need to be reminded that any ministry happens through God’s grace, and He has gifted the called with strength to be faithful to him. Being faithful to Christ is the most important responsibility church leaders have.

The New Testament gives no evidence that the lists of spiritual gifts appearing in 1 Corinthians 12 and in Romans 12 are exhaustive. Robbins has observed, “That many youth workers are discovering that they exhibit spiritual gifts that are every bit as vital as they are nontraditional. God has not chosen us for any merit that we possess, but we have been chosen for strength and heart and wits as we have.”⁸ Given the responsibility to lead others means being faithful and teachable, and earning the trust of leadership. Mike Yaconelli, the co-founder of Youth Specialties, “suggests that a number of spiritual gifts have been overlooked and underappreciated when it comes to youth ministry.”⁹ To read more on these underappreciated gifts refer to Appendix B.

The job of the youth leaders is to not make assumptions about anyone, but to be an encourager through all situations. Being kind to students and crossing into their culture

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., 21-27.

takes courage for everyone who love others unconditionally. The church family is critical in encouraging others every time they see one another.

Many church ministry leaders stand firm, often with great sacrifice, in good works anchored by the exhortations that come from the pages of the New Testament. Robert Lewis offers such exhortations in his *The Church of Irresistible Influence*. These can be found in Appendix C. These Scriptures are important for church and youth ministry leaders to memorize and live out in their daily lives. Every congregation should strive to become a Body of believers living the truths of Scripture as best as possible.

A fitting description for the Church today would look something like this: “A community of people who stand firm in the truth over time against raging currents of opposition and who present living proof of a loving God to a watching world.”¹⁰ While that may not describe many churches today, it could serve as a textbook definition for the Church of the first century. The New Testament Church shared many cultural similarities with today. It too lived in a world filled with skeptics.

Robert Lewis writes, “For a number of reasons, the lifeless gods and goddesses of the Greeks and Romans became less and less a prevailing force in the lives of the ancients. As the economic prosperity flourished, the souls of everyday men and women increasingly descended into a meaningless poverty.”¹¹ Believers stood firm. Christians embraced the Word, living it out in word and deed. Proclamation was more a matter of essence in life and death than it was in words.

¹⁰ Robert Lewis, *The Church of Irresistible Influence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 41.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

Lewis continues, “During the two great plagues that swept the Roman Empire in the years A.D. 165 and 251, killing a third of the population each time shows the willingness of Christians to care for one another.”¹² Christians were on public display, and pagans tried to avoid all contact with the afflicted, often casting the living into the gutters. Christians, on the other hand, nursed the sick, even though some died doing so. Christians also were visible and valuable during the frequent natural and social disasters afflicting “the Greco-Roman world: earthquakes, famines, floods riots civil wars, and invasions. Even in healthier times, the pagan Emperor, Julian, noted the followers of The Way support not only their poor, but ours as well.”¹³ The Church helped widows, orphans, prisoners and cared for the sick in cities stricken with famine and disease.

He continues, “We would go beyond being seeker-sensitive, to a new frontier of being community-admired. Will we be known, not just by the corner we inhabit, but by the city with which we interact? People would be drawn to God, not because of the weekly show in our churches, but by the irrefutable lifestyles we incarnate.”¹⁴ Many churches today are about a production instead of following Christ.

On both sides of postmodernity, there is a growing emptiness in mainline churches. For the Church, it is due to a lack of radical, courageous and sacrificial faith. Denominations are failing because very few courageous and radical believers in love with Jesus are willing to fight for truth any longer. The world is headed down a slippery slope of ungodliness: “If our Christianity is real, let’s live it. For the world, this emptiness is

¹² Ibid., 45.

¹³ Ibid., 46.

¹⁴ Ibid., 48.

from a lack of captivating, life-giving proof: if your Christianity is real, let's see it."¹⁵

Men and women who love Jesus and are willing to sacrifice all that they have are needed to lead the churches of the twenty-first century.

A bridge is needed, to have the mind of Christ and to think his thoughts will require transparency. Lewis continues, "A church is often an island. Not only does it fail to construct bridges to the world, but it doubts even the possibility of such a difficult and costly work."¹⁶ The Church has been exiled from its true purpose. It focuses on programs, good psychology and creating images, all of which are helpful and well meaning, but are fueled for the purpose of continuing introspection.

Church members who desperately need to live lives of purpose have little to look at but each other. Most youth ministry and church leaders know that a bridge changes everything, and need to reach out and become involved in the lives of others. The role of church and youth ministry leaders is to move the flock from personal agendas to Kingdom causes: "The movement from preoccupied self-absorption to radical and sacred self-giving—is the movement of faith in the real world and to the real world."¹⁷ These are the very places where ministry and life get messy. This move to sacred self-giving requires a humble leader who is full of encouragement and willing to take risks.

To care for a congregation and help them live like Christ is, by itself, a daunting task for any church; "But add to that the challenge of finding ways to transition them into areas of effective service can seem overwhelming, especially when they balk, at the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 91.

¹⁷ Ibid., 93.

critical ideas of sacrifice, discipline, and giving.”¹⁸ Today the Church needs to make an investment of developing a process that equips people to serve better, not just live better. According to Lewis, “If not, we doom them to a self-focused immaturity and the church to the sidelines of the community.”¹⁹ Just to join a church requires personal hurdles of fear, confusion, and isolation. Every newcomer ventures into the strange land of the church asking questions: “What are these people here really like? Will I fit in? Will I make friends? Will I be accepted? Will I like it? Will there be a place for me?”²⁰ These are very real and personal obstacles in making the transition to becoming part of a local church community.

At First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge, there are roadblocks that one must personally overcome in order to transition into and embrace ministry. If these roadblocks remain unaddressed, new members will be passive and passionless participants in the church community. Lewis continues, “Fear may be the biggest enemy to personal ministry, and a large part of leadership’s responsibility will be in helping people move through it.”²¹ If the church became serious about penetrating the community with God’s love, it would be costly not only to loved ones, but to their serene sense of identity.

With ministry, change is inevitable and constant, and personal sacrifices are costly: “The church is never ours, but always his. The God of the Cosmos, wants us to build bridges to the real world. He never intended the church to live the lifestyle of

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 94.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 95.

islanders.”²² The emotion that lurks quietly is fear. Fear and not love are the realities driving most churches. There is fear of the unknown and fear of inadequacy paralyzing the church community, and this “isolation breeds and multiplies fear, propelling the imagination to envision the world as even more threatening than it really is.”²³ Churches are dying and closing because of isolation and fear.

Lewis rights, “When God called Moses to address the squalid conditions of Israel in that oppressive community called Egypt, Moses balked. He balked because of his personal fear of inadequacy.”²⁴ Moses said to God in Exodus 3:11, “Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?” The question “Who am I” is every believer’s nemesis when considering the call to personal ministry. Many church members’ lack of preparation and training disqualify them from serving: “This is a fear generated by a sense of unworthiness or what we perceive as a lack of ability or both.”²⁵ Moses, of course, could identify on both counts. This fear of inadequacy often defeats followers of Jesus, and it is why fortresses are built around churches. Many churches would sooner give money to missionaries than give themselves to their communities.

