EXPANDING THE CULTURE OF THE CHURCH BEYOND ITS WALLS

EFFECTIVE OUTREACH FOR THE 21ST CENTURY JOURNEY

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ABSTRACT

EXPANDING THE CULTURE OF THE CHURCH BEYOND ITS WALLS

EFFECTIVE OUTREACH FOR THE 21st CENTURY JOURNEY

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It is the goal of this study to explore the possible redesigning of the church's outreach ministry and its process of welcoming "un-churched" individuals. The church would benefit from an "outer court" or "buffer zone" to introduce nonbelievers to the faith. In this setting, the un-churched will have the opportunity to be shown the value of living a godly life that provides eternal liberation and Christians, also known as "churched" individuals, will be able to demonstrate how living a life for Christ is worth the change, worth the denial of self and the world. Unfortunately, current outreach practices do not extend beyond the walls of the church on a consistent basis. There are man-made barriers that prohibit all souls from coming forth to gain a better understanding of the walk of faith, such as the lack of communication.

The desire is to upgrade Outreach Ministries as a whole so that the masses can be effectively reached in a relevant and appealing manner. A new 21st Century Outreach Ministry entitled the "One-on-One Nite Social" was developed at Antioch Baptist Church in Brooklyn. The program included segments on training, preaching, and teaching as well as the physical creation of a Christian Lounge. The edifice was built within a year's time, small teams of believers were formed, "un-churched" guests were invited, surveys were provided, and information was gathered. The end result: five testimonies from people who joined Antioch Baptist less than four weeks after visiting the lounge.

This study concludes that the practices and methods of outreach can be effective in various forms. The continuation of research and development of valuable strategies in attracting and retaining believers is crucial. This project increased awareness of the possibilities in one church. The next step is to branch out and develop similar practices at other churches in order to validate the true success of this model.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my deceased mother Pearlie Mae Julious who has been my support and inspiration during her life with me on earth.

INTRODUCTION: THE JOURNEY IN REVIEW

Am I welcome in your church without getting that look?

The Gospel Lounge project is an example of one type of opportunity for Christians to demonstrate their beliefs and show God's love in an environment that is appealing to the un-churched. The "un-churched" are simply individuals who do not attend church services regularly nor do they have a solid relationship with God. They usually do not feel comfortable in a traditional religious setting. If they are Christians, they may live a spiritual life inside the place of worship, but are unlikely to succeed at meeting the needs of those outside of the church. The goal of the Christian or "churched" is to walk in faith while helping and connecting with the un-churched. The Gospel Lounge provides a great opportunity to bring the church to the un-churched rather than the other way around. Christ always found himself going to the unbelievers and meeting their needs. In Mark 6:33-37 the scripture talks about how Jesus met the people in a deserted place and began to teach them. The disciples wanted to send them away because the hour was getting late, but Jesus gave instruction to meet their needs.

The majority of people who actually need Christ reside beyond the physical walls of the church. It is our goal to explore, cultivate, and transform this newly charted abyss, the Gospel Lounge, into a useful venue in which to lead people from "the world" into the church. Once the un-churched learn that they can be themselves around so-called "church

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people" and embrace the fact that we share more similarities than differences maybe then, they will be inspired to join the actual church body.

Initially, while developing this opportunity in creating a Lounge, I examined a number of key issues. Searcy and Thomas, authors of the book, *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch*, made a major impression on me. These authors believe in the importance of developing your internal structure. They write of a "team of committed individuals who will assist you in preparing for and executing an effective launch. This team is a team of people currently living in the area...a team you build from scratch."[1]

A strong team was developed for this project. Individuals considered for this group were those willing to learn, listen, and communicate. The scripture in Matthew 28:18-20 explains how to teach others what Jesus taught and commanded His followers. It was crucial that the project team understood the mission of the project and communicated it effectively.

I was also encouraged by George Barna's *Revolution: Worn-Out on Church?* which focuses on his perspective of identifying a venue that would be attractive to the un-churched. A key issue is to not mistake which is more important—the message or the venue. It is essential to uphold scripture as doctrine and to view it as the meat and not just the seasoning in an entertaining message. Barna believes that too much focus is placed on the brick and mortar church, resulting in the real message being lost in religious buildings. The goal is to find living faith beyond the walls of the sanctuary, which will aid in presenting the message that Christ wants His followers to deliver. Barna states:

> Our research shows that local churches have virtually no influence in our culture. The seven dominant spheres of influence are movies, music, television, books, the Internet, law, and family. The second tier of influences is comprised of entities such

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[1] Nelson Searcy and Kerrick Thomas, *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2006), 142.

as schools, peers, newspapers, radio, and businesses. The local church appears among entities that have little or no influence on society... To those who are worried about their investment in congregational real estate, the only answer is to recognize that the Kingdom of God is not about buildings and programs.[2]

Moving beyond the building means thinking about developing creative concepts of engagement that can be identified by the target demographic. Donald Anderson McGavran, author of *The Bridges of God,* has some interesting theories that have helped me develop my ideas for this project. He sheds light on how to advance the Kingdom of God by moving masses of people toward discipleship. McGavran indicates that a major consideration is to select strategies that surge beyond the barriers that might hinder the masses from moving. He writes: "The discipling of people is often hindered or actually stopped because, in the very first stage, the church leader 'requires evidence' of an ethical change or dedication of Jesus Christ, which some Christians in the older churches have not yet achieved."[3]

McGavran helps illustrate the importance of removing the barriers in the first stage of outreach that will prevent the un-churched from having a chance to be introduced to Christ. Delving into uncharted territory can seem daunting especially when the experience leads to a life change. Sometimes church leaders or lay members focus on changing people's ethics even before they experience God in their lives for themselves.

One key theme that has emerged during this project, and become the focus for the internal training of my own membership, is language. Avery Cardinal Dulles identifies language as an important aspect of the church today. Information gathered during this assignment re-enforced this position, and emphasizes the vital importance of language in

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[2] George Barna, *Revolution: Worn-Out on Church?* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), 118-19.

[3] Donald Anderson McGavran, *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1955), 14.

outreach, as well as in the worship experience. Language can connect or disconnect communities to Christ and to the church. Dulles states: "As the proclamation gathers around Christ, there is no faith without the community of Jesus Christ. And his community has its being, its "togetherness," in the possibility of its being able to speak the kind of language in which the event of its community is fulfilled. The language-activity is mark of the community. The language of faith brings into language the gathering of faith and thereby Christ." [4]

Dulles explains that in order for the church to be truly effective, it would be beneficial to speak the language of the community. There is always going to be a breakdown between the church and the community if communication is not fluid. It is vital that the language barriers that separate the churched from the un-churched be removed. Several individuals have written about the culture of church, but Anthony B. Robinson's *Transforming Congregational Culture* accurately pinpoints the seemingly inward focus of today's church and its lack of missionary efforts. He writes: "… too often the church, rather than sending people into the world in ministry, tied people up in the administration and activities of the church. And when the congregation became inward focused and inward looking, the interaction with the culture at large was reduced." [5]

Currently, many churches are run as if they were Fortune 500 companies, where business administration and financial reporting take precedence. Some churches lose their distinctiveness when they become more focused on being relevant to the surrounding culture rather than remaining true to the teaching of the gospel. Members of the congregation and

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[4] Avery Cardinal Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Image Doubleday, 2002), 73.

[5] Anthony B. Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 74.

immediate community do not see salvation as an aggressive goal. Evangelism is often systematic and positioned on the back burner leaving the church appearing selfish and ingrown. These issues reintroduce the need for proactive and progressive outreach, which supports the purpose of this project, which is to make the journey beyond the walls an action and not merely a concept.

CHAPTER 1

ENVISIONING THE JOURNEY

Today's society is what many call a 'postmodern' or 'post-Christian' society. The prevalent thinking today is causing many Christians to re-examine their interpretation of traditional institutions. This period of examination is beginning to have a major impact on Christianity, as many re-think concepts of religion and the church as a whole. These concepts affect the interpretation of the Bible, how doctrines are applied, how people participate in church services, and even how Christians think and react to various methods of fellowship. Today, there are traditions and rituals in churches that many people do not understand. Examples include: the difference between Protestant baptism and Catholic baptism; Communion; when to stand, sit, clap, and pray. Therefore, while embarking on this journey, it is advisable that some time be spent considering Biblical definitions regarding what church is and what churches do from various standpoints in this 'postmodern' society.

Clearly, the church is headed in a new direction. Technology now plays a major role in how its message is circulated around the globe and how it brings different worlds together. Technology and progressive views are replacing tradition with sanitized, safe practices, causing many fellowships to remove their denominational designation along with other traditional accessories, such as crosses, stained glass, pews, pulpits, choirs, hymnals and Bibles, and renaming churches as "worship centers," or "venues." Traditional houses of worship are being camouflaged and have names such as "The Antioch Worship Center." It

does not take a doctorate in theology or marketing to realize that some of these "religious therapy centers" would benefit enormously by simply removing the word "church" from their signs, buildings, vans, letterhead, flyers, television advertisements, and Sunday worship bulletins.

After reading several books and articles, I have realized that the church has a great deal of work to do in redesigning its culture to reflect an atmosphere that warmly invites and welcomes the un-churched. A critical question to ponder as this journey begins is how far the church will go to attract the un-churched. The church's true essence of spirituality and worship has been compromised and there is a pressing need to bridge the gap between the churched and the un-churched. But the inherited values of Christianity cannot be compromised. There is surely a need for a new paradigm, a shift to innovative, non-traditional methods with which to attract unbelievers without compromising the values and foundation of the church.

The concept for the "Lounge" does not seek to replace the existing religious institution. However, it creates a necessary transitional stage or an outer court so-to-speak that can usher in new believers. The Lounge provides a neutral turf or common ground where those seeking spiritual fulfillment and those eager to embrace God's people can meet. This Lounge is located in Brooklyn's Bedford Stuyvesant community and is the focus of this project.

The Lounge is an establishment with a warm and inviting environment where the churched and un-churched can "kick back," unwind, and openly explore their similarities and differences. The Lounge is that transitional post where these groups can come together and begin to communicate. It creates an atmosphere where necessary dialogue—the kind that

bridges the believers and unbelievers—can take place. It is a place for that curious individual to take the initial step of defining God's love and beginning the process of committing to live a Christian life. But before the un-churched can make that commitment, they need to see positive examples of believers truly living godly lives. The Lounge serves as that portal. Here, believers eager to do God's work can minister to the un-churched in a non-traditional setting. They in turn, who often interpret the life of a believer as restrictive, can enter a mutual environment without feeling the stigma of entering an actual house of worship. In time, they will learn that the benefits of this "restrictive" life-style, one of which is eternal liberation, are priceless. Congregating at the Lounge is simply the icebreaker, the opportunity to jump-start the relationship between the churched and the un-churched by means of a unique approach. Before the team begins this journey beyond the walls of the church, ground rules reflecting an understanding of the purpose of preaching, worship, and spirituality are established.

Tools for the Journey Beyond the Walls

> Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the
> books, especially the parchments. (2 Tim 4:13 NKJV)

Paul left certain items with Carpus at Troas, including a care package for Timothy. Preparation for any type of journey is necessary and this expedition begins in a similar fashion. The tools required are preaching, worship, and spirituality. The team is responsible for building upon and explaining how each is to be utilized. The first tool is preaching. Jesus preached and taught the unadulterated Word of God. Romans 10:14 asks "And how shall they hear without a preacher?" for a preacher is necessary in delivering the word so that it can be heard. Romans 10:15 also asks "And how shall they preach except they be sent?"

Jesus heralded or proclaimed the Gospel mainly at outside venues. He also encourages us to leave our immediate surroundings and follow his example. The Lounge does not focus on preaching as the main source of spreading the Gospel; however, knowledge of the Word is essential. Once rooted in the Word, being able to demonstrate and live its teachings becomes second nature. Yes, preaching is the foundation for both the unbeliever and the believer, but is solely reserved until the un-churched attend a church service on Sunday or Bible Study. The Lounge focuses on the other remaining tools in the travel care package—worship and spirituality.

In the scriptures, parables or "stories" are used as the primary method of preaching and teaching. Jesus kept it simple and easily comprehensible. Parables effectively move people because the content is usually familiar and people can relate to it on a basic level. Combining all these techniques or tools in stages seems to be effective in attracting, educating, and retaining the interest of non-believers. The purpose of preaching and teaching in this context is to direct the un-churched to Christ. In essence, the long-term goal of this project is to establish, strengthen, and affirm the lives of the churched as well as the un-churched and the institution of family in Jesus Christ. Christ met people at their level. He was not confined to the ceremonial religious practices of the time. He ventured into the cities seeking people in need.

This concept of the gospel lounge offers an opportunity to display God's love through action, which is balanced with a mixture of traditional and non-traditional social activities. There are groups such as the Singles Ministry, Youth Ministry, Teen Ministry, and Young Adult Ministry that have provided this sort of interaction. Most of these functions and gatherings take place outside of the church. The sharing of the Gospel need not be limited to

the interior of the church, nor should it be confined or restricted in any way. Living a life in Christ can be liberating, once the role that one plays is truly accepted. There is a duty associated with this charge, and it is important that the team become doers of the Word and co-laborers of Christ. Jesus began the work and passed the baton. The Lounge is now a part of that exchange and sets a new precedent in the continued work of winning new believers. It is unconventional yet effective, and a place where the un-churched may catch a glimpse of different types of worship experiences.

Worship

God requires worship, therefore; limiting worship to Sundays only, is limiting our Creator. Other religions find time to socialize and are extremely expressive in their spirituality and worship. For many Christians, worshipping God is confined to Sunday mornings. During the week, there is a lapse. However, through non-traditional worship at the gospel Lounge, people can observe how significant God is in the life of a Christian. The Lounge offers God-centered worship through a Christian DJ, an open mike for karaoke, poetry, spoken words, and drama. The Lounge does not replace corporate worship in the church, nor does it try to do so. It was designed to be to a less restrictive, more welcoming environment with the un-churched in mind. It is an unconventional community-based worship venue that allows the un-churched to experience God via more modern and trendy social activities. This social setting allows patrons to commune in a relaxed environment where they are able to converse and sip a non-alcoholic beverage while taking in various forms of entertainment.

Some worship services utilize upbeat contemporary music, country, and even rock and roll music provided in coffee houses and other non-church settings. When discussing the various styles of services with fellow worshippers, the conversation often centers around the atmosphere and music selected, rather than focusing on the message. These encounters made me wonder if there is a true understanding of the process of real worship. Tradition no longer seems appealing in our current culture. It seems that the church, on a broad scale, is gradually drifting toward conformity with the world's unscrupulous views and values.

The team pondered: What would worship look like if it were removed from traditional worship venues? More importantly, how can the spiritual process of worship be made into a daily experience? They then realized that the experience with God is spiritual in nature and can be obtained through a variety of processes. Therefore, no single style of worship experience can be identified as the one appropriate vehicle for displaying adoration for God. Different styles appeal to different people. However, all worship ultimately leads to a spiritual connection with God.

Spirituality

Worship provides the spiritual food necessary to sustain us for the trials ahead. Spirituality creates a path for the journey. Spiritual values are placed on what is done according to the Word of God. Spirituality is not confined to a particular location; it is a lifestyle and it is displayed in the way our lives are carried out on a daily basis. Worship and spirituality work hand in hand. At the Lounge, the un-churched understand that singing is performed for the glory of Christ. They can observe various forms of praise and various uses

of God-given talents. It prepares the un-churched for what takes place on Sunday. In other words, the Lounge is just a dress rehearsal for corporate worship on Sundays.

In order to embrace the full concept of spirituality, attempt to create an active environment where actions can freely demonstrate the love of Christ. We can try to provide a true spiritual experience where love and fellowship continue to be felt beyond the church walls. What is spirituality without a relationship? How is a spiritual experience created outside of the church building? One step the church might consider taking is to move from an institutionally driven establishment to a missionary-focused environment. We can create an environment that takes the church out into the street—a traveling atmosphere of love and fellowship.

In order for the church to refocus its internal activities, it needs to develop a shared vision that people can live by and build upon in their daily activities. The focus would be to unite the church under a shared vision for demonstrating not only God's love of each church member, but also, more importantly, demonstrating God's love of the un-churched. Many Christians want to tell the world how great God is; but a more relevant and persuasive method for sharing God's word is simply to live in a way that reflects His goodness, grace, and mercy. Continually renewing this walk of faith in front of the un-churched can illustrate the example of a truly faithful life that is spiritual instead of institutionally based in nature.

The Literature

The decision to construct a gospel Lounge where individuals can partake in one-on-one conversations outside of religious confines stemmed from an observation made one Sunday that crystallized people's opinions related to attending church. When I became pastor

of Antioch Baptist Church in Brooklyn, it became a daily ritual to walk a four-block radius

circling the church. During this exercise, I would stop and speak with every person I

encountered. The one question I asked was, "Why don't you go to church?" Although the

answers varied, many felt that the church was full of hypocrites who claimed to be better

than others; while others expressed difficulty in communicating and interpreting what was

going on and having an underlying feeling of not being good enough.

The more these answers were considered, the more vivid the divide between the

church and the community appeared. In his book, *Church: Why Bother?* Philip Yancey

indicates that formal church service is routine and repetitive, making it unappealing to the

twenty-first century churchgoer. He believes that these traditional worship services leave

most people feeling empty and unsatisfied by not getting anything out of the church service.

Yancey quotes Annie Dillard's description of her church experience:

> Week after week I was moved by the pitiableness of the bare linoleum-floored
> sacristy which no flowers could cheer or soften, by the terrible singing I so loved, by
> the fatigued Bible reading, the lagging emptiness and dilution of the liturgy, the
> horrifying vacuity of the sermon, and by the fog of dreary senselessness pervading the
> whole, which existed alongside, and probably caused, the wonder of the fact that we
> came; we returned; we showed up; week after week, we went through with it.[1]

The writer John Burke indicates in *No Perfect People Allowed* that there is a new

congregation on the rise. The church needs to overcome a hurdle that is cultural in nature. He

asks: "What do a Buddhist, a biker couple, a gay-rights activist, a transient, a high-tech

engineer, a Muslim, a twenty-something single mom, a Jew, a couple living together, and an

atheist all have in common? They are the future church in America!"[2]

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[1] Philip Yancey, *Church: Why Bother? My Personal Pilgrimage* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 22.

[2] John Burke, *No Perfect People Allowed: Creating a Come as You Are Culture in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 22.

The problem with most established churches is that they cannot redefine culture. Any church, synagogue, or temple that has been established for centuries will find it difficult to change in a manner that will include those who have been excluded. According to Burke, we must define culture. He quotes Edgar H. Schein:

> Culture could be defined as the glue that holds any organization together. In churches, it encompasses the normal practices and behaviors of people as they determine what, why, or how they act or interact. However, it is also the sum of all behaviors, attitudes, and styles of the people, programs, and services.[3]

> Culture creation forms the texture of relational life and community in a local church. The outcome of an effective come-as-you-are culture is an engaging community of faith that God uses to transform individuals, neighborhoods, cities, and societies. It happens when leaders effectively contextualize the message of Christ for the surrounding indigenous culture, and out of the surrounding culture, the community of Christ grows.[4]

The team found that most traditional churches exist for churched people to congregate. There is little to no concern for the un-churched. The outreach methods currently used are geared toward people who have a general understanding of God, but not, unfortunately, an ongoing personal relationship with God. The existing state of the church structure is not enticing to new congregants. Yancey says: "It is not what you are nor what you have been that God sees with his all-merciful eyes, but what you desire to be."[5]

The church appeals to the world that God has commanded it to reach throughout the ages. In the book of Matthew, Jesus states:

> All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and,

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[3] Edgar H Schein, *Organization Culture and Leadership, 2nd ed.* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 24.

[4] Burke, *No Perfect People Allowed,* 24.

[5] Yancey, *Church: Why Bother?* 71.

lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:18.20 KJV)

Ponder this question, "Is the church created for the churched or for the un-churched?" Throughout the history of established churches, there has been a clear focus on the churchgoer, not the un-churched. The original focus was to ensure that the people of the church had a clear understanding of God's commandments and how they were to conduct themselves as God's people.

Now, the climate has shifted and the focus has broadened. When the un-churched assemble to express themselves spiritually, there is no "Sunday Best" outfit and the gathering is less formal. The un-churched may not even meet on Sunday morning, if on Sunday at all. They meet where and when everyone is available. There are no titles. Differences are not emphasized. Everyone is welcome.

"Un-churched" is a term used by Thom S. Rainer, author of *The Un-churched Next Door*, in which he surveyed more than 2000 people on the regularity of their church attendance. If they said five times or less in a year, they were classified as the un-churched.[6] For the present project, this definition is extended to include individuals who would never consider attending a standard church. Likewise, our target demographic is considered to be the un-churched. Barna says about 40% of Americans claim a relationship with God, but do not care for church. Why? The church is supposed to be an environment that supports those who value closeness with God. It provides an opportunity for people to strengthen their relationship with God without requiring that they embrace a set of traditional biblical or dogmatic religious practices.

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[6]Thom S. Rainer, *The Un-churched Next Door: Understanding Faith Stages as Keys to Sharing your Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 46.

This understanding of our changing society and the need to revamp the culture of our churches is the foundation for the creation of the gospel Lounge. Several writers and team members have helped to form the vision for this project as well as the ongoing direction for the congregation, which places a focus on living our mission through action. As a congregation, we have learned to display our beliefs through daily actions that extend beyond the church building.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING OUR ROADMAP:
FOLLOWING JESUS' METHODS OF DISCIPLESHIP

The Charge from Christ

Throughout the creation of this gospel Lounge project, one theme resonated in the

team meetings as the primary objective toward following Jesus' methods of discipleship: We

realize that we have to move beyond the church building. The New Testament provides

regular instruction regarding God's expected behavior for the church, but Christ left a special

charge for His people in Matthew 28:19-20 - The Great Commission.

> "[19] Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father,
> and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things
> whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end
> of the world."

I interpret the meaning of "commission" as (1) an authorization to perform certain

duties or tasks, or to take on certain powers, (2) authority to act on behalf of another, (3) an

entrusting, as of power, authority, etc., to a person or body. The command begins with "Go

ye therefore, and teach all the nations. . ." How are we to teach the nations, if we are waiting

for them to arrive at the church? We realize that we have to venture out and locate the un-

churched wherever they are and teach them about the Word of God. While we are out, we

have the backing of the Godhead. The team and the congregation are urged to move beyond

the church in their own strategies to reach and teach the nations.

Jesus did just that. He traveled into the cities and villages. He moved with compassion. The compassionate heart of Christ is what every believer strives to obtain. The hardest act for Christians to perform is to put others first and their needs second. God uniquely designed His people. He did not designate one particular method for all to fulfill their personal charge. Christ encourages His people to find their own individual way to witness that will effectively entice the un-saved. The internal organization of the church should not prevent or hinder the fulfillment of God's will for the church as a whole.

Following Christ's Lead

The gospel Lounge explores one of many options for moving beyond the church building and reaching people where they are, where they need us most, and where they can understand our message in their language. It is very important for Christians to find and create the right venues for attracting the un-churched. Choosing the appropriate path prompted reflection on the various venues used throughout the Bible to reach the people. The Bible refers to cities, villages, synagogues, the sea, mountains, a boat, a house, the marketplace and even the desert. Using Jesus as an example allows the church to venture further beyond what has emerged as standard or customary practices for outreach, and empowers people to utilize more innovative tactics for attracting and retaining the un-churched.

We realize that moving beyond the church structure requires a series of major changes, beginning with the general "mindset" concerning the nature and mission of the church. For far too long most churches have focused the majority of its efforts on the pastor or/and the church membership, while seeking to ensure that the body of Christ continues to

follow His commandments. However, at some point, Christians are encouraged to move from teaching salvation to the saved to developing disciples to help the unsaved. That time is now! This course of action transforms entire congregations from mere members into devoted disciples—effective, empowered evangelists fulfilling the Christ's charge to go out and teach the nations, while being led by the Spirit of God. Jesus used the church not only to preach the Word but also to meet the needs of the people; and the people came in multitudes as their needs were being met. An important question to re-visit is whether or not the church is truly meeting the needs of the un-churched through its current traditional offerings.

The restructured church culture reflects one that embraces the un-churched in a nonjudgmental environment of agape love, while sharing the knowledge that Jesus came for all people—whether saved or unsaved. However, Jesus has not called us to judge, but to display the fruits of the Spirit in temperance, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith, and love. The process of evangelism is a continual circle that begins the moment a person receives, accepts, and understands Christ; it culminates in living the Word of God. The ultimate goal for Christians is to become proactive disciples of Christ. Fellowship begins personally, in the inner circle with family and friends, because 77% of new Christians were familiar referrals from friends and family. A great deal of the involvement within the church is prompted by familiarity based on our backgrounds and our environment. Payne and Beazley states: "Movements can also recruit by spreading through pre-existing social networks as converts bring in their families and friends."[1] Jesus surrounded himself with the families and friends of fishermen. Jesus often spoke by the sea or in other familiar surroundings that were accessible to the people. Today's church has

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[1] Bishop C. E. Payne and Hamilton Beazley, *Reclaiming The Great Commission: A Practical Model for Transforming Denominations and Congregations* (San Francisco: Wiley, 2000), 56.

forgotten how Jesus went to the people and spoke, using stories or parables that made His message easy for them to understand and apply.

Our Mandated Mission

The team discovered that using certain methods such as conducting surveys, bible study, preaching the word, and worship services can clarify a church's direction and mission toward God. However, the Holy Spirit is required to guide our efforts toward reaching the people in targeted communities. Christians who study to prove that they are worthy of fulfilling this mission can examine various techniques in order to determine the best strategies for progress.