The Church must believe the words of Jesus: “If you wish to find your life, you must first lose it” (Mt 10:39). Many believers are frozen at the thought of giving themselves wholly to ministry: “Yet the cross has always been a tough sell. So how does one dispel the paralyzing fear that grips so many believers and convince the church that

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 96.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid., 97.

the abundant life resides only through the mystery of the cross, through losing yourself in love for others?”²⁶

One means First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge has used is the power of testimony. Few things are more helpful in explaining vision than hearing from some elderly church members; ninety-five-year-old Sue Spaht and her eighty-eight-year-old sister Margery Fabre shared recently with their Bible study how serving the Community Outreach meal in the church gymnasium has blessed them immensely. These are ordinary people, who have conquered their fears, and picked up their crosses in service to Jesus. These two women and several hundred others from First Presbyterian Church have persevered through trials and errors, and in time, found meaningful and even strategic use of their gifts and lives. By hearing these stories of encouragement, people not yet on the launching pad receive a glimpse of what it means to live in the shadow of the cross.

Through the power of testimony, the mystery, and much of the fear, of serving and engaging community is gone. Through stories, “church members come to understand the great cost of ministry, and even more important, it’s even greater reward: real, deep joy.”²⁷ The kind of joy Hebrews 12:2 talks about when it states that Christ, “for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Lewis continues, “For too long the church has been trying to turn people into something they are not and it only fuels their fears of inadequacy.”²⁸

Anything done in the name of Christ and in the name of love is ministry. Passion for

²⁶ Ibid., 98.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 99.

reading and tutoring at schools, feeding the homeless, visiting the elderly, sports ministry camps, community development, politics, caring for the unborn and helping at shelters be potential areas of ministry. Lewis concludes, “By enlarging the concept of what ministry means, the fear of ‘who am I?’ often dissolves, replaced first with something like, ‘You’re kidding,’ and then with an excitement of possibility and expectation.”²⁹

The Church must provide exposure for members by programming opportunities into its yearly calendar. In so doing, it gives fearful people a feel for the different kinds of ministry that are out there, but in a short and safe context. It also gives them a personal experience of their own to go along with the stories they keep hearing about from other church members. This empowers people; “Empowering others takes place within a context of caring and a context of love. The Holy Spirit is our ‘empowerer,’ the one who gives us the power to live out the gospel.”³⁰ Empowering others likely entails increasing the economic resources of underprivileged individuals and communities. But material resources are not the immediate or even ultimate focus of empowerment.

Wayne Gordon and John Perkins write:

In the Bible, two principles appear to be in tension with each other. On the one hand, caring for the poor, the weak and vulnerable, the disenfranchised, the outcast, or those who are grieving or struggling in some way is clearly a high-priority agenda item for followers of Christ. But on the other hand, the Bible consistently requires those in need to participate in their recovery to the extent they are able.³¹

²⁹ Ibid., 100.

³⁰ Wayne Gordon and John M. Perkins, *Making Neighborhoods Whole: a Handbook for Christian Community Development* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press), 152.

³¹ Ibid., 153.

First, there must be opportunity for people to get their needs met. Humanity has a moral responsibility to look out for others. Life is not all about acquiring and keeping. God wants people to share. Second, the person who has the need must be willing to work for what they get. In the Old Testament, the widow, alien, orphan or poor person had to go into the farmer's field and pick up the crops they needed or wanted. They had to work or otherwise, they would go without.

Peter and John in Acts 3 were on their way to the temple and saw a man who was crippled from birth who gets their attention and asks for money. Peter says, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Peter shared not wealth but the power of God. He did not go in fear to the temple; but he went in the power of Jesus Christ. As the Church encourages one another, the mission to serve is not to go in fear.

However, "Fear is one of those 'Goliaths' that stalks the church and keeps many from believing they can personally contribute to bridge building. But with the power of a story, a broader more biblical understanding of ministry, and periodic first-hand ministry exposures, this giant can be brought down."³² Having walked a son through college graduation and into the workforce, it is clear how confusing and fearful this life transition can be. There is the fear of the unknown, and what to do next. Andrew needed encouragement as he searched for public relations' internships. He landed a six-month internship in Washington, DC because his parents encouraged him.

Every major transition in life needs a process to clear away the fog and create forward momentum. One question he might have thought of, "How do I make sense of all

³² Lewis, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*, 100.

that's about to happen to me? How do I make good decisions? What do I do?"³³ It is not just a matter of "what can I do?" but of "what do I want to do? What really excites me?" When it comes to serving the Kingdom, these are the vital, crucial questions. No one wants to merely put in time: "People want purpose, meaning, and fulfillment in their serving. Anything less will feel like Israel's 'forced labor' in Egypt: empty, oppressive. And anything less will not propel people through the inevitable pain and difficulty that comes from time to time in having a ministry."³⁴ Church members who give their time as volunteers want to know that this energy used for the Kingdom will be well spent.

Paul exhorted the Church not just to do good works, but to do good works "according to the grace given us" (Rom 12:6). God has uniquely designed every believer with different gifts and abilities aimed specifically at different functions. Brennan Manning shares, "The only possible way to move out of our obsessive self-awareness and into the life of Christ is to surrender ourselves and let God be God."³⁵ Every believer has to surrender and search for God's truth hidden deep within: belonging to God; "This loving awareness of being the child of the Father moves us out of a life spent pursuing our desires and frees us to pursue the kingdom of God."³⁶ The cure for selfishness is to develop discerning hearts and go in the grace given us.

Manning continues by sharing, "When the church puts on the mind of Christ and focuses their thinking and behavior on the kingdom of God, they can begin evaluating

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 102.

³⁵ Brennan Manning, *The Importance of Being Foolish: How to Think Like Jesus* (New York: Harper Collins), 130.

³⁶ Ibid., 130.

their choices, their decisions, and their motivations with new clarity.”³⁷ This process of focusing on Jesus involves an effort to break away from addictions. Everyone has at least one addiction and my obsession is Louisiana State University sports. This kind of focus cannot happen without a daily decision to surrender to the Holy Spirit. Every day sports come into my brain, and choosing to surrender to the call of the Spirit is a difficult challenge. The ability to surrender is a gift from God: “Our dedication to growth is the single most important determinant of our spiritual development.”³⁸ Without an intense inner commitment, the surrender to the mind of Christ will not happen. The mind of Christ must be the most treasured value in the believer’s life. It is God’s will that believers grow in holiness, “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life” (2 Thes 4:7).

By coming to this realization and appreciation of how God has wired each individual overall, one can more fully grasp the range of personal ministry options. Church leaders can encourage their flock to remember they are “fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14) by their Creator. Each person belongs to God and has a unique purpose to a particular ministry.

Henri Nouwen recounts the commissioning of Peter by Jesus:

Before Jesus commissioned Peter to be a shepherd, he asked him, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?” He asked him again, “Do you love me?” And a third time he asked: “Do you love me?” (John 21:15-17). We have to hear that question as being central to all of our Christian ministry because

³⁷ Ibid., 132.

³⁸ Ibid., 135.

it is the question that can allow us to be, at the same time, irrelevant and truly self-confident.³⁹

He continues, “In our world of loneliness and despair, there is an enormous need for men and women who know the heart of God, a heart that forgives, cares, reaches out, and wants to heal. It is a heart that wants only to give and receive love in response.”⁴⁰ This sounds simple but few people know that they are loved without any conditions or limits.