In reviewing outreach strategies, there are specific mandates that need to be adhered to in order to be successful. For example, the New Testament mandates the establishment of the mission of Acts 1: 8, which provides instructions on proclaiming the Gospel to the remotest parts of the earth. Training in evangelism is a requirement for defending the faith, and believers are molded to follow Jesus as His disciples did. Again, effective witnessing essentially includes defending the faith, answering questions, and making the knowledge of Christ acceptable through our words, deeds and actions.

Attracting the Unattractive

The literature review revealed that a vast majority of the texts related to outreach focused on attraction and retaining, but the question is "Does this focus truly reflect outreach?" Outreach can be defined as an attempt to provide services to a particular segment of the community. Truly effective outreach will extend far beyond the conventional and

systematic assistance that some churches offer. This definition helps to set the stage for churches to participate in outreach strategies that "go beyond" the conventional limitations of the church building. One small example of thinking outside of the box and taking church assistance a step further concerns - the collecting of clothing. It can be beneficial to not only hold an annual clothing drive, but to also offer resume and computer classes to accompany those ready for a fresh start. The role of the church is to teach the nations and in order to do so it has to approach them speaking their language and showing a genuine concern for their everyday well-being, needs, desires and, most importantly, God's plan for their lives. Creating the right venue begins with understanding the true nature of outreach and using that understanding to follow Christ's examples of outreach to the people.

Today there are mega-churches that offer a mini-mall approach to traditional church by selling food, clothing, books, and so forth to attract both the churched and the un-churched. However, Jesus spoke about this as a type of inappropriate use of the church in John 2:16, "…make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." Therefore, how does the twenty-first century church find an acceptable balance in offering a modern place of worship that does not offend the purity of God's house, while meeting the needs of the church and the un-churched? Can the church go beyond the walls? This is the platform for our Lounge project.

What is an acceptable balance for meeting the needs of both the churched and the un-churched? Both Mark and Matthew tell the story of Jesus being highly provoked regarding the selling of cattle and the moneychangers. Both Jesus and Jeremiah stated, "Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? Nevertheless, I have been watching!

declares the Lord." Both emphasize the issue of sacrificial "worship" which took place in the temple. The moneychangers were taking part in sacrificial "religion."

Worship and religion are two concepts that can be misconstrued if not defined properly or understood as solely Christ-centered. Worship is explained best when coupled with the term praise. Praise is what we do to usher in God's presence and worship is simply what we do once He has arrived. Anything that we worship outside the realm of God is considered idolatry. The root of the word "religion" is usually traced to the Latin *religare* (*re*: back, and *ligare*: to bind), so that the term is associated with "being bound." In other words, Israel was bound to God, in a covenant relationship. When Jesus arrived, the methods and rituals that existed shifted. The change in religious requirements was predestined, as God already knew the future of His creations and the challenges they would face. The team focused on building solid relationships and being bound with God rather than tradition.

A Passionate Purpose

After serving as pastor at Antioch Baptist Church for six months, I finally relocated and settled into my new residence. I awoke after my first night in Brooklyn filled with joy and praise as I prepared for church. My new home was just around the corner from the church, so I walked. During my walk it appeared that I was the only person headed to church. People waved and spoke as I passed them. This observation did not sit well with my spirit, as I noticed that most of the people that I had come to know over the past few months were not headed to church. As the pastor of a church in the community, I saw, first-hand, the lack of involvement or interest in the church. I realized there was an immediate need for real transformation. From that moment on, I was determined to change the Sunday morning

experience. As a minister, I am personally responsible for instilling in the community the ideal that Antioch Baptist Church is a viable resource and honorable institution.

The moment of true conviction came when I saw children playing in front of the church and on the church steps, who were not going to attend the service. I knew that something beyond what the church was already doing had to be done in order to create a positive change in the neighborhood's attitude toward the church. My passion toward this project propelled me into action. I felt the need to at least make an attempt to forge a connection between the churched and un-churched. My personal investment of time and resources regarding the project has been one of the greatest accomplishments in my life as a pastor.

Objective 1 - The Search for the Venue

While the team and I pondered the different methods of witnessing, we began to look at how Jesus witnessed. This gave me the initial idea of creating a Lounge that would house the churched and un-churched alike. As I began my journey in search for a venue, I drove around looking at various places. I examined bars, lounges, storefronts, and small storage units. My search expanded to locations far from my residence and the church. However, I realized I needed a place that would allow me to maintain my proximity to the church and residence, as I was accustomed to walking to work (church). The further I looked the more discouraged I became, as I realized that the distance of the location played a key role in participation of the team, the congregation as well as the un-churched.

One day, I was about to head out on my search again when God intervened. I pulled out of the church parking lot headed towards Lewis Avenue. The spirit of the Lord spoke to

me. "Look up at that building." I looked up and there was a "For Sale" sign posted by Century 21. I simply lowered and shook my head, remembering how I had prayed to God to lead me to the right place. Remembering Matthew 7, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you," I realized I had done just that but then forgot that I had.

The first objective in identifying an appropriate venue is to be very specific with God by outlining every need and desire. The general vicinity of the property, the type of establishment, the capacity, the patrons that you wish to attract, how long the business will last, how long will it flourish. Again, be detailed and cover all of your basis. It is very important to have a clear vision or you will waste precious time. Do not start the search until the vision is clear because there is a probability of jumping the gun, which might result in a search in all the wrong places. A vital point to remember is that not every place that looks good is God's choice. The objective is to wait patiently upon His guidance before making a final selection.

Objective 2 - Location, Location, Location

The second objective in the search is to focus on the proper location for the venue.

> When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not learn to follow the abominations of those nations. (Deut 18:9)

This scripture refers to the idolatry and occult practices that were to be avoided once God provided a destination for His people. This scripture still applies to today's church and this project because the location will determine if it is conducive for both the church and the community. When conducting outreach, the church will have access to the venue, as well as the target demographic. Examining the places Jesus chose reveals that his selections were not

only for Him and His disciples, but were also appropriate for the multitudes that would follow.

It was important to me to identify a location that was near the church, making it convenient for the members to participate in the project. In the search, the focus was to eliminate as many excuses for non-participation as possible. Therefore, placing the location directly on the path of the churched and the un-churched alike will create a curiosity to visit, although mentally, they may have decided not to participate. The venue should be visible so that all parties can view it while on their regular routines; provoking an interest in what is happening in the space. Examine the factors that will enhance the convenience of the location, such as access to parking—our church parking lot is down the block from the venue. In marketing jargon, "location, location, location," is identified as a major consideration.

The venue selected was a corner property, making it a prime location visible to the entire community from all directions. It took about six months to find the perfect spot; it could have been one week if I had been more attentive to God's direction.

Objective 3 - Creating the Right Atmosphere

The third objective is to focus on the décor. This can be very challenging if the design of the venue is not well planned and thought out. Tailor the atmosphere to the taste of the targeted constituents as much as you can. God's vision will reveal the specifics regarding the desired clientele, as well as which design plan is appropriate for the individuals who are preparing to answer His call.

The space was designed to attract individuals between the ages of 20 and 40, and suitable for both the churched and the un-churched. Brick walls with wooden floors and borders were selected to provide a cool, warm, yet classic decor. A white ceiling with warm colors (reds, browns, and beiges) enhances the atmosphere. The interior decor includes a combination of low and high top tables with chairs, bar stools, a sofa, and window seating. The layout provides seating options for everyone, those wishing to sit and talk, those wishing to stand, and those wishing to relax snuggled amongst an array of pillows on a comfortable sofa. Ultimately, the seating is close and intimate. Track lighting with dimmers was installed along the ceiling to provide appropriate ambient lighting. In addition, ceiling fans were installed to maintain a cool breeze during the summer months, especially when the space becomes crowded. The décor creates a relaxing café-type environment, where patrons can enjoy a private moment or the company of others.

The right atmosphere creates ambiance through an inviting décor. The Lounge is an alternative location for those who want to get away from the overcrowded bar and lounge scene that we see taking over the cities. What the Lounge has to offer is integrity, from its foundation to its interior design. It has become a hub for a consistently faithful few who fill the room every Friday.

In comparison, many secular lounges may look attractive to the eye, but in reality the climate can be very uncomfortable and uninviting. The music that is played at the Lounge is extremely important in creating the appropriate atmosphere, whether through live musicians or the selection of a DJ. The music currently rendered is mainly gospel with occasional R&B. The music does not overwhelm the space; all of the elements work in tandem. In 1600 square feet of space, there is enough room to line dance, talk, play games, and meditate.

Objective 4 - Building Relationships

The right location, design, and decor will appeal to both the churched and the un-churched alike while inviting them to experience something new and different. The lingering question then is "What actually attracted them?" Which aspects were they attracted to—the location, the design, the décor, or the people? Outreach programs have been developed that mainly focus on ultimately getting the people into the church for them to hear a spiritual message about God. The goal of the Lounge is to provide an environment where the churched and un-churched can form bonding relationships. Through these relationships, the un-churched can see God within the actions of the churched. Building these types of relationships puts the church in a position not just to talk about God but also to demonstrate a godly-life focused on and reflective of His love. Solid relationships are built through much work. Reaching the unsaved is the desire of every team member and congregant working on this project. Christians can readily acknowledge that their actions are being recorded and the world is critically watching. Their light shines from within and others will be able to perceive the presence of Christ in them. Visible good works will in turn give glory to God the Father in Heaven.

Participating in a structured outreach program is crucial because evangelism without structure and organization is like starting a business without a business plan. Strategy is the best approach to evangelism. Building relationships is a priority, and an alternative way of reaching others is through the Christian Lounge. There are people who may not be drawn immediately to a church, for various reasons. In those cases, however, the Lounge will serve as a sort of incubator to cultivate growth before the un-churched eventually migrate to the

church. There are other methods of evangelism, and each technique is effective. Whether it is via open-air preaching, televangelism, or just personally leading someone to Jesus Christ, the end goal is for the un-churched to receive eternal salvation.

Many churches have utilized a street evangelism as their primary form of outreach. This focus is a mandate for every believer in the church to become a disciple, but it is not necessarily labeled as evangelizing. The objective is to have a collective mission that is effective. Jesus, our model evangelist, commissioned and appointed His disciples to be effective in the world. According to Luke 10:1, "After these things, the Lord appointed others; seventy in number, to go out two by two into the cities where He Himself would go..." The true born-again believer proclaims the gospel and defends his or her faith in order to make disciples. He or she is also equipped by God as a saint for the mission. Jesus said over two thousand years ago in Matthew 9:37, "the harvest is ripe" and the harvest is still ripe today. The gospel Lounge is an alternative outlet or a stepping-stone for the un-churched until they come to the church and receive Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

CHAPTER 3

WHO WILL TAKE THE JOURNEY?
DEVELOPING OUR TRAVEL TEAM

> As you think about building your launch team, ask yourself, 'How many
> people do I need on this team by the time our church begins weekly services?'
> Working backward from your answer will help you determine how to build
> and structure your launch team.[1]

Communication of Concept

Jesus communicated to the masses, addressing large crowds from Galilee, the

Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and the region across Jordan. He attracted their attention by

addressing their basic needs, and then He addressed their spiritual needs. Even though Jesus

knew that many would not embrace him as Lord, He continued to preach and teach faithfully.

He chose twelve men to communicate his message, and taught them how to present it in a

clear and simple manner. His message was presented in a standardized format, so that it

could be reproduced and translated easily; hence, those communicating the message were

consistent and of one accord.

Jesus favored parables and used illustrations about farming and fishing, as these were

the familiar industries of the time. He did this so that His listeners could comprehend the

spiritual truths that He wanted them to understand. He did not speak above their heads, He

preferred to use common language. But before He could choose the appropriate illustrations

or stories, He had to study and learn about the people intimately, which meant spending time

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[1] Searcy and Thomas, *Launch: Starting a New Church from Scratch*, 146.

with them. After ascertaining the information collected on the lives of the people as a whole, Jesus met people on *their* level and invited them to have a relationship with Him. The church of today could benefit by practicing leadership by example.

Meeting people at their point of need is critical in this process. It is only after doing so that the message can then be proclaimed. When Jesus spoke to the disciples, He said, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). They did not fully understand the expression 'fishers of men', but they did understand what it meant to go fishing. Jesus would continually use this type of terminology in order to relay a simple message or get his point across. The benefits mentioned in the Beatitudes are for those living righteously. Some examples are: Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven", and Matthew 5:5 "blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

Communication with the un-churched invites people to the truth. It is important that people understand the value of God in their lives and that without Him there is no hope. Effective communication is essential for a project of this nature to be successful. Not compromising the message is also a priority. Members of the congregation as well as the participants of this project need to be well informed of all aspects of the endeavor ahead. Payne and Beazley emphasize the value of communication as follows: "Because two-way communication among all parts of the wheel is necessary to maintain the system in balance, communication flows both inward and outward."[2]

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[2] Payne and Beazley, *Reclaiming the Great Commission*, 76.

Internal Communication

Bible Study class was the first forum used in communicating the objective of this assignment. Members of the church met on Wednesday nights, and for four weeks I provided extensive hands-on training workshops for those team members actively involved with church leadership in reaching out to the un-churched. The second forum used to relay the aim of this project was the Sunday morning worship service. I preached and taught the same materials and incorporated valid principles of outreach for four consecutive Sundays.

In order to introduce this project to the church formally, a small group of members, now known as the Lay Committee, was assembled. At a special meeting, the Lay Committee outlined the objectives, and each member was assigned to put in writing as much general information about the church as possible. At this time, only the members of the Lay Committee were privy to the information regarding the actual task at hand. After receiving the complete details, they were then asked to compile and sort the collective data and meet again to discuss the findings.

A second meeting was scheduled in order to review and discuss the findings. All members who were interested in continuing with the assignment were present. The charter team consisted of a mix of general congregants, members from several boards and various ministries within the church. The Singles Ministry and the Young Adult Ministry were asked to participate as well. The target objective was to increase awareness of the vast opportunities for attracting the un-churched by means of a new and innovative method. To commence this experiment, the Lay Committee gathered at the Lounge and invited three guests to visit and enjoy a hospitable time. After repeated visits with their guests and in-depth conversation, the

members of the ministries were then to invite their guest(s) to a Sunday morning worship service.

External Communication

Marketing became a critical tool in communicating the biblical mission in its entirety. Attempts were made to effectively market the church both ethically and spiritually, but these efforts were futile. The church continued to be marketed inappropriately. This project required the marketing of the church to be executed externally, by seeking out and engaging the un-churched. The focus was on people and relationships, not on increasing congregational numbers. One of the methods considered initially was to become more familiar with the community, which began with the church gaining clarity about and understanding of its mission and goal. The message then had to be translated to the surrounding community. Our mission became to present Christ to an unfamiliar people. Advertising was not a substitute for the evangelism. The un-churched had to be reached.

The intention behind outreach is to show the community that we, the churched, are real people. We have real struggles. We have discovered, and been changed by, something that they need—God. The marketing strategies had to attract real, hurting, needy people. After the next Wednesday evening Bible Study, and the Sunday morning service, there was an activity that involved several church members. The members were asked to go out into the community and hand out information about the church with the goal of bringing people closer to God. This was done through CD's and pamphlets.

Selection of Participants

Teams were formed and selected from participants in this venture. They were elected through the random assignment of members from the focus group and two church ministries (Young Adult and Singles Ministries). The goal of each team was to encourage its members to connect with individuals who would naturally be drawn to them. For example, the Young Adult Ministry has an age restriction; therefore, its members will automatically attract those in their age range. On the other hand, the Singles Ministries includes individuals of all ages who are single. Again, the intention is to not to highlight people's differences, but to focus on the similarities. Payne and Beazley state that developing a team approach creates strong relations amongst the teams: "This team approach creates a strong sense of community among staff members. It allows them to develop trust for one another and to lead from their value systems. It also teaches them a constructive way to work with others, which they can model in their interactions with committees."[3]

The interviewing process for this project began with the identification of the focus group. Team members had to have the ability to build a relationship that might lead to other levels of outreach. They were all church members committed to internal and external church growth. These individuals truly believed in evangelism and the importance of bringing the un-churched closer to God. Each participant was committed to developing relationships within the community. All team members were encouraged to identify opportunities for cultivating and developing local neighborhood interaction. The focus group members were predominately those who provided church leadership in some capacity. During the

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[3] Payne and Beazley, *Reclaiming the Great Commission*, 77.

interviewing process, the members of the focus group were asked questions about the community. They had to make a serious time commitment in order to complete the assignment. They also had to attend Bible Study regularly because this is where the initial preparation for the project began. The members were expected to brainstorm and present creative concepts to bring the un-churched into the church.

The remaining participants were the members of two church ministries. They were chosen because they fit the specific profile identified at the onset. The members of the two groups were single, and many of them between the ages of 18 to 40. They and the target population had common needs and core values that would draw them closer together. A few of those commodities are: finances, education, violence, infidelity, substance abuse, singles, couples, and seniors.

Project Participant Training

Training was a key element in this assignment. Participants were trained to become effective communicators. The training focused on building relationships through conversation. This was done to ensure that the community did not feel as though team members were participating in "drive-by evangelism." Obtaining solid external connections was the goal, and marketing alone was not the route. When members canvassed the community while providing informational pamphlets and CDs, they were met with much skepticism. In hindsight, this was because of the lack of thorough training and preparation. Before they approached the community, the participants required additional training about the appropriate language to be used when greeting new people. This discovery prompted a more focused and in-depth study of language adapted to reaching a twenty-first century

urban community. Outreach and marketing require up-to-date adjustments in order to stay ahead of the curve, just as billions are spent on marketing strategies by major corporations to present their image and message effectively. The church may not spend billions but we can consider updating our methodologies, particularly if we are not obtaining the desired outcome.

Vision Conferences

Participants involved in this type of project have a vision of what the church looks like when its outreach strategies are successful. They are able to visualize our church filled with all the un-churched that they have built relationships with through effective engagement strategies. This visualization of the future church creates momentum throughout the outreach process.

Tone and Focus

The people of the church, meaning the team and congregation, have to know what the outreach strategies are before they are executed. When I address my members from the pulpit and instruct them to bring a friend to church each Sunday morning, it usually fails. Members need to know that bringing a friend is part of a greater outreach strategy. Awareness and knowledge is the root of sustaining, lasting change, and it is crucial that the congregation remain informed. The congregation can be informed by using several different methods:

- Lead up to the activity for about 3 months
- Have key members motivate the other members to share in the activities
- Mail cards to introduce the church to the community
- Distribute cards to invite people to church
- Provide effective ways to train those who will be instrumental in the outreach process
- Form prayer groups

- Compose newsletters
- Organize special events
- Proactively provide continual training
- Evaluate the systems put in place for effectiveness

Outreach Training Classes

The pastor of the church does not have the sole responsibility of performing this training alone. It is important that there be a co-sharing of the responsibilities. A small advisory and administrative committee will share in developing the teaching methods. The committee will have a professional background in communication and marketing. People are assigned individual tasks with a plan of action for implementation.

Application of Training

> My people need to be ready to address all kinds of theological garbage that the un-churched have unwittingly bought into over the years. My people have to be prepared to give a clear and articulate reason for the hope and faith that is within them.[4]

Jesus traveled throughout towns and villages, teaching in the synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. Whenever He saw masses of people coming together, He became compassionate, and healed their ailments and afflictions because they appeared to be helpless, and without guidance. He then said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38).

Following Jesus' lead, the mission is to minister to the many immediate needs of the surrounding community, all the while proclaiming the good news of Christ's reign. This

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[4] Barna, *Grow Your Church*, 148.

process begins with the implementation of a quality outreach-training program. With this

training program members had to lay aside the many excuses that hinder passionate outreach:

"I don't know enough." "I'm not an evangelist." " I have not been to seminary." "I don't

have the courage to come out of my comfort zone." " I'm afraid the church will offend my

friends." "I don't know any non-Christians." "I am struggling with my own walk."

The Community

> If we want to build bridges to the un-churched, we have to understand who
> they are. Knowing their demographic background is of some help, but we
> need to comprehend something more intimate about what makes them tick-we
> need to understand their spin on life.[5]

The project team had to make an effort to understand the people that they were trying

to attract. Members needed to understand clearly the differences between the un-churched

and the churched, while at the same time realizing the commonalities that could bring them

together. Statistical data was gathered in order to help to identify the desired target

population within the community. Strategies were introduced to gain a better understanding

of the makeup of the community. It literally became necessary to walk around the

community to investigate the areas surrounding the church.

The examination of the demographic breakdown of the community was interesting as

we compared the variation of ages, consumer preferences, personal lifestyles, and habits of

our neighbors. Most of this information was taken from the most recent Community Board

#3 Census Reports. Other methods used to obtain this information were door-to-door

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[5] Barna, *Grow Your Church*, 51.

canvassing, telephone and windshield surveys, focus groups, local media, and local public records.

The Church Identity

Many surveys were utilized in order to gather information and provide internal insight about the church. These surveys are labeled and listed in the Appendices of this document. This internal examination identified members' core values and feelings. For example, many would assume that every churchgoer loves children. However, the survey suggested that even though this is true, ministry on developing a child's relationship or knowledge of God might not be at the top of the list of priorities. This survey prompted team members to closely examine and re-think the values presented in the survey and the relationship to God's call to the church. The survey results revealed preferred worship styles, i.e., how members felt about the music (i.e. lyrics and content), prayers, devotions, and the visual arts.

Interests

> Demographic characteristics are common background traits, such as a person's gender, age, income, education, region of residence and racial heritage. Because such attributes are based upon stable conditions... rather than variable conditions... demographics has become a very useful tool for understanding today's conditions and predicting tomorrow's probabilities.[6]

The demographic profile of the un-churched helps to define personal interests from preferred leisure activities to social likes and dislikes. This information is valuable when matching team members with the target population. It is important to seek individuals for outreach that have the same or similar interests.

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[6] Barna, *Grow Your Church*, 39.

The Development of a Training Program [7]

- Research of the community
- Know the identity of your church
- Find the congregational strengths
- Develop the target group
- Identify the needs
- Identify the media
- Produce the marketing strategies
- Test it
- Track and evaluate the results
- Adjust the strategy

The Lounge was specifically designed to bring the un-churched closer to God, and it presents a perfect opportunity for fellowship in a non-traditional setting. Members of the outreach team partake in fellowship at the Lounge and have the opportunity to bond, brainstorm, and commune with each other. They share testimonies that build their own confidence and discuss the potential barriers that will cause the un-churched to stay away.

Now that the outreach team had been developed and trained, the real test began. Could the church effectively engage the un-churched in a nontraditional setting by building relationships that would draw them into a traditional setting?

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[7] Stetzer and Ramsey, *Strategic Outreachers*, 63.

CHAPTER 4

INVITING OTHERS TO TAKE THE JOURNEY:
ENGAGING THE UN-CHURCHED

This chapter will discuss the results of the analysis of our project data from: 1) the

Congregational Profile, Parts 1 & 2 (see Appendix A & C) and 2) the Gospel Lounge Project

Team (hereafter referred to as the GLPT members) Pre/Post Participation Surveys (see

Appendix G & K). The GLPT members were the individuals willing to assist in outlining and

defining the entire process of attracting the un-churched to the new space. The

Congregational Profile was a synopsis or general consensus of data gathered from sixty-two

of Antioch's 600 members. Observing, recording, and analyzing data via surveys created the

opportunity to gather valuable information and obtain a clear understanding of various

religious standpoints. This information would later prove to be very helpful in the

development of this non-traditional model.

The documenting of this process provided tangible information and an eye-opening

opportunity to learn from this journey. It is an experience that I would not trade for anything,

because it has made me a better leader, made my active participants better team players, and

made our general membership more knowledgeable and active disciples. This project was not

solely based on the collective knowledge of the GLPT team. Additional information was

obtained from other individuals who are also committed to spreading the gospel and building

the body of Christ. The collective efforts of all parties involved have helped to enhance

spirituality and deeply root the commitment to this journey beyond the walls.

Many of the un-churched as well as the churched spend Friday nights in local bars and clubs, seeking to fill the empty spaces in their hearts and lives. The Lounge was built as a place where the un-churched would be able to find real friendship, agape love, when they are ready to accept it, and a fulfillment that will never leave them empty again. Entry into the Lounge is free, affording all the opportunity to connect. The design creates a comfortable conduit, where "the world" can observe and see that the life of a Christian is not without joy, happiness, friendships, or mistakes. But it is a life that is focused on developing a personal relationship with God through His son, Jesus Christ. The lives of the churched will exhibit the benefits through interaction with the un-churched. When the project's pilot period was concluded, the GPLT members made their list of invites for the actual test.

The Invitation

The GLPT team members possessed a real desire to reach others and to share the gospel in a non-traditional environment. Now the focus was on them. There would be no minister to preach a motivational message. Their actions and conversations were the message: the invitation. The question at hand now, is "Will they, (the GLPT members), be able to exemplify love of Christ in such a way that their invitation would produce an interest that prompted their invitees to actually come to the Lounge?" The GPLT members seemed to be especially proactive in attempting to accomplish this goal, however, Barna states: "Most churched Christians believe that since they are not gifted in evangelism, such outreach is not a significant responsibility of theirs."[1]   This was a challenge that the GPLT members and the participants faced collectively.

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[1] Barna, *Revolution: Worn-Out on Church*, 22.

The Congregational Profile, Pt. 1 - Outcome shown in Appendix B, was conducted with a focus group consisting of sixty-two of Antioch's 600 members (approximately 10%). Out of the sixty-two, twenty-two of the members surveyed has joined Antioch during my five-year tenure. This group of sixty-two represented the target demographic for the survey. Survey answers disclosed that 49% of members always encouraged people outside the church to get to know Christ for themselves. One desire of this project is that, as the church shifts its focus to the un-churched and their growth patterns, current members will become interested, and as a result will be more effective in using non-traditional methods of outreach.