Nouwen continues, “This unconditional and unlimited love is what the evangelist John calls God’s first love.”⁴¹ John writes, “Let us love, because God loved us first” (1 Jn 4:19). But there are limitations to love: “The love that often leaves us doubtful, frustrated, angry, and resentful is the second love, that is to say, the affirmation, affection, sympathy encouragement, and support we receive from our parents, teachers, spouses, and friends. We all know how limited, broken, and very fragile that love is.”⁴² As unconditionally loved people, “the good news is the second love is only a broken reflection of the first love and that the first love is offered to us by God in whom there are no shadows.”⁴³ God love without any strings attached, and as Neder always says in his sermons, “God loves us just the way we are, and not the way we should be.”

From Jesus’ heart flow streams of living water. He cries out in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me! Let anyone who believes in me come and drink” (Jn

³⁹ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company), 36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 40.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

7:37-38). Matthew recounts, “Come to me, all you who labor and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls” (Mt 11:28-29). Nouwen continues, “From that heart come the words, ‘Do you love me?’ Knowing the heart of Jesus and loving him are the same thing. When we live in the world with that knowledge, we cannot do other than bring healing, reconciliation, new life, and hope wherever we go.”⁴⁴ The desire to make a splash and be known will disappear, and “our only desire will be the same with our whole being to our brothers and sisters, you are loved.”⁴⁵

Later in the same book Nouwen writes, “After having asked Peter three times, ‘Do you love me?’ Jesus says, ‘Feed my lambs, look after my sheep, feed my sheep.’ Having been assured of Peter’s love, Jesus gives him the task of ministry.”⁴⁶ When Jesus speaks about shepherding, he does not describe a brave, lonely shepherd who takes care of a large flock of obedient sheep; “First of all, Jesus sends out the twelve in pairs (Mk 6:7). It is often forgotten that we are being sent out two-by-two. We cannot bring good news on our own. We are called to proclaim the gospel together, in community. There is a divine wisdom here.”⁴⁷ It is difficult to be truly faithful when alone. Many of the faithful speak about the struggles they encounter in remaining pure in mind, heart and body, or as Nouwen writes, “Indeed, whenever we minister together, it is easy for people

⁴⁴ Ibid., 41.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 57.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 58.

to recognize that we do not come in our own name, but in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ who sent us.”⁴⁸ God wants Christians to serve in community.

Nouwen continues, “Somehow we have come to believe that good leadership requires a safe distance from those we are called to lead. Medicine, psychiatry and social work all offer us models in which ‘service’ takes place in a one way direction. Someone serves, someone else is being served, and be sure not to mix up the roles.”⁴⁹ For the past year, Angola Prison has been a sanctuary on numerous occasions, where leadership requires sacrifice, not distance. Baton Rouge is seventy-five miles from Angola prison, and it would be easy to make excuses to not want to go and love unconditionally the chaplain and his flock of 6,352 incarcerated men.

At Angola, lives are intertwined by the desire to grow deeper in Christ and in choosing this, friendships inside the walls enters into an incredible personal relationship. Nouwen addresses this: “Laying down your life means making your own faith and doubt, joy and sadness, courage and fear available to others as ways of getting in touch with the Lord of life.”⁵⁰ Realizing, this vessel is weak and vulnerable enables a heart to choose to love incarcerated men unconditionally. Every time the church enters the walls of Angola prison, the Body of Christ has “chosen to make our own limited and very conditional love the gateway for the unlimited and unconditional love of God.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 59.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 62.

The question arises, “What kind of an impact is the church having in serving outside our ivory towers?” Another question that comes to mind every Monday evening before driving to Angola prison is, “What difference can I make tonight?” Philosophical questions about impact are best answered theologically. Certainly the early church had cause to question their impact personally and ultimately. They were at best, a miniscule band of disciples, and even if they made a difference, they had to find out exactly how that happened. Robert Lewis writes, “The truth is, the disciples never proceeded with a view to success.”⁵² Nowhere in Scripture is success the objective. The early church gave themselves “relentlessly to the ancient world, which they knew was passing away. The early church invaded it, served it, and enriched it with their good works.”⁵³ Early Christians saw themselves entrusted by God with a calling to faithfulness and a duty to service. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, “So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”

Early Christians measured success by how they loved others in bringing glory to God. Whether they employed their gifts or gave up their lives, success was simply glorifying the Lord. First Peter 4:10-11, declares: “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen.”

⁵² Lewis, *The Church of Irresistible Influence*, 106.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

Asking what difference the Church can make is the wrong question. The question should be, “What stewardship has God called the church to render? This is all that will matter in eternity.”⁵⁴ When the Church makes excuses and says, it will not do any good, there needs to be a reminder of what good is. If God has been glorified, the Church has done well. Bringing glory to God is all that matters to the Savior of this world.

My position at First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge is in calling people to build a bridge with the community and overcome fear, confusion, lack of direction and questions of impact. Through the help of the church in the transforming experience of many people, the membership will be moved from passive spectating and personal agendas to passionate commitment and Kingdom causes.

Manning ends his writing in *The Importance of Being Foolish* by sharing a story of wanting to be like St. Francis of Assisi for only one hour: “In the early days of the Franciscan Order, when the friars were unacquainted with the psalms, they asked Francis in great simplicity how they should pray. He answered, pray in this way – we adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, and we praise you, because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.”⁵⁵ From his conversion to his death, Francis was preoccupied in both mind and heart with Jesus Christ crucified in the power and wisdom of God. Manning writes, “The cross was the cause of his poverty, the source of his perfect joy, and the soul of his

⁵⁴ Ibid., 107.

⁵⁵ Manning, *The Importance of Being Foolish*, 161.

transparency.”⁵⁶ Francis lived his life in simplicity and poverty because of his unconditional love for the Savior Jesus Christ.

The role of church leaders in encouraging spiritual growth to their congregations will have to build a bridge by becoming transparent and sharing real fears, deep feelings of inadequacy, problems and difficulties, yet because of courage and persistence, have run unexpectedly towards success.

In the final chapter, the discussion on how to prepare for any disaster will be explained in incredible detail. Due to the experiences in the past century, the churches in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Texas have learned many lessons especially from hurricanes and flooding. This chapter will not be exhaustive, but hopefully will be an encouragement on what to do before, during and after a disaster.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 162.

CHAPTER 7

HOW TO PREPARE FOR ANY DISASTER

Pastors must learn how to respond when a crisis comes to the church community they belong to. The flock is looking for leadership in the midst of a disaster. Admittedly, I have not always handled difficulties well. Experience has taught me a number of things the past forty years of walking and working with the family of God.

Five lessons are learned from the outset of a crisis. The first lesson is to slow down. The general tendency is to speed up, but haste is not best. Initially, the need to move quickly and put out some initial flames may be necessary, but as much as possible, slow down long enough to think before reacting. The second lesson is do not panic. The team's emotions will almost always be an exaggerated version of the leader's emotions. If the leader appears hopeless, the team's emotions will appear even more hopeless.