This same survey data highlighted the fact that 41% of the members believed that the presence of a Lounge would provide the opportunity to attract and retain the un-churched as well as increase membership. However, 49% of the members surveyed stated that at times they found it difficult to speak with un-churched people about God. This statistic suggests that more training and preparation were necessary, and this would be addressed in the Preaching/Teaching Series on "Outreach and the Journey beyond the Walls." The primary focus of this training was to teach members how to effectively connect with and relate to the un-churched. Moreover, additional training would ensure that the project team fully understood their individual assignments and subsequent call to witness. At this stage, members would be fully prepared to engage the un-churched through one-on-one conversations.

This project was outlined and structured with the intention of encouraging and assisting other Christian leaders and innovators to think outside the box when examining creative opportunities for engaging the un-churched. However, change is challenging.

Christians are often not ready, willing, or able to invite others to share their experiences, even while they encourage others to develop their own relationship with Christ.

Thom S. Rainer's, *The Un-churched Next Door*, provided some interesting insights in relation to the reception of the un-churched to the Christian invitation. His research supported the project's position that the un-churched would feel more comfortable opening up initially through regular conversation in a nonjudgmental environment. One of Rainer's participants, Travis Fleming, concluded:

> There are people all over the United States who are just a conversation or a relationship away from being introduced to Jesus Christ. This is why the local church and laypersons are so important. Each one must teach one![2]

What does he mean by a "conversation"? Should interaction with the un-churched begin with high-minded biblical jargon and the spewing of titles, or with a simple hello? In the same way Christians seek a personal relationship with God, the un-churched are seeking genuine relationships with Christians. Twyla Fagan, leader of Rainer's research team, shared results that demonstrated the importance of sincerity:

> Most of the un-churched the team is interviewing would respond positively to a "genuine' Christian who would spend time with them in a gentle, nonjudgmental relationship.

> Most of the un-churched can easily tell the difference between 'drive-by' evangelism and a person who really cares.[3]

Sincerity is the key to securing a positive receptive response. In researching why people come to church, one common theme was evident throughout—the invitation. People come to church primarily because someone lovingly and patiently invited them. In a society that claims to have built its foundation on faith in God, it is amazing how many people today,

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[2] Rainer, *The Un-churched Next Door*, 36.

[3] Ibid., 28.

have never had a church experience. It is estimated that more than 160 million residents in the U.S.A. are un-churched.

Rainer's research project sought to revive the un-churched community. One of the participants named Mark was asked, "What prompted you, after thirty-six years to go to church?" His response was, "Because Chad invited me." The interview continued and Mark noted that in all of his thirty-six years, Chad was *the only person* who had ever invited him to church. Even more interesting was the response given by John, who was asked the same question. John was a young man who had early exposure to the Universalist-Unitarian church in Wisconsin. He told us, "I probably would attend a church if someone invited me, and the closer the friend the more likely I would be to attend."[4] Statistics confirm that people respond to other people, particularly those they know and trust. "It is natural to talk about and promote the things that excite us. Nothing should excite us more than the realization that God Himself loves us, wants an intimate relationship with us, and allows us to invite others into that sacred and priceless relationship with Him."[5]

The aforementioned examples raised a number of questions for the GLPT members to ponder: (1) Is the behavior of the un-churched pre-judged? (2) Is there shame in the decision to follow Christ? and (3) Is the lack of education on how to witness effectively to the un-churched creating an inability to share Christ-based experiences in such a manner that it motivates others to want to know Him for themselves? Rainer says: "Sadly, statistics show

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[4] Rainer, *The Un-churched Next Door*, 36.

[5] Barna, *Revolution*, 23.

that only 21% of active churchgoers invite anyone to church in the course of a year. But only

2% of church members invite an un-churched person to church."[6]

In order to find answers, the team re-examined the Congregational Profile, Pt. 1 data

where 49% of the participants stated that they always encourage people of the church to get

to know Christ for themselves. What about the other 51%? The remaining participants

dwelled in Christian "safe zones" and were only willing to invite individuals in their circle or

those that they assumed already attended service. The team then sought to define the term

"outside." Did it represent the un-churched, alluding to those who had no church home or a

personal relationship with Christ? Or did the term "outside" simply denote believers who

worshipped outside of their immediate church community? As the project progressed, they

would continue to strive to define the target group in order to pinpoint accurately the

reasoning behind the lack of boldness in the Christian approach. There seemed to be a

resistance to inviting individuals who really need to connect with God—the un-churched.

The Congregational Profile, Pt. 2, focuses on actual outreach examining how to penetrate the

target market effectively. The real question at hand is, "Why are so many Christians afraid of

the un-churched?" Do they produce a mirror of the past? Are Christians afraid of being

pulled back into the world by the condemnation of their past behaviors? Barna remarks:

> At any given time, a majority of believers do not have a specific person in mind for
> whom they are praying in the hope that the person will be saved.[7]

Data from this project's research suggests that even when a neutral venue is used,

Christians are still nervous about inviting the un-churched—particularly close colleagues,

friends, and family. This continues to be very distressing in light of the fact that people are

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[6] Rainer, *The Un-churched Next Door*, 25.

[7] Barna, *Revolution: Worn-Out On Church*, 32.

far more responsive to receiving invitations from individuals they know. Considering these factors, the church is still up to the challenge and positioned to succeed, but the question is, "What is truly holding it back?" It is clear that some Christians are afraid to approach the un-churched, assuming they will be met with a negative attitude. However, statistics from one research project presented the attitude of the un-churched toward the churched as "antagonistic 5%, resistant 11%, neutral 36%, friendly 27% and very friendly 11%."[8] These statistics highlight the fact that more than 74% of the un-churched population is open to an invitation to attend church.

Education is a key component identified as a potential barrier between the churched and the un-churched. The process of teaching and learning is necessary and essential for producing adequate comfort levels from which the churched can make a genuine invitation that the un-churched will openly receive. Creating an invitation that fits each individual's personal stage of faith is essential while attempting to build a cyclical connection and promote active involvement. In Rainer (2003), a participant offered this view:

> Franklin R., a former un-churched, forty-something African American from Ohio, gave us this insight: "You need to ask the un-churched questions that will help you know where they are spiritually. Ten years ago, I claimed to be an agnostic. But just a year ago I was ready to accept Christ; I was just waiting for someone to tell me about Jesus." Franklin continued, "The best way to reach me ten years ago would have been much different from the way to reach me a year ago. Last year someone invited me to go to his church. I gladly accepted the invitation, heard the gospel, and accepted Christ—all within six weeks "But." Franklin continued, "I never would have accepted an invitation to go to church ten years ago. You would have needed another way to get me closer to the cross.[9]

Now Rainer in order to explain the stages of faith experienced by the un-churched developed what he calls the "Rainer Scale," which consists of five stages:

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[8] Rainer, *The Un-churched Next Door*, 20.

[9] Ibid., 44.

U1) *Very Friendly* - Highly receptive to the gospel

U2) *Friendly* - Receptive to the gospel and to the church

U3) *Neutral* - No apparent receptivity, neutral, perhaps open to discussion

U4) *Resistant* - Resistant to the gospel, but not an antagonistic attitude

U5) *Antagonistic* - Highly resistant to the gospel, antagonistic attitude [10]

Using the Rainer Scale, the church through casual conversation can identify individuals who will be open to an invitation, particularly an invitation to a non-traditional setting such as the Lounge. Internal surveys illustrated the various comfort levels team members experienced with extending an invitation and the impact these levels had on the success or failure of the process.

"Journey beyond the Walls" is based on continual outreach, although many members expressed discomfort with the process. Therefore, the leaders compiled a Pre/Post-Participation Survey Comparison, which allowed for an assessment of the GLPT members' initial and ending comfort levels. (The resulting data is located in Appendix I.) These comparisons were designed to highlight any challenges or opportunities related to inviting the "un-churched" to the project's non-traditional church-sponsored event. The GLPT members seemed to begin and end the project at the same comfort levels. Surprisingly, the variances in the resulting Pre/Post-Participation Survey Comparisons were marginal. (See Appendix M.)

For example, the Preaching Series and Training in which the GLPT members participated was designed to enhance their comfort levels in engaging with the "un-churched." Information gathered revealed that the actual experience of inviting the "un-churched" provided additional opportunities to apply training technique, but it did not result

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[10] Rainer, *The Un-churched Next Door*, 21-23

in increased comfort levels. In an overview of the status of the local church entitled "Regarding Faith-Based Conversations" Barna notes: "The typical churched believer will die without leading a single person to lifesaving knowledge of a relationship with Jesus Christ."[11] This statement prompted more thorough research to identify various strategies and techniques that members could use to enhance their comfort levels while interacting with the un-churched through one-on-one conversations.

This additional research also revealed that many church members were afraid of being confronted with their past behaviors. Even with the knowledge that God has thrown their transgressions into the sea of forgetfulness, shame over their former actions was still front and center. The journey toward salvation has begun and Christ has been fully embraced, yet the fear of human judgment still exists. The un-churched are oftentimes friends, family, and colleagues of the churched, with intimate knowledge of their lives before salvation. The focus group revealed that fear of personal attacks on their current beliefs was a major deterrent during the invitation process. Continual change is a vital component of the Christian experience. This lifelong striving to be more like Jesus is a critical element in the Christian experience, for which both the churched and the un-churched need to be properly educated. Acknowledging that God has created a change in the lives of people, and that He is continually making them more like Him, illustrates the commonalities of the churched/un-churched: "For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) This commonality is a motivator rather than a deterrent; and so additional one-on-one and group counseling was offered to address this barrier. The consideration of these results prompted a reassessment of GLPT members' levels of honesty during the Pre-Test. After comparing all

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[11] Barna, *Revolution: Worn-Out on Church*, 32.

the data collected, it was concluded that some answers were expressed in an effort to satisfy the expectations of the project's leadership. The Bible indicates that Christians should be willing to testify about the changes God has made in their lives. This can require them to share their past as well as current experiences. It is simply part of the Christian charge. Unfortunately, for many Christians, this self-disclosure is an undesirable and shameful process. Nevertheless, it is their past that makes their present condition so wonderfully amazing and appealing to the un-churched. In today's society, "seeing is believing." Therefore, the Christian's personal revelation and daily illustration of God's impact on his or her life provide real-life examples to the un-churched of exactly what a relationship with God can produce.

Often in my sermons, I ask the people who feel that they have fallen short in the sight of God to acknowledge who they are: e.g., former drug users/dealers, fornicators/adulterers, liars, thieves. I am always surprised at how many people are resistant to acknowledging their pasts and willing to give God the glory for the obvious change in their lives. This testimony of change is the foundation of Christianity: sinners saved by the grace of God. Research has documented that whenever a church presents an attitude of "superiority" toward the un-churched, barriers to building productive relationships arise. In many instances, when Christians are truly honest with themselves and others, their stories reveals a continual struggle against past and current temptations, and that their strength lies in God's unfailing grace and mercy, which is available to everyone. How, then, does the church begin to remove these engagement barriers and create a loving, nonjudgmental environment of acceptance for the un-churched? Can this environment emerge within the traditional church setting?

The Lounge is an exercise in reality; it gives Christians the opportunity to simply be themselves—young, old, loud, quiet, dancing, singing, having fun with the un-churched in an non-judgmental manner. The Bible says in Luke 24:47, "And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." On the subject of repentance, it would be beneficial to not only explain what it means to truly repent to the un-churched, but to also provide alternatives to their current activities. With all the distractions of today's society, it is unrealistic to believe that even Christians will spend every waking moment in direct worship of and praise of God. God calls the church into fellowship. The Lounge is a place of fellowship where people enter without labels. It produces a community of people enjoying the moment through laughter, music, comedy, and conversation. People that have experienced the joy of the Lord will have the opportunity to demonstrate that joy through their actions. Everyone will have the opportunity to develop new friendships and share experiences. Life is full of good and bad experiences, both inside and outside the church, and honesty about these experiences builds trust. Establishing a real connection with another person is a process, and the Lounge provides a regular scene for this process to run its course. It usually takes more than one visit or encounter to motivate a person to take the next step— which is to actually attend Sunday worship. The process requires the development of a genuinely caring relationship that extends beyond one night, into follow-up calls, conversations over coffee, lunch, or dinner, to creating friendships that motivate a person to want to know more about the church and Christianity.

In the Congregational Profile, Pt. 2 - Outcome Calculations (See Appendix D) participants were asked to prioritize a series of strategies that would be most effective in a New Outreach Ministry. Forty-five percent of the respondents selected "training members

how to discuss Christ with others individually or in a group" as their top strategy; while 50% selected "training and taking members as a group out into the community to do outreach" as their second selection. The final strategy selected by 26% of the respondents was, encouraging each member to invite at least one person to church every Sunday. This outcome indicated that providing more training and opportunities to connect on a personal level would help build relationships and probably produce a more receptive response to the overall church experience.