The third lesson is to get a plan. After addressing the most pressing needs, this will bring a sense of calm to the team. Backing away long enough to create a plan of recovery could be the best exit plan the team can develop, but either way there has to be a plan. In crisis mode, this plan sometimes seems like a waste of time. The thought is that if the ship is sinking, keep bailing water. Getting a plan in place makes the difference in the

quality of leadership through the crisis. The fourth lesson is to navigate carefully. Once a plan is in place, it needs to be implemented. Being the coach, cheerleader, bottle washer, captain of the ship at this point will keep the team on task toward the end goal.

Finally, the fifth lesson is to help the community recover. After the dust settles from the crisis, the leader's job is not complete until the church family and the community recovers. This involves learning from what happened, making adjustments as needed and helping the church family begin again.

In the best scenarios, this thought process begins to happen even during crisis mode, giving the church family some hope of better days to come. Every community hopes to avoid those days of crisis. However, it helps to have a plan how to respond if or when a disaster ever comes.

The pastors of First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge quickly learned that they were unprepared for the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. First Presbyterian quickly assimilated all of the resources as a church body, and opened the doors to hundreds of Entergy workers and sixty-five US marshals to sleep in the gymnasium, youth building and the sanctuary within twenty-four hours of the disaster. The church family fed them, washed hundreds of towels daily and took care of all the necessities that were needed for the next few months.

When this disaster hit home, the pastors and key church leaders assembled and came up with priorities that mattered immediately. Opening the church for families in immediate need was the beginning. Power went down in 95 percent of the city, yet the church's power grid came back on quickly due to being in downtown Baton Rouge.

Dividing the church family by zip codes quickly enabled church leaders to begin driving

to check on the members of the flock, especially the elderly. Anyone needing assistance immediately was the primary concern of church leadership.

Before any disaster comes, preparation is the key. Every member of the church family is strongly encouraged to create their own disaster plan of action. The final decision of any action taken during a real emergency is the sole responsibility of the person involved. Putting together a disaster plan before it comes enables a local church body to assist greatly once a disaster occurs. Coming together to make a disaster plan had never crossed the minds of the Session, the governing body of the church, before Katrina. Everyone on staff was called into immediate action to demonstrate unconditional love to new neighbors who moved into downtown Baton Rouge overnight.

Appendix D contains, with permission, many of the insights that we learned through the course of Hurricane Katrina. This final chapter has not been exhaustive by any means, but it is the beginning of preparing for any crisis or natural disasters. There are plenty of ideas to offer churches around the world, and certainly, much can be learned from each other, and what works when a natural disaster occurs in a community.

The strategy that our youth ministry took from January 2006 until May 2014 has been to introduce students and adults what it means to be a servant leader and love others unconditionally. First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge has served in the New Orleans community for the past nine summers, and will continue to love and serve others until the city has been completely rebuilt. This task is difficult to measure, but at least one thousand Baton Rouge students and adults have served in the Hollygrove neighborhood and throughout New Orleans. It has been a joy to love and to care for those who were

brokenhearted, but have now seen the joy of the Lord on the faces of each servant from this community.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In 2 Corinthians 1:1-11, Paul writes,

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God in Corinth, together with all the saints throughout Achaia: grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. We do not want you to be uninformed brothers about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Douglas Kelly writes, “From time to time God does call every true servant of his to go through dark places.”¹ Every one suffers for many reasons, and in this passage, Paul mentions the value of difficulty and suffering in the service of Christ.

First, “we learn the value of suffering for the Lord, when a man or woman of God is faithfully serving him.”² Thousands upon thousands of God’s true servants experienced the dark places of Hurricane Katrina. Words cannot describe the pain that was felt in the lives of many. Such faithful suffering connected the believers throughout the world in an especially close way during the months after the devastation of Katrina. Everyone identified with someone going through some hurt, and it was then that God comforted

¹ Douglas F. Kelly, *New Life in the Wasteland* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2003), 24.

² *Ibid.*, 25.

tribulation and distress. Servants from all over this country have felt this intense pain as they worked side-by-side during the cleanup of Hurricane Katrina.

Second, “suffering for the Lord in his service brings a new revelation of who God really is.”³ There are certain things about God, which believers can only learn experientially, and primarily through hard times. God may not call believers to go through devastation again, but the effects of hurricane Katrina will remain forever. Sometimes God has to let followers mature and through some difficulties before he can use them more widely.

Third, “in verses 4-6, we learn that Christ’s death as it works in us gives us new power to comfort others.”⁴ It is those who have been through a particular experience that can often help others the most. During the aftermath of Katrina, something was done to give survivors an authority from God to put strength and light in other people. It has been good to had experienced Hurricane Katrina, knowing that I might know how to speak a word in season to one that is weary.

Last, “in verses 8-9, suffering with and for Christ has a way of killing our self-centered thinking and leaving room for us to trust God who raises the dead.”⁵ Sometimes God has to let every door slam. Otherwise believers might have only relied on intelligence, family, money or other source. Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf coast and suddenly, every door was closed, and everyone was at the end of their resources. There is just one door, and his name is Jesus Christ. If anything is to happen in this life, it will be

³ Ibid., 26.

⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵ Ibid., 29.

because God must be in charge. When believers realize that they cannot do anything of their own strength, they can see that God will have to do everything.

When exhaustion from the heat during the past nine years hits my body from hurricane relief work, rarely do I feel religious or see that the Lord Jesus is working. It might even seem as if God is doing so much more for those that oppose the work. But it is just at those times, when followers do not feel it or see it, that God is doing tremendous things. A power that is far greater than all the forces of death and destruction, and that is able to revive the situation is done in the resurrection power of Jesus Christ.

One of the situations that allowed healing to begin in New Orleans was the repair of the Superdome in 2006. The state poured nearly all of its resources into rehabilitating a destroyed building from Hurricane Katrina. The Gulf Coast community rallied around the idea of repairing this building as a symbol of hope that the city would return. Much work went into the Superdome being completed for the first home game of the 2006 season.

On the Saturday before the New Orleans Saints hosted the Atlanta Falcons in September 2006, coach Sean Payton switched the practice venue to the Superdome. When the team walked under the lights, there was a hush over the entire team. Drew Brees had never set foot in the Superdome, let alone played there. For all the returning team members, this was their first time in the Superdome post-Katrina. Payton wanted the team to experience the feel of the Superdome before the first game. Brees writes in his book,

It was emotional for the New Orleans Saints to walk onto the field and see how much work had been done to repair the Superdome. New seats have been installed for broken ones, all the video screens had been replaced, and new turf had been put in. Standing on the field going through our drills, the New Orleans Saints couldn't help but think about what had happened here a year earlier. People had

died at the Superdome, and in some ways the spot was like a refugee camp for a long time. The pictures of water dripping from the ceiling, people huddled together under blankets, sleeping on cots scattered across the field where we now stood was heart wrenching. Outside the dome, thousands of people had search for loved ones or scoured through the trash for something to drink or eat. The fact that this was happening in the United States shocked everyone. With that history fresh in our minds, we felt an added sense of responsibility. Not only do we need to win Monday night, we needed to play the entire season for the people of New Orleans, who had lived through so much. The way I saw it, there was really no other choice. We had to win. And we had to keep winning because we knew what that would mean to our fans. In some small way, it was our contribution of hope.⁶

As everyone found out, the New Orleans Saints crushed the Atlanta Falcons that night and the hope for the city of New Orleans was felt everywhere in the nation. Friends were calling me about how I felt. As emotional as our family was watching the game, the work was just beginning to heal this great community from devastation.