A continual failure by Christians to witness on the assumption that someone else will make the invitation has the potential of resulting in more lost souls. Statistics show that for thirty, forty, or even fifty years, citizens of the United States live without ever being invited to church or hearing the gospel. An excerpt from Thom Rainer illustrates the importance of the invitation: For forty-one years, Marian lived without any knowledge of Christ. When asked what Christians know about the importance of witnessing, she shared the following:

> Tell them . . . that the world and Satan will give them many reasons not to be bold in telling others about Jesus. They will even have many reasons not to invite someone to church . . . But tell them never to accept those excuses. The un-churched do want to be invited to church. The lost do want to be told how to be saved . . . But what if Paula has not cared enough to invite me to church? What if no one had been there for me during my divorce? What if no Christian had the guts and the conviction to tell me about Jesus? Tell them . . . to stop listening to the lies of Satan and the world and to be obedient. There are millions of people who were like me, waiting on someone like them to be unashamed of what they believe.[12]

The Congregational Profile, Pt. 2, results show that 90% of the congregation felt that encouraging each member to invite at least one person to church every Sunday would be an effective strategy for New Outreach Ministry, only 26% of the respondents selected it as one of the top three strategies. It is very important that the church understand their individual role

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[12] Rainer, *The Un-churched Next Door*, 55-56.

in fulfilling this project. Unfortunately, far too many of church members are not familiar with

the concept of outreach. Therefore, in assembling the Congregational Profile, Pt. 1, the focus

was on examining members' knowledge and understanding of the concept of outreach in its

totality. Of the fifteen members who participated in the questionnaire; their understanding

was almost split equally three ways. Thirty-five percent had a "clear" understanding of

outreach, while 35% had "some knowledge" and 30% had "no" understanding. When asked

if Antioch's current Outreach Ministry is achieving The Great Commission, the members

were divided, with 35% answering "yes" and 49% answering "maybe." More than 65% of

the members could not provide a substantially definitive definition of outreach and an equal

amount were unsure about the impact of the Outreach Ministry as it relates to achieving its

goal. First, conducting this survey was an eye-opener, as it is often assumed that Christians

have a particular level of understanding of the Bible. However, this division among members

(35/49 split) suggests that more education is necessary to explain the concept and tactics for

practical application.

The Socialization

> Love is more than a feeling; it is a tangible reality when it is shared with other
> people through acts of selfless services. [13]

The Lounge positions participants to progress from conversation to action providing

the opportunity to demonstrate God's unconditional love. The un-churched are not un-

educated; they are intelligent enough to recognize the sincerity of a message. However, at

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[13] Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door*, 29.

times churched individuals make them feel like they are meeting a soul quota as if they just want to spill their presentation and move on.

One concern was creating a non-traditional venue that felt like a traditional church. The goal was to create something innovative, new, exciting, and challenging for both the churched and the un-churched. It was clear the project would face several obstacles, and feedback from the GLPT members provided valuable insight. Regular feedback allowed the team to assess barriers to the project's goal quickly. Seven individuals were involved in the Pre-Participation Survey phase. The purpose of this survey was to assess potential challenges and opportunities. The initial round of feedback fell into the following six key categories (See Appendix I):

1. Commitment Levels (30%)

2. One-on-one witnessing (14%)

3. Self-Disclosure (14%)

4. Location (14%)

5. Transitioning Settings (14%)

6. Identifying Candidates (14%)

Seven people participated in the Pre-Participation Survey. They were asked, "What do you feel will be the most difficult part of this process?" Two out of seven (30%), replied that obtaining a commitment for participation on a Friday night was their greatest challenge. The survey highlighted obstacles experienced during the project that created barriers to advancing its mission. The survey questions for the Post-Participation Survey varied slightly from the Pre-Participation Survey and produced slightly comparable results. The results fell into the following six categories. (This information is located in Appendix N.)

1. Commitment Levels (37%)

2. Communicating the Goal (13%)

3. Beverage Selection (13%)

4. Information/Clarity (13%)

5. Music Selection (13%)

6. No-Shows (13%)

The Post-Participation feedback comments mirrored many of the team members' concerns. It suggested that even though the GLPT members knew in advance the particular areas of difficulty, they were still unable to identify and implement strategies to overcome these obstacles effectively.

This inability to address known concerns created an opportunity for introspection. What were the difficulties in addressing known issues? Were traditional methods of engagement so uniform and so firmly entrenched that even when they were proven unsuccessful they were continually used, due to being within the churches "comfort zone"? Acts 2:42, 46 reminds us: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. . . *Every day* they continued to meet together in the temple courts." God calls the church to daily worship, to continual fellowship with each other.

What is the issue with Friday night? Is it because it is the beginning of the weekend for the world, the time set aside to break loose and let go? Friday was purposefully selected for this project for similar reasons. People in general who work all week look forward to the conclusion of the work week. Some people truly enjoy a place where they can gather to have

a good time with one another without worldly additives. The Lounge is a place where the focus is on finding inner joy and using it to sustain a positive attitude toward life.

The initial perception was that the un-churched would arrive with very specific ideas regarding what their Lounge experience would be like. The GLPT members were concerned that individuals would be disappointed due to different expectations. Another concern was that the un-churched would feel as if they were in an environment that was too much like the very walls the project sought to transcend. General concerns included the types of beverages available and the selection of music offered. The goal was to create a balanced atmosphere for the churched and the un-churched. These very concerns also suggested there might be underlying issues that would prohibit the team members from fully comprehending, teaching, and applying the concepts learned while researching outreach. It appeared that many of these issues could not be immediately ascertained and resolved in an urban environment, but could be addressed by applying a variety of strategies, and analyzing which ones would be most effective for reaching the target population. To this end, regular assessments via onsite surveys and focus groups should be implemented throughout the process in order to analyze the results and apply necessary changes. For many, feeling good about themselves stems from feeling comfortable or welcome in their environment. Therefore, a major focus within and beyond the church walls is to create an extremely welcoming atmosphere. The GLPT Pre/Post Survey Comparisons (see Appendix P) examined the following two questions (1) What would make the invited guest feel more welcome? and (2) What actually made the guest feel welcome/unwelcome? (See Appendix Q.)

The wide range of responses received highlighted the fact that those Pre Participation Survey strategies, which the GLPT members initially thought "would make their guests feel

welcome," were not effectively implemented. Therefore, these strategies arose as issues in the Post-Participation Survey that actually inhibited the creation of a welcoming environment. The project attempted to create a social environment mutually inviting to the churched and the un-churched. The goal to achieve a balanced approach to reaching people through activities and language that reflects their current mindset was partially achieved. We learned that more on-site evaluations from the un-churched would have given immediate insight in order to gain a better handle of the situation.

Fellowship among Christians is supposed to be joy-filled, and entered into by people with glad and sincere hearts. Where is the love—the love that Jesus Christ commanded us to show to one another? Where is the concern that our brethren once showed by selling their possessions and goods and giving to those in need? Consider an instance where a Christian gave up something that he really wanted or needed in order to help someone else. How has the church made a sacrifice for the good of the body of Christ?

Building this venue was not a simple task and keeping it alive by not charging for entry or food is a cost gladly incurred for the opportunity to share the love of Christ. Few things worth doing are easy; therefore, the examination of the Post-Participation Survey comments, were discouraging. How could Christians on a mission to draw in the un-churched come together and unwittingly present an atmosphere that demonstrated: (1) members gossiping about other members and (2) isolated socialization, only chatting with specific guests? 1 Peter 3:8,10 state, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another...he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile." Our behavior reflects the love of Christ.

In the Lounge, actions speak louder than our words; and the un-churched were watching and observing the interactions between church members. If they were willing to openly say and do hurtful things toward each other, then their "outpouring" of love for the un-churched was perceived as hypocritical. Galatians 5:14 provides the directive that "...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." An unwillingness to follow this simple commandment dims the light of every Christian, and the church is ultimately judged as one body.

The Bible is the instruction book, and in Romans 12:10 it tells Christians to "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves." At the Lounge, the message is conveyed through actions. If a Christian's actions do not speak for him or her, nothing will. The truth is; Christians and the way they live, striving daily to live a life that reflects Christ, is their only message. When one begins their walk with Christ no matter what kind of venue they frequent, at some point a visible change is to be expected; a change in attitude and a change in behavior.

In the beginning, we realized that demonstrating the love of Christ was going to be a challenge for both the churched and un-churched. The church preaches love and kindness in the sanctuary but is it demonstrated beyond those walls? Barna noted that "when asked to explain their understanding of biblical stewardship, less than one out of every twenty included resources such as time, relationships, ideas, or skills in their assessment." Do Christians really believe that their faith revolves around a Sunday church service, weekly bible study, or church volunteer effort? Have they gained the wisdom to understand the vital call to actually demonstrate God's love in their communities and beyond the church walls? Barna goes on to state that "the typical believer would rather give money to an organization

to allow it to do good deeds in society than personally assist in alleviating the needs of disadvantaged people."[14]

Did the team, as well as other invited church guests, truly understand their purpose and the potential impact that the Lounge would have, or was it just an exercise in drive-by Evangelism? Collectively, we are called to unify the body. "Restoring Life by Destroying Barriers" is the running theme at Antioch and for this project and can be found in the book of Ephesians 2:14. Keeping that in mind, the GLPT members were asked to identify potential barriers *before* and *after* the project, then to compare and contrast the data. This feedback reflects issues brought to the fore during the Pre/Post Participation Survey.

Recurring themes continued to emerge as the project developed, such as (1) the overall Christian perspective, (2) potential language barriers ("Church" vernacular, to be specific) and (3) the concept of things being "too churchy." The aforementioned text outlined how critical the "Christian perspective" is in direct relation to the un-churched. It explores the Christians' perspectives of self and others, while examining in particular the effect of their interactions and influence with the un-churched.

Chapter 5 will look at "potential language barriers" and shed light on the concept of "too churchy." This chapter's conclusion will provide a final review of Christian perspectives and effective engagement strategies.

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[14] Barna, *Revolution: Worn-Out On Church*, 34.

The Re-Visitation

My congregation as well as a few members of the lay team were skeptical and questioned the planned methods for engaging the un-churched and the actual concept of going beyond the walls with great hesitation. That doubt is what has fueled and propelled this project forward with fervor. In order to highlight the teams' acknowledgement that the project was on the right track, we look to Barna's perspective:

> But at the same time, we must take God's word to Peter to heart: "Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean." (Acts 11: 9) We must be very careful how we critique another person's spiritual journey. If someone's path conforms to biblical guidelines —even though it may stray from church traditions, cultural expectations, or our personal comfort zone—then we must accept the possibility that God may be working through him or her in a manner that is different from how He is working through us, or perhaps different from the ways we have previously seen or experienced His leading. We are called to be wise and discerning, but not judgmental.[15]

Failure was the collective expectation. In part, this was due to the non-traditional methods used. Yes, there were stumbling blocks along the way but with each trial, came new direction, and throughout each experience a "road map" for success appeared. Since this was a learning process problems were anticipated; so evaluation strategies were continually incorporated into this project. Motivating guests to come to the venue was just one part of the process. More important to the project's success was the actual retention of the un-churched. In the final analysis by the GLPT members, it was apparent that some formal guidelines for evaluating the "un-churched" should have been implemented. The final evaluation process will be partially based upon the following suggestions, offered by participants throughout the process and in the Pre/Post Participation Survey analysis:

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[15] Barna, *Grow Your Church from the Outside In*, 19-20.

1) Invite people with whom you are already familiar

2) Keep a balanced mixture of activities/entertainment (avoid being "too churchy")

3) Be social, open, and non-judgmental

4) Keep a friendly attitude and an approachable disposition

5) Ensure that there is time for everyone to participate in the open mike session

Moving forward, a final One-on-One Social will be planned and guests will be surveyed. Feedback will be compiled and the data used to add value to the continuation of the project. The final analysis will produce a cross-reference of the experiences of the churched and un-churched. GLPT members suggested additional topics for discussion in order to gather feedback that is more accurate. These questions are listed in Appendix R.

The project's evaluation process utilized internal as well as external examination methods. The internal examination focused on the impact of the preaching, teaching, and training provided to the GLPT members and its subsequent impact on their preparedness levels. Questions that arose in this examination included but where not limited to: 1) Were their hearts and minds truly fixed on God or gaining the pastor's attention; 2) Were they committed to practicing personal worship, praise, prayer and studying the word; and 3) What did they have to offer the un-churched? Barna notes:

> When asked what constitutes success in life, few believers define success in spiritual terms. Most describe outcomes related to professional achievement, family solidarity, physical accomplishments, or resource acquisition... When given the opportunity to state how they want to be known by others, fewer than one out of ten believers mentioned descriptions that reflect their relationship with God.[16]

Who are Christians and do they really want to be called out by the world? Do Christians act for personal reward or for the Glory of God?

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[16] Barna, *Grow Your Church from the Outside In*, 33.

In search of clarification, we asked our GLPT members three questions and gathered their responses. (This questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix S.)

(1) Why did you volunteer for this project?

(2) What did you hope to gain from this experience?

(3) What did you actually learn?

The Bible tells us in Matthew 18:14, "In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost." God cares about each and every one of His children. When Christians show God's love, He has the opportunity to draw another unto Him. The project results indicate that an impact was made as it relates to individual's personal walk with Christ. The information drawn from the Pre/Post Participation Surveys provided crucial feedback that was instrumental in creating direction, and highlighting challenges and opportunities.