For one solid year (September 2005 till September 2006), our church family spent one hundred days in New Orleans, and the overwhelming feeling was we still had a long way to go for restoration. Nine years later, the homes in the city have come back stronger than ever because of the power of Jesus Christ that has enabled thousands upon thousands to serve Him and love others unconditionally. Of course, the process of rebuilding the residents will be a task that will continue for many years. Over 150,000 residents have never returned to New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina.

The strategy of this paper has been to be as candid about what a disaster can do to the heart of a man who loves his community and state with a passion. The joy of this experience has been loving others in the Body of Christ for all around the world. The students and adults from First Presbyterian Church Baton Rouge who have served the

⁶ Drew Brees, *Coming Back Stronger: Unleashing the Hidden Power of Adversity* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2010), 154-155.

past nine years have truly been angels from above. At the time of this writing, the joy of serving will continue in Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Romania, and throughout the Middle East, especially in Egypt. My heart will forever be passionate to love others with the good news of Jesus Christ no matter where the Savior has me.

APPENDIX A

Who Is This Resource For?

The person who is studying spiritual development of adolescence may ask questions like:

When can a person knowingly accept Christ as Savior?

Does the realization of the seriousness of sin grow with age?

Does increasing abstract thought contribute to the understanding of theology?

How much repetition is needed to ensure comprehension of spiritual truths?

The person who is studying physical development may ask questions like:

What is puberty, and when does it happen?

Does early or late maturation affect the teenager?

What physical development is to be expected and when?

Are sixth graders adolescents, and when should we tell them about the changes that will take place in their bodies?

The person who is studying mental or cognitive development may ask questions like:

Does the move toward abstract thought explain why my preteen asks so many questions?

Do the stage theories of adolescence really explain the move toward adult thought?

Is intelligence measured by one number or by several different measurements?

How do youth learn? Is learning ability related to spiritual maturity?

The person who is studying social development may ask questions like:

How do we protect youth while acknowledging their growing need for independence?

How do we help with peer relationships?

What about courting, dating, romance, sex, and intimacy?

How do we mediate the turbulent world of adolescence, which now includes homosexual issues, media influence, violence, gangs, raves, and Internet culture?

The person who is studying emotional development may ask questions like:

Does personality change with adolescence?

Are there truly differences in adolescents in different cultures?

What does emotion have to do with discipline?

What about stress and anger in a seemingly crazy culture?

How do hormones affect emotions and relationships with parents, siblings, and peers?

When we study adolescent development, some issues seem to circulate over and over. Hiding behind the categories above are some general questions about adolescence. One such question that fits into this section is the issue of “nature versus nurture.” The questions are posed:

Which is more influential – our genetic makeup (nature) or the environment in which we are raised (nurture)?

Is there any validity or relevance to the often-discussed differences between the generations?

Are teenagers today (millennials) different from baby boomers or generation X'ers were when they were teenagers?

Is it unbiblical for Christians to refer to psychology to explain human behavior?

Are adolescents the same around the world?

Does adolescence have to be a volatile, turbulent time?

Are there significant gender differences regarding development?

With regard to the development of a teenager, what is normal?¹

Early adolescence (12-13)

Physical

Changes are rapid and dramatic.

Stamina is lacking; tiredness and short attention span are common.

They may be awkward; hands and feet are large in proportion to rest of body.

They begin to show physical signs of sexual maturation, with the emergence of secondary sexual characteristics.

Girls are usually more mature than boys, entering puberty up to two years earlier.

Most have superhuman appetites.

Intellectual

They want to see proof and are less willing to accept others' opinions (particularly parents).

They begin to think abstractly but usually view issues in terms of black or white answers by looking at alternatives and consequences.

They grow in their ability to make decisions based on personal values.

They make decisions that often are idealistic and sometimes overly optimistic in expectations.

Emotional

They begin to develop personal identity and sense of self.

They are self-conscious and egocentric but gaining more confidence.

They are enthusiastic.

They are still dependent on parents, but their desire for independence is increasing.

Fluctuates between friendly and moody.

They express a positive sense of humor.

¹ Jackson and Ulmer, *Introducing the 21st Century Teenager*, 13-16.

Social

They place great value on same-sex acceptance and want to fit in with the crowd.
They attach to few close friends and are often cliquish.
They can be overcritical and have unrealistic expectations.
They began to be interested in the opposite sex (girls develop interest earlier).
They are most comfortable in small groups of trusted friends of the same sex.
They experiment with appropriate behaviors and test limits.

Spiritual

They are generally receptive to making a decision about a relationship with Christ.
They are more able to make genuine commitments.
Their spiritual views usually mirror their parents' spiritual views.
They are beginning to develop personal values.
They respond to others needs and are more aware of social issues.

Middle Adolescence (14-15)

Physical

Physical changes have slowed for girls; boys may still be changing rapidly.
Advanced development of secondary sex characteristics takes place.
They develop an intense sex drive (particularly males).
They are active and energetic.
They tend to experiment with alcohol or drugs.

Intellectual

They become capable of more complex and abstract thoughts.
They can ask deeper questions.
They are usually extremely interested in pop psychology and "self-help."
They often question illogical arguments.
They are more analytical and critical of belief systems.

Emotional

Their ability to form personal relationships increases.
They are less egocentric; they learn how to give of themselves.
They often enjoy arguments.
They feel an intense need to separate from their parents.
Their self-assurance can mask deep felt insecurities and self-doubts.
They seek recognition for being good in some activity.

Social

Their focus moves from same-sex friendships to opposite sex relationship.
They date in groups.
They stay with their established circle of friends.
They may join a group with social beliefs or values that differ from parents.

They sometimes rebel against persons in authority.
They may become protective of personal possessions.

Spiritual

They search for what the Bible says about what is or isn't okay.
They may experience guilt about relationships with or thoughts about the opposite sex.
They may experience frustration with the desire to stop some behavior and their apparent inability to do so (like pornography or masturbation).
They often pray for forgiveness.

Late Adolescence (16-18)

Physical

Their physique is almost fully developed.
Most have reached adult height.
Boys have caught up with girls developmentally.
They express a strong interests and personal health.
The may fall victim to eating disorders.
Some are sexually experienced.

Intellectual

They become increasingly involved with their future.
They begin to focus on career choices.
They recognize that current decisions influenced their future.
They developed the ability to consider many options that once and can process possibilities.
They make better and more mature decisions.
They might be able to resolve conflicts with judgment.

Emotional

They feel confidence and security with their own identity.
They are sometimes sentimental.
They can put others' needs ahead of their own.
They recognize the need to take more personal responsibility.
They are usually friendly toward family.

Social

They desire meaningful relationships with others, including and especially the opposite sex.
Personal relationships show increasing commitment; many date one partner exclusively.
Dating is frequent.
Some are sexually active.
Driver's license and graduation will be rites of passage.
Most work part-time, resulting in discretionary income.

Spiritual

They show ability to demonstrate strong commitment to a relationship with Christ.

Moral and spiritual values are tested and challenged.

They understand and care about how others feel and think.

They become interested and sometimes obsessed with life after death.

They asked questions and expressed doubts about their spiritual life and assurance of salvation.

They may rededicate their life at camps or retreats repeatedly.

They are increasingly able to apply spiritual principles to life and are able to grasp deeper spiritual concepts.

APPENDIX B

The gift of helplessness is a tremendous asset in youth ministry. Helplessness opens us to new ideas and strategies, keeps us teachable, and moves us to innovation.

The gift of truthfulness is essential in youth ministry to be people of integrity and people committed to not only speaking the truth, but living it.

The gift of listening can offer our students the advantage of experience counsel guided by a heart of concern, without the sometimes sharp edge of parental over concern and panic.

The gift of liking teenagers is the ability to look beyond some of the typical marks of adolescence and see real people. Teenagers do not need us to be adults who act like teenagers.

The gift of nurture is a painstaking process of encouragement for youth leaders to build friendships into thick cords of caring. It is not a ministry that just anyone can do.

The gift of affirming offers students a vision of who they are in Christ. The power and impact of a simple word of affirmation or writing a quick note to a student will bring their hearts closer to Him.

The gift of a sense of humor is crucial because anyone involved in youth work will be laughed at occasionally – usually when we are not trying to be funny. The gift of a sense of humor shows students that we don't take ourselves so seriously.

The gift of flexibility is critical not only for prolonging the youth worker's sanity and survival, but also for teaching students a mindset that guards their sanity and survival in an unpredictable world. Students glimpse our faith in the sovereignty of God most clearly through the situations that turn out wrong. Blessed is the youth worker who stays cool when the bus breaks down, for his is the ministry that keeps on rolling.

The gift of perseverance is that gift of God's grace that allows us to hang in with the student when we really might prefer to just hang that student. Youth workers have to stand there and pray and wait and be patient and pray some more and persevere as a young person matures. When it is all said and done, tightening the nuts and bolts of a youth ministry is sometimes more a function of heart than muscle.

APPENDIX C

Let Everyone See Your Good Deeds

Matthew 5:16 – In the same way, let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

Love Your Enemies, Do Good to Them

Luke 6:31-35 – Do to others what you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But *love your enemies, do good to them*, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, *because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked*.

It is More Blessed to Give

Acts 20:35 – In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: *it is more blessed to give than to receive*.

Overcome Evil with Good

Romans 12: 20-21 – On the contrary: *if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink*. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Do Good to All People

Galatians 6:9-10 – Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, *let us do good to all people*.

Created to Do Good Works

Ephesians 2:10 – For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Do Not Grow Weary of Doing Good

II Thessalonians 3:13 – But as for you, brethren, *do not grow weary of doing good*.

Be Rich in Good Deeds

I Timothy 6:17-19 – Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope and wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Engage in Good Deeds

Titus 3:8 – This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God may be careful *to engage in good deeds*.

Be Eager to Do What is Good

Titus 2:11-14 – For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘no’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, *eager to do what is good*.

Spur One Another to Love and Good Deeds

Hebrews 10:24 – And let us consider how we may *spur one another on toward love and good deeds*.

Be Eager to Do Good

I Peter 3:13 – Who is going to harm you if you are *eager to do good?*¹

¹ Robert Lewis, *The Church of Irresistible Influence* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 42-44.

APPENDIX D

Preparing for an emergency may not seem necessary during the time of peace or in between natural disasters. Since emergencies happen with little to no warning, it is important for individuals and families to be ready with an emergency plan and supplies. Emergency kits can be tailored for each family. The first step towards emergency preparedness is to have a disaster plan. This plan should be based on local natural disasters such as flooding or earthquakes, and should include any warning signs and what to do the family is outside the home when the emergency strikes. The emergency plans should be reviewed with the whole family, including places to meet, where the emergency supplies are and how to contact each other, and basic emergency skills such as first aid and water purification.

Every emergency kit must contain clean drinking water. A clean and durable water bottle is required for keeping people hydrated in an emergency. People that prepare for evacuations will need at least three days of water for each family member. A bare minimum food supply for an emergency should last each member of the family for at least three days.

Emergency preparation should include small and portable tool kits for repairs, escapes or as survival tools. These can be multi-tool knives, multi-tool pliers, shovels, ropes, gloves, and hatchets. A first aid kit is especially important in case someone is injured during the emergency. People that are preparing for long emergencies may wish to have a fully stocked medical kit and should include: bandages, gauze, medical tape, disinfectants and antibiotics, alcohol wipes, scissors, tweezers, a mask or face shield, several pairs of gloves and over-the-counter medications. People of prescription medications should have at least a week's worth of medication in the emergency kit.

Emergency kits should also include a blanket, sleeping bag, candles, flashlights and plenty of spare batteries. Basic hygiene supplies such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, and toilet paper should be included.

Hurricane preparation is good practice for dealing with nearly any emergency you and your family may face. Water, food, heat, light, information, and property protection are common factors in any emergency. Hurricane Katrina remains the standard for learning from one's mistakes. If there is one thing engrained in my preparation plan, it is this: have some where definite to go if you decide to evacuate. Go there couple days in advance and beat the traffic jams on the evacuation routes. Without a clear idea where to go, I am not an evacuee, but will become a refugee.

Plan on having a lot more than 72 hours of food and water in your vehicle. As was seen after Katrina, it can take at least that long for relief efforts to spin up and be deployed. Even FEMA and the American Red Cross now recommend having at least a week's worth of food and water stored and ready to go. Let's suppose your family decides to

shelter in their home instead of leaving town. Your family will have a few days lead time to get prepared, so prioritizing your preparation chores becomes a necessity. This calm planning will save duplicating efforts and reduce the number of forgotten or overlooked details.

Start trimming any dead or broken limbs off the trees around your home while your spouse makes a supply run. Ask your spouse to bring home a good supply of AA, C, and D batteries, extra flashlights, battery-operated lanterns, a camping stove, cans of stove fuel, and an assortment of canned goods if the pantry is bare. Please do not forget to get a portable radio powered by AC, batteries and one that brings in AM, FM, NOAA, and at least a few local shortwave bands.

It is essential to include in your emergency kit a supply of freeze-dried and dehydrated foods. Two gallons of water per day per person is really a good idea especially if you have young children or if the weather is hot. Make more ice cubes, place them in paper bags and store them in your freezer. Freeze bottles of water at the same time in the freezer. Locate all of your ice chests to store the frozen foods from the freezer and purchase as many bags of ice as necessary ahead of time. Once the crisis begins, the opportunity to find ice becomes very slim.

It is wise to stock more than a few days of disposable diapers for babies and have backups of prescription medications. Plan on purchasing more baby food and special dietary items for people such as diabetics and kidney patients.