The final evaluation looked beyond the GLPT members to question whether there was true commitment to outreach. When all of the interviews, focus groups, and surveys were completed, one question remained—what was accomplished? How many lives were re-directed toward God?

This assignment confirmed the impact that Christians can have on one another and specifically how one person or even one invitation can change a life or an entire family. This situation motivates other Christians to become innovators for Christ. Christians spend time educating and preparing themselves for various duties and obligations in life, but what about the call to witness. Do Christians believe that because they have found God that that experience alone is enough to prepare them to witness to others? Are Christians truly committed to developing a closer, stronger relationship with God? If so, the path is clear, as

God speaks to us through His word, requiring consistent studying, and searching of scripture

for His guidance. Amazingly, Barna says that "although the typical believer contends that the

Bible is accurate in what it teaches, he or she spends less time reading the Bible in a year

than watching television, listening to music, reading other books and publications, or

conversing about personal hobbies and leisure interests."[17] A true commitment to God, places

Him first, and that is evident and demonstrated to others by putting His commandments into

actions. Fitch states:

> This new generation is not impacted by the ways evangelicals have traditionally
> presented truth and defended their faith. They experience and engage truth differently
> than previous generations. They want to see how truth is lived, not just talked about
> intellectually as information . . . In their demand for a living gospel, they expose how
> much we have separated the truth of salvation from the way we live it.[18]

Referencing the Congregational Profile, Pt. 2, we find that 73% of the members felt

that communications were clearly stressed for articulating that outreach is a key focus; and

77% were aware of Antioch's outreach activities. However, only 41% were aware of

Antioch's members' training on outreach and the opportunities available to prepare and

practice outreach; while 36.4% were unaware of these opportunities. In the end, 75% felt that

Antioch could develop a more effective Outreach Ministry. When asked if "outreach is

primarily the role of the pastor and church leaders," members were interestingly divided,

with 50% stating "no," but an even more interesting 35% stating "yes," and a little over 10%

answering "maybe," for a total of 45% being unsure of their role as it pertained to outreach.

This came as a real surprise, since 95% of the respondents initially noted that they believed

that outreach is an important part of being a part of the body of Christ.

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[17] Barna, *Revolution: Worn-Out On Church,* 33.

[18] David E. Fitch, *The Great Giveaway: Reclaiming the Mission of the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2005), 49.

These statistics complete the circle for this introspective view of Antioch's situation and how it imitates the overall culture of today's church. Individuals with one-to-five years of church experience were still unclear about their basic roles as Christians. An effective engagement of the un-churched begins by effectively engaging the actual church. This suggests that a major focus is placed on education within the church along with encouraging regular personal study. One suggestion was to promote the development of small groups and to encourage conversation that would challenge our traditional perspectives and biblical foundation. Moving forward, there is a real commitment to regular internal surveys to measure the impact of various efforts. Being dedicated to spiritual growth is the duty of all Christians, with the Word written in their hearts and reflected in their actions. Going beyond the walls is more than just an interesting concept; it is an initiative, for it has the potential to become a way of life for every Christian.

When considering the New Outreach Ministry, survey respondents identified their top three strategies. (See Appendix F.)

1st Tier

"Training members how to discuss Christ with others individually or in a group" - 53%

2nd Tier

"Training and taking members as a group out into the community to do outreach" - 50%

3rd Tier

"Encouraging each member to invite at least one person to church every Sunday" - 26%

Running close to the third tier, with 24%, were members who selected "using existing ministries to conduct outreach, such as the Young Adult and Single Ministries as well as other Clusters in the church." Continuing the evaluation process meant striving for continual

improvements, recognizing both successes and barriers that have the potential to negatively impact the process.

- A more thorough review and assessment process of the questions posed would have ensured consistency in Pre/Post Participation Surveys analysis period and enhanced the design of our initial training opportunities

- The development of a more formalized and substantial ongoing training program for discipleship

- Provision of more relevant tools to aid participants in understanding how to assess the readiness levels of the un-churched for an invitation

- Identification of strategies for personal development of comfort levels

- Ensure Pre/Post Participation Survey data validity

Inviting others to take this journey was truly a learning experience for the entire project team. The survey results aided in developing an effective program design, and in identifying a continual training program for the project team and the church body. The next chapter will demonstrate how internal cultural norms create external barriers. Gaps emerge as individuals make inferences about the interruption of language and behaviors. The GPLT was fortunate to have this information in order to avoid many pitfalls on the way to successful engagement of the un-churched. The journey continues.

CHAPTER 5

CREATING CLARITY IN OUR CHURCH CULTURE

The church represents the body of Christ, as a living, breathing, moving organism that

performs works. What then, is church culture? The combination of church and culture can be

dangerous if the result is that culture triumphs. A generic definition of culture is simply - the

world that we live in or the human environment. An alternate definition offered by Richard

Niebuhr in his book *Christ & Culture* is as follows.

> Culture is the "artificial, secondary environment" which man superimposes on the
> natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organizations,
> inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values.[1]

In this context, the terms culture and civilization are sometimes synonymous as they

both affect and relate to social groups. Culture is the culmination of nature and the synthetic

influence of man in the world. Niebuhr goes on to explain that when man attempts to

combine Christ and the world they are referred to as a cultural Christian. A few of the

individuals in the Lounge project initially fell into this category. They felt nothing wrong

with using Christ and divine doctrine as an insertion or downloadable version applicable to

life similar to Windows 98. Cultural Christians are an interesting breed that appears to hold

God and community in the same esteem. There is not a fine line but a blurry line between the

standards of both the church and the world. They extract what is applicable from the spiritual

realm and blend it with what is carnal. Yes, this is only one component, but this also assists

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[1] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1951), 32.

in the breakdown of language that the church is currently experiencing. Niebuhr goes on to write:

> On one hand they interpret culture through Christ, regarding those elements in it as most important which are most accordant with his work and person; on the other hand they understand Christ through culture, selecting from his teaching and action as well as from the Christian doctrine about him such points as seem to agree with what is best in civilation.[2]

This reminds me of the situation that we have in our society today where one group of people will create a particular word or phrase and use it so often and so frequently that society adapts it and places it the dictionary making it the norm. The church is also susceptible to that same degree of normalcy with the language spoken within its walls.

Systematic communication is the crux of any well-structured organization. The church is no different. In church it is important to understand that human words are essentially based on culture. God speaks to us by using human words, thus leaving room for human err. The lounge project team had to have a firm grasp on this concept in order to proceed and communicate effectively with the un-churched.

Church members relate to each other by continually exchanging thoughts and ideas; thus, appealing to the un-churched through genuine conversation has become a crucial component of this project. Content as well as the context of the language utilized is carefully selected, as it will prove to be of the utmost importance to the total success of the Lounge. First, the members of the GLPT had to grasp the fact that their words were to be chosen cautiously on a consistent basis even within a Lounge setting; and second, they had to embrace their role in the process of outreach fully. Initially, team members were given techniques with which to communicate comfortably and with clarity. However, before fully

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[2] Niebuhr, *Christ & Culture*, 83.

developing the training and coaching tools on how to initiate a genuine discussion with Lounge participants, a thorough review of the current language used would be necessary. Project members needed to understand thoroughly that in order to effectively reach the invited guests and create a lasting bond with them, they had to *hone* in on and analyze language in general.

In the Congregational Profile, Pt. 1, 49% of the members surveyed noted that they sometimes found it difficult to speak with un-churched people about God. One reason for this is that there has been a great language barrier between those attend church regularly and those who do not. This became more evident as the Lounge project progressed. This separation stems from the fact that, once people are saved, sometimes they feel that they need to speak in a certain manner or use religious or biblical terms in order to fit the "I am saved" mold, which in essence, projects an air of arrogance or superiority. One of the goals in creating the Lounge was to dispel that myth as well as to minimize the focus on outward appearances completely, and allow people to interject and intermingle using their own unique voice. This goal was so important that multiple vehicles for its accomplishment were established, such as open mike, spoken word, comedy, song, playing instruments, and drama. The Lounge creates an entertaining yet level playing field, and at any given moment, if one were to walk in to view the space, no one would be able to detect who is churched and who is un-churched. It is this uniformity that most of the un-churched seek. They already know that they appear to be unique and are most likely not living up to "church standards"; therefore, visiting the Lounge could be that curious baby step. The anticipated vibe and subsequent dialogue that occurs can either encourage or discourage further spiritual exploration.

Another pivotal reason why surveyed members found it difficult to speak to the un-churched is that over the years church members have adopted their own dialect, and at times certain phrases or clichés are used to express emotion or make a religious statement. This was identified as a potential language barrier, because the actual meaning behind the use of these particular phrases was unclear and unfamiliar to the un-churched. There had to be a commonality of language on some level for each group to understand the other fluently. Basic communication regarding the church and its teachings can be simple and without the need for translation. Martin Marty, author of the series, "The Public Church -- Living Out the Good News," made this statement while speaking to an audience at The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Marty stated, as reported by Payne and Beazely:

> "The challenge is to interpret what we have to say," said Marty. "We need to seek fresh language for a new day" and get past the "special interiority" of church language that hides its meaning from the public." Marty, who directs The Public Religion Project funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, called for the public church to have a "mission of clarity" to shape the public language it espouses. "Too frequently the language of scholars on the front edge of the church's thinking doesn't match the language that is out there. We need the kind of language that reaches a depth of heart in that place where the infidel moves...[3]

Our society is very permeable in that anything can become "the norm," including language, if spoken frequently and consistently enough. In recent years, the church has also mimicked this trend by using familiar speech that only appeals to some. In order to explore this growing trend more in-depth, a language analysis was performed, with the participants from the Lounge examining five common phrases and their use within the church. The Church Language Survey (intended for the churched and the un-churched) in the form of a blank survey is reproduced in Appendix T. The collective responses can be found in Appendix U, and additional data is highlighted in Appendix Z.

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[3] Payne and Beazley, *Reclaiming the Great Commission*, 11.

Surveyors within the church as well as outside the church were asked three simple questions related to "church dialect" and the overall impact that the vernacular had on this experiment as a whole. The participants were separated into two comparative groups from Tuesday and Wednesday Bible Study. A portion of the total of sixty-two participants were surveyed. Group One consisted of four respondents, and Group Two had seventeen respondents. Both groups were comprised of only those members with one- to five-year tenure at the church. First, they were asked whether or not they used the phrase in question. Second, they were asked if they understood the phrase. Finally, the GLPT team members wanted to know if they were comforted by the phrase.

The five common phrases were:

(1) I'll Pray for You

(2) Too Blessed to Be Stressed

(3) I am Blessed

(4) Rely on the Lord

(5) Come Fellowship

These phrases can also be referred to as clichés, which are overused expressions, statements or ideas that have lost their originality or meaning due to repetitive use. They have been adopted by believers of Christ and are used in Christian culture. They are self-explanatory in definition, and at times haphazardly used by church members in order to get a point across. The collective survey results are as follows:

Table 5.1 – Language Survey
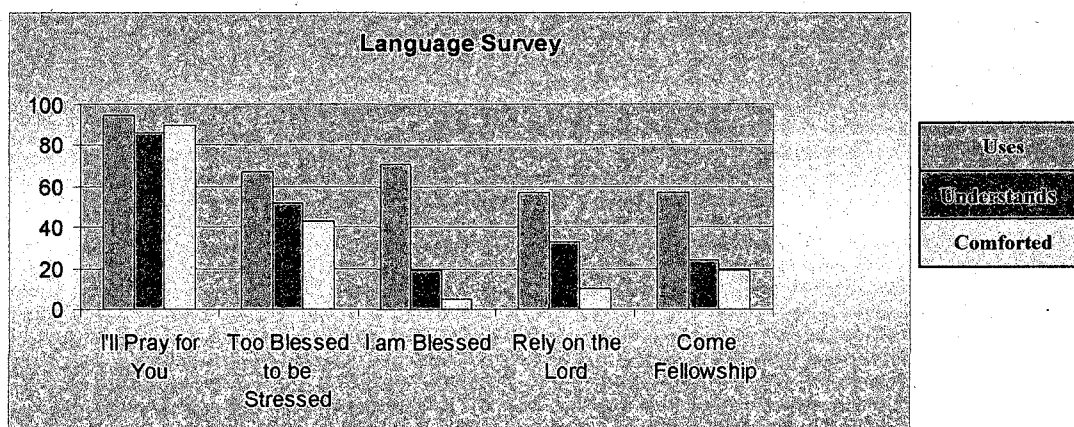
While interacting in the Lounge, team members had to choose their words carefully

while engaging in dialogue with and in proximity to un-churched participants. Because

people in this changing culture of spiritual revelation are seeking truth and understanding, it

is more vital than ever that scriptural messages be expressed with clarity and in their proper

context. Creating "catch phrases" in order to blend in with worldly culture to spread more

easily the good news of the Lord is not effective. The un-churched participants in this study

are interested in receiving useful information, real connections, and genuine conversation,

not in passing idioms that offer a "church band-aide." The attempt to rid the Christian

population of frivolous language begins locally, by educating the members in the

appropriateness of dialogue content that stems solely from the Word of God.

While analyzing the data from the language survey, it became evident that church

members have become more lackadaisical than ever regarding their total commitment to God

and the reading of the Word. The information collected prompted the GLPT members to take

an introspective look at themselves and re-assess their true level of devotion and dedication.

They then had to re-focus on their task with the knowledge that religion has taken a backseat

to pop culture and that God is simply not a priority today. Church members in the present day do not have the same absolute moral beliefs that members did a few generations ago. Barna provides some shocking statistics about the nature of Christian living. For example,

> Although the typical believer contends that the Bible is accurate in what it teaches, he or she spends less time reading the Bible in a year than watching television, listening to music, reading other books and publications, or conversing about personal hobbies and leisure interests.. . . The most significant influences on the choices of churched believers are neither teachings from the pulpit nor advice gleaned from fellow congregants; it is messages absorbed from the media, the law, and family members.[4]

This passage suggests that some of the difficulties surrounding effectively engaging the un-churched are grounded in the fact that the church is not living the life it has invited others to live. At times, people who frequent the church (building) are in essence living the exact same lifestyles that the un-churched are living. That is why the creation of the Lounge made such good sense. This is also why an informal dialogue forum, called Sunday Conversations was created by two of the new members of Antioch who initially met through this Lounge project. The dialogue is now held every other Sunday in the evening at 7 p.m. This informal gathering is church for some people; thus, the scriptures are referenced with each query to ensure an accurate biblical tie-in. It is an open forum where very frank and real discussion takes place. I am the moderator. The two young women felt that, because the atmosphere seemed so open and free, they too would feel very comfortable and non-restricted in dialoguing about everyday concerns and issues. Sex and Religion was the first topic that received such an overwhelming response that requests were made to continue dealing with the same issue at the next meeting. The first two sessions were packed, which affirmed the need for such a gathering. Again, it makes sense for people to gather together in

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[4] Barna, *Revolution: Worn-Out on Church*, 32-33.

the same space to share similar experiences, good and bad. The Lounge was created in order to highlight and narrow the divide between judgmental and non-judgmental Christians. The desired environment is a barrier-free place where everyone is equal. The Lounge setting is conducive to practical outreach, social communing, and effective witnessing.

Christians are obligated to witness. Christians are compelled to embrace responsibility and shift from the concept of self to engaging others. In order to cultivate effective members in the body of Christ the church uses a strategic approach called Outreach. The position that each Christian is obligated to witness prompts an analysis of the perception of outreach preparation and practice within the church culture. Does the church truly believe that it is each individual member's duty, regardless of their position, to evangelize actively by witnessing to others? No. In fact, there were varied responses as to who was responsible for outreach and witnessing to the un-churched. Some felt that it was solely the Pastor's job to evangelize but pastors are not supposed to be positioned as paid professionals who do ministry in place of their members. They are to equip their members for ministry and then hold them accountable as servants. The majority of people did not feel that it was a shared role. In an effort to decipher these varied responses, the Congregational Profile, Pt. 2, examined outreach strategies selected to design a New Outreach Ministry. Attendees were given a questionnaire, and the results are displayed in Appendix F.

In the final analysis of members' views towards a newly proposed outreach program, the data was collected revealing that 75% of the members of Antioch felt that the church could develop a more effective Outreach Ministry. That was encouraging. Eighty percent felt that training was necessary in order to discuss Christ accurately and effectively, and 80% of

the members also agreed that, after training was complete, taking it to the streets would be the next logical step in the process.

Changing the cultural state of mind in longstanding institutions such as the church is no easy task. Commencing this gradual process of change in a Lounge affiliated with a church is a much more attainable endeavor. What is important is that dialogue has begun. What is equally important is that a model is being developed for the specific purpose of ushering in new believers with new ideas and fresh energy. The change of mindset is the first step and this experiment has laid a very solid foundation for further research and analysis of locating, engaging, educating, and embracing the un-churched.

CHAPTER 6

BREAKING THE WALLS DOWN:
THE IMPACT OF THE JOURNEY

This project highlighted the capacity of the Lounge to foster communication and growth by first developing the outreach skills of the churched, thereby enabling them to engage and minister to the un-churched more effectively. One highly anticipated expectation of this project was the production of more leaders and disciples throughout the church, as this would ultimately equip more of the church's membership with the ability to move masses of believers to God.

The participation of the Young Adult and Singles Ministries of Antioch Baptist Church allowed these members to take a new leadership role. Furthermore, it also allowed the church to focus on a key population that traditionally had moved away from the church experience altogether. Using these young adults to reach their peers was a key strategy for the success of this project. The members of these ministries were instructed to meet and greet the un-churched in a way that would demonstrate their love for the un-churched and God's love working through them. While several potential barriers were addressed, even more barriers were identified that generated concern. It became clear that language and the inability of the participants to communicate effectively with the un-churched was a major obstacle. Participants realized that some of the un-churched might have felt spiritually inadequate after various Bible brow-beatings from church members in the past. Approaching the un-churched seemed difficult to some and impossible to others, especially if they did not

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possess strong communication skills or an outgoing personality. The common thread that made them press forward was the fact that LOVE conquered it all.

The un-churched needed to feel the presence of love in all interactions with the believers. Human nature dictates that people desire love, even in difficult situations; because of this, the Lounge environment is to accommodate and support this need. The invitation to the Lounge was the initial phase. The ultimate goal of this project is to bring the un-churched into the church and to sustain them there and cultivate their relationship with Christ. Although the Lounge is the vehicle that brings them into the church, love is the ingredient that keeps them there. Love is one of the major factors that keep the church alive and healthy.

Although this endeavor highlights the young adults and singles as the church members involved in the outreach strategies, all of the church's membership is equally important in this effort. Through training in mediums such as Bible Study and workshops, all members become capable of inviting the un-churched to fellowship. Ministries with members of other age groups can also invite them to activities that are interesting to them. Venues like the Lounge can be set up to offer activities that will accommodate any group.

This mission has demonstrated the ability to create an all-inclusive environment for the churched and the un-churched that reaches far beyond the walls of traditional religious institutions. With an environment that is non-judgmental and void of rituals, people are free to be themselves. Experience has shown that once the un-churched feel comfortable that they can be themselves around so-called "church" people they are inspired to join in other endeavors, such as an actual church encounter.

Testimonies

This project could not have come to fruition without the testimonies of the un-

churched individuals who now know God on a deeper level through this non-traditional

experience. The entire project team is thankful to God for the Christians who were bold

enough to share the love of Christ with their family, friends, colleagues, and strangers. Some

of the testimonies show God's hand at work, while others reveal the impact that one

individual can have on another person's life, just by reaching out to him or her. Sharing these

experiences demonstrated how easily the church could miss a vital opportunity to engage an

un-saved person. Missing this opportunity can cost someone his or her salvation and eternal

life.

Alyce gave the first testimony. Her long-time friend Leon invited her to the Lounge.

They had met in the military and remained friends over the years. Leon was a GLPT

member. (The fact that Alyce responded to Leon's invitation supports Rainer's data,

mentioned in Chapter 4, that people are more responsive to individuals close to them.) Leon

explained the concept behind the Lounge to Alyce and she wanted to share in this new

experience. Standard questions were presented to each individual. Below are the questions

and Alyce's responses:

How was your experience at the Lounge?

I had a wonderful experience there. I enjoyed the concept of being in a comfortable
and inviting setting and being able to fellowship with Christians without the pressure
of being forced to join the church.

What made you make the transition from the Lounge to the church?

After meeting the pastor and other church members, I was invited to revival and
church services. The service was moving to me and I felt as if this could be the
church home for me. After visiting the church on several more Sundays, I decided

that Antioch was where I needed to be for the enrichment of my life both physically and spiritually.

Alyce is a success story that displays the true impact of this project. She is now an active member of Antioch due to her assurance level. She continues to visit the Lounge. Today, Alyce embraces acceptance through close friends within the church family. She does not visit the Lounge as regularly because now she is comfortable in the traditional church environment, attending bible study, and finding her place within the body of Christ.

Dawn was a member of First Church of God in Christ for six years and she gave her testimony. One of her friends, Shareema, had family who are members of Antioch. One day Shareema told her about the Lounge and asked if she wanted to check it out. Dawn thought, "What a corny idea." Shareema and Dawn never made it there together. Later, Dawn decided to throw an event for her company and remembered the Lounge. She asked Shareema to connect her with her cousin (Keith) who attends Antioch, but Shareema took too long to get back to her. So, Dawn found out the name of the church and called me directly to inquire about using the Lounge for a party. She was fast-talking and just knew that I would say no because she was a stranger; but I said "Yes." Dawn said, "I was totally surprised." She scheduled an appointment with me to meet and view the space the following Tuesday after work; I then invited her back on Friday night to see it in action. She came to the Lounge with a friend, but they only stayed briefly. Dawn decided to have her event on Friday, April 18. Below are her answers to the standardized questions:

How was your experience at the Lounge?

I accepted the invitation to come back to the Lounge because the space was so beautiful and the location was dope (impressive). It was also a little hidden treasure in the heart of Bed-Stuy. I was curious to see what type of crowd would attend on a regular night. I think I have been there every Friday since my initial visit.

It was fine the first time. It was different with no liquor available. I enjoyed the atmosphere and Pastor Waterman and Shaneeka were very hospitable. The free finger foods really added a nice touch. The space was clean and you can tell that it was built with a lot of TLC. The space translates into "welcome."

What made you make a transition from the Lounge to the church?

Well, since the year began, I just happened to have been asking God to move me from my current church, so personally, I believe that I was led to Antioch for more than one reason and the Lounge was the initial draw. I was asking God to move me to where I could really be used in the Kingdom as I felt that I was not utilizing all of the talents that I was blessed to possess. Pastor invited me to Antioch and I accepted his invitation because I was so impressed with the Lounge that I felt that the organization and structure of his church would have to be similarly on point, and I was correct.

After about three weeks of attending church and continuing at the Lounge, Dawn became a member of Antioch. Today, after five months, she is my assistant, a member of the praise team and event manager at the Lounge. This project has not only moved people to renew their relationship with Christ, but it has also allowed them to use effectively their many talents to enhance the body of Christ for the glory God. We thank Him for moving through this project.

Third is Monique, who had an amazing series of twists and turns, which were all maneuvered by God. Monique's testimony begins with an overview of situations in her life. She felt like something bad was going to happen to her, and she needed something positive in her life. Everybody was telling her to pray, pray, pray, so she felt that she wanted to join a church. Monique had never had a church experience, and simply wanted to have the experience and see if what people were saying was really true. She said she believed, "Don't knock it until you try it," and actually prayed seriously to God. She said, "I let him know that I didn't know if I was coming or going, but if He would lead me, I will follow, no questions asked."

The next day, Monique had a doctor's appointment in Manhattan. On the bus, she chatted with a woman named Diamond, who asked Monique if she would like to go to church. This was funny, because she has been looking for a church for about a month. They exchanged numbers as the ride ended and when she got to the doctor's office she found out that her appointment was actually scheduled for the following Monday. As Monique walked out of the building, she threw her hands up to God, saying, "I'm not going to ask any questions, but just go with You."

Diamond called Monique about a week later and gave her testimony of drug abuse and the change that God made in her life and invited her to church that Friday. Monique was amazed. She said, "I felt that if this really worked for her, I was willing to try it." That Friday, Monique went to Citibank to deposit her check and coincidentally overheard a random conversation where a bank employee was informing two guys about this very nice Lounge that served no alcohol and had a positive environment.

That Friday, Monique and Diamond went to church and Diamond introduced her to a few people. They then ventured out into the parking lot, for it was now time for the nightly church tent service. Afterwards, everyone was eating and talking outside, and making plans to go to the Lounge. Monique also went and this was what she had to say:

> It was amazing. The place was beautiful with nice lighting and live entertainment. It was everything I imagined it would be. It was not a hole in the wall; it was a nice, cozy little spot. For the first time, I did not feel the need to drink. I felt comfortable and I did not need anything to make me feel good. I stayed until closing, and as I looked to the side, I saw the bank employee (Avis) that I heard speaking about the Lounge. Once again, I thought "Oh my God" I am not going to ask any questions, I am just going to follow. I approached Avis and told her about the conversation at the bank, and Avis told me, "It was meant to be." We hugged and went back into the Lounge to gather my belongings. I was having problems getting a cab, so Ms. Miller came outside and tried to help me, but nothing came. Ms. Miller finally offered to take me home, which was on the other side of town by Brooklyn College. She told

me, "This is what we do; we take care of each other." I have been going back ever since.

Monique continued going to church and to the Lounge. After about three weeks, she officially joined the church, and one week later relocated to an apartment that I had available for rent. Today, Monique is a member of Antioch's praise team and sings her heart out. She recently started taking online classes with International Academy of Design & Technology (IADT) for graphic design and helps with the church's Media Arts Program