In preparation for the high winds, start moving things inside that could become airborne such as trash cans and garden hoses. Plan on moving heavier items to the side of the house that faces away from the anticipated winds. Be sure to lash down anything you cannot move. It is important to board up any windows you think may require it. Stay tuned to emergency radio frequencies for storm developments and have a cup of coffee. Flooding is often the least expected natural disaster but it can have devastating effects, rendering large areas inaccessible and incapacitating entire communities for days or even weeks. High, moving floodwater poses all sorts of hazards and will contaminate water and food supplies. In order to be prepared, find out about your area's flood risk from your local weather service office, Red Cross chapter or emergency management office. Be aware of your property's elevation in relation to nearby streams or rivers so when severe weather hits, you can monitor forecasted flood levels and know if you are at risk.

If you live in a flood prone area, there are things you can do to minimize possible damage to your home. Try to raise your water heater and furnace above typical flood levels or relocate them to the attic. Install check valves in your sewer traps to prevent backup of floodwaters into your drains, and check your building codes to see what types of barriers can be constructed around your home. It is wise to have a stockpile of emergency building and repair materials on hand, perhaps stored in the attic or at the highest point in an outbuilding.

Even if you do not live in an area that is at high risk for flooding, it is still important to take some basic steps to ensure that your family is protected because of flood can occur virtually anywhere. Imagine having to spend several days on the roof of your house: what would you need? Every family should have enough emergency rations for at least five days for every member of their household. This includes nonperishable food, water, toiletries and medications. Other items to consider are warm clothing, a tarp, a battery powered cell phone charger, a battery powered radio, a lantern, and a small cook stove.

In addition, make sure that you store your important household papers in a waterproof safe. When you are alerted to severe weather, remove the information that you may need immediate access to and store it in a watertight zip lock bag. It is important to put these papers with your survival kit. Being prepared for flooding doesn't just mean gathering supplies. Make sure the family has a plan in case everyone is separated when the flood happens. If everyone needs to evacuate, all family members should know of a designated place to meet up or a specified out-of-state relative to report their whereabouts to.

Before leaving the home, move all the valuables to the highest floor of the house and make sure all lawn furniture is stowed away or secured. Fill the gas tank of the cars and have all emergency kits handy. Finally, turn off all appliances and shut the electricity off at the main fuse; turn off the main water valve; in turn propane off. It is important to leave natural gas on unless instructed to do otherwise by your local authorities.

No one wants to be in a flood but to be caught in one without being prepared is hazardous and possibly even deadly. According to FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, floods are the most occurring natural disaster in the United States, and they are the least prepared for. Looking back to Katrina and the devastation the flooding caused was a huge surprise to the residents in New Orleans. There are two types of floods, slow rising waters and flash floods. Both can cause millions or more in damages and loss, however, flash floods tend to cause the most casualties. This is because flash floods are a wall of fast-moving waters that come on suddenly and usually without warning. Preparing for these occurrences can be a lifesaver, especially for anyone living in the floodplains or near waterways.

There are several things that anyone can do to prepare for a flood, starting with checking with local agencies to see if one's business or home are in a flood zone. If the structure is not yet built, try to avoid building in flood zones to begin with.

Furthermore, buying or putting together is a must for any disaster preparedness. Gathering emergency numbers and to plan out an evacuation route are equally important. Families and businesses should practice their evacuation plan on a regular basis so it is fresh in everyone's mind if a flood happens. Fire extinguishers and sump pumps should be bought and installed. Also, everyone should know how to operate them and locate them.

To avoid contaminated materials from getting all over the place in the event of a flood, backflow and plugs need to be purchased and installed on toilets and all sewer connections. Also, everyone in the family should educate themselves on local emergency evacuation routes, warnings, and shelters. Freeze dried foods and ready-to-eat meals should be stocked up on. In addition, another very important supply to be absolutely certain to have on hand is water. Water storage solutions can be purchased as well.

There are several steps and items that are imperative in being prepared for a flood. The sooner they are implemented and bought the better, because a flash flood can happen even if there was no rain in the immediate area. They can happen due to a levee failure, rapid ice/snow melt or of course rain. It is also important to be sure all fuel tanks are properly tied down to avoid damage contamination during a flood by them floating around in breaking open. These simple steps can save lives and extra hardships in the event of a flood.

When emergencies strike, there is often no warning. Therefore, it is crucial for every homeowner to have the necessary supplies in case an emergency arises. The first 72 hours that one's family is in crisis is the most important time for survival. Quite often, emergency vehicles and medical assistants have trouble getting through barriers, especially when natural disasters strike. Every family should have at least three days worth of survival supplies in an easily accessible area for when the time comes.

The following list is of items that are essential to sustaining life while help is on the way:

Water - Humans can survive on water for as long as two months. It is the most important element in being able to survive an emergency. A good rule of thumb is to have 3 to 5 gallons of water stored for drinking. Extra gallons may be purchased for cleansing, but the drinking water is most important.

Food - Sealed food pouches are the best way to go for making a survival kit. Foil sealed pouches do not require any opening mechanisms and they can stay fresh until the individual removes the seal to eat. The homeowner should purchase enough of these food pouches to last the entire family at least 72 hours. Larger packages are available to allow for extra time.

First Aid – First aid items are necessary for any injuries that may arise. It may take medical personnel quite some time to be able to access the area, so it is best for the homeowner to put away as many first aid kits as possible. A basic first aid kit consist of bandages, iodine, antiseptic towelettes, sponge dressings, alcohol pads, and cotton tip applicators. Ace bandages and neck braces may provide additional protection just in case of more serious injuries.

Light – Electricity is lost in most emergencies. Candles, light sticks, and flashlights can provide an inexpensive source of temporary power for moving around. People with slightly better budgets can invest in an emergency power source such as an adventure kit.

An adventure kit has the capability of charging cellular phones, appliances, and radios. Some adventure kits also have solar panels so they can receive power from the sun during the day.

Warmth – The homeowner should store plenty of blankets and sleeping bags so the family can stay warm and get as much rest as possible during this time of crisis. It would also be wise to store a very small kerosene heater for warmth when electricity is not available. Any hooded clothing should also go into the survival kit.

Communication – An amateur band radio or CB radio would be very beneficial during this time of crisis. This will help the family to communicate with others. CB radios will operate on batteries, so the user should be sure to load the devices with batteries before storing them. With these few items a family should be able to survive the first 72 hours of an emergency. The rest of the survival process involves having faith and sticking with loved ones until the worst is over.

Some recommendations to consider before a disaster occurs. Store some of everything. Do not just buy wheat and powdered milk and think “life will be great.” Store the kind of foods everyone in the family eats. If money is no problem and like the convenience of already prepared foods, purchase and store freeze-dried and MRE’s (Meals Ready to Eat). If you’re on a tight budget, buy a little extra each time you go to the grocery store, plant a garden, avoid fast food, and save your money for some extras.

First of all ask yourself, “Do I want to just survive or will I enjoy eating this kind of food? How difficult will it be to prepare during difficult times? What kind of budget will our family have? Begin by building your food storage program systematically and according to priorities. Try to determine all of the needs for a month, six months, or even a year. Attempt to choose food preservation methods according to your situation: space, storage conditions, climate, and costs.

What are my options? The options are grocery store, bulk foods, freeze-dried food, MRES (Meals Ready to Eat), dehydrated foods, garden, and fast food. The advantages of bulk foods are usually canned and boxed and easy to prepare. The disadvantages of bulk foods are some items do not have a very long shelf life and avoid glass containers. The advantages of freeze-dried food is already prepared and need to add a little water, heat, or eat cold. Freeze-dried has a shelf life of 20 years and the disadvantage is cost. The advantage of MRES is they are already prepared, open, and eat with a five-year shelf life and the disadvantage is cost. The advantages of dehydrated foods is they are affordable and stores well in airtight containers with a twenty year shelf life. The disadvantages are difficult to prepare, requires water, heat and fuel to prepare. Dehydrated foods may not taste like you’re used to. The advantages of a garden are fresh, healthy and inexpensive.

The disadvantage of gardens is weeding depending on how you look at it. Gardening is seasonal and this is a disadvantage. The advantages of fast food are they taste good. The disadvantages of fast food are expense and they may not be available all the time.

The amount of food varies depending upon your age, size, and needs. Containers are very important. To extend the shelf life of the **foods**, choose the containers and how they are packaged wisely. Air, light, heat, moisture, pests, etc., will destroy your food if allowed in any container. There are advantages and disadvantages to every container. The recommendation is to use many types of containers for different food groups.

Paper and plastic bags are not good for long-term storage. Rotate any items in paper or plastic every six months to a year. Five or 6 gallon plastic food buckets are great for storing wheat, grains, beans and sugar. If packaged properly, food will store for a very long time. Bottles are excellent for canning and preserving fruits and vegetables. Metal cans are not recommended for food storage because of rusting. Rotation is very important. Food loses its nutritional value over time and when it is exposed to light and heat. Always keep food cool and in a dark room. If you had a one year supply of food and ate from it once a week, you would rotate your entire one year supply in seven years.

We've already discussed the importance of water and how to find, store, and purify it. It is recommended to store 1 gallon per person per day for two weeks. It becomes impossible to store enough water for one year for a person. Having a source of water and knowing how to purify it, becomes very important.

If times become difficult it may be nice to have on hand extra clothes to go through and wear if for some reason you can't buy them. Every six months to a year go through your clothes and see what you really wear and what you don't. Take the ones that you don't wear and put away in time of need. As you rotate out of your closet also rotate out of your storage box keeping the best items. It is important to also store a few pair of shoes.

It is also very important to have on hand \$100 in cash in small bills, credit cards and checkbook. Please be sure all your important documents are safe and have all of the necessary insurances in place to protect your home against losses.

Consider the necessities and luxuries that a camper, travel trailer, or motor home can provide during difficult times, as you think about the following. If you are temporarily displaced your family may be able to go to a friends or relatives home or stay in a hotel. If not, here are some alternative temporary shelters you may consider. Tent, camper, travel trailer, motor home, community shelter, bomb shelter or any other building that is safe. During the first two weeks after Hurricane Katrina, our home was a shelter for 10 relatives from New Orleans.

Heat is critical during the cooler times of the year. Consider having on hand some of the following items in case of an emergency: hand warmers, portable heater, matches, fuel for the heater, wood-burning stove, fireplace, wood, blankets, and sleeping bags. Many fuels do store very well and can be dangerous. Propane is one of the easiest and safest to store. Matches, flashlights, batteries, lanterns, cyalume chemical light sticks and candles are very important.

If your family has prepared well you may have storage foods that do not need a lot of cooking. Freeze-dried foods and MRE's are great because there is little or no cooking. But if you have to cook, think of using your patio gas barbecue grill or camper stove. It is important to have sufficient fuel on hand for these moments when grilling is vital.

Keeping clean during disasters and emergencies is essential to maintain good health and is often difficult to accomplish. Think for a moment: what would you do without running water? Here's a list of some sanitation supplies: portable camping toilet, heavy duty plastic bags, metal trash cans, paper towels, rubber gloves, scrubbing pads, detergent, rodent traps, disinfectants, shovel, liquid soap shampoo, towelettes, washcloths, disposable plates, cups, eating utensils, pocket knife, infant supplies, disposable diapers, toiletries, just to name a few.

My hope is that through reading this information you have gained a better understanding on how to become prepared. You should also have a feel for the necessities that you already have on hand and for those items that you need in case of emergency. Begin now and take inventory of your situation and purchase what you need. It is better to be five years early, than one minute too late.

The first question to ask is where will your family be when a disaster strikes? Work? School? Home? Traveling? Will you know what to do and where to go? There are three steps to safety:

1. Finding out what could happen in your area is very important.

- Have contact information for police, highway patrol, hospitals, poison control, family doctor, dentist, pharmacy, employers, relatives, neighbor, schools, gas, power, telephone, electrician, etc. in one place to prepare for a disaster in your community.
- Find out what your communities warning signals are, what they sound like, what you should do when you hear them.
- Learn about the disaster plans at work, school, daycare, and other places where your family spends time.
- If you have animals, find out about animal care. They may not be allowed in some places during and after a disaster.
- Find out how to help the elderly and disabled.

2. Creating a disaster plan for your family is critical.

- Meet with your family and discuss what types of disasters could happen in your area and what to do.
- Discuss the steps of evacuation from your home safely.
- Choose two places to meet family members: outside your house if members are home and outside your neighborhood in case you cannot get to your home (park, church, school playground).
- Ask an out-of-state family member or friend to be your family's contact person. After a disaster occurs, communication can be difficult. Many times it is easier to get through to your contact person out-of-state than to make a local call. If your family members

become separated in a disaster, have them call this person and let them know where they are and if all is well with them.

3. Practice and Maintain your disaster plan is important.

- Conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills in your home.
- Quiz your family every six months so they don't forget how to evacuate from the home.
- Test and recharge fire extinguishers every year.
- Check/rotate food and water in your evacuation kit every six months.
- Test smoke detectors monthly and change the batteries every six months.
- Remember to always remain calm in a crisis. Panic causes accidents.

Recovery from a disaster can be excruciating and very painful. Disasters usually strike quickly and without warning. This can be very frightening for adults, but are especially traumatic for children. Attempt to reduce anxiety and fear with the following: **Before a disaster occurs:** explain to each family member your disaster evacuation plans, teach your children how to recognize the danger signals, explain how to call for help, help them memorize the important family information: name, address, phone number, and know where to meet in case of an emergency. Younger children can carry a small card that list emergency information to give to an adult or babysitter. **During and after a disaster occurs:** children look to you for stability, security, and guidance. If mom and dad react with alarm, the child could become more frightened. Children see our fear as proof that the danger is real. Their fears may come from their imagination, and adults need to take these feelings seriously. A child who feels afraid is afraid. After disaster, a child is most afraid that it will happen again, someone will be hurt or killed, and they will be separated from their family and be left alone.

Extreme weather hurricanes have winds in a wide circular motion with five categories. Category One has winds from 73-95 mph; Category Two has winds from 96-110 mph; Category Three has winds from 111-130 mph; Category Four has winds from 131-155 mph; Category Five has winds over 155 mph. Hurricane Katrina was a Category Four in the Gulf of Mexico, but when it made landfall, it was downgraded to a Category Two. The wind damage was severe, but the flooding was ridiculously painful in New Orleans. There are many different kinds of disasters that one must prepare for: hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, earthquakes, hazardous chemical spills, violence, famine, and plagues.

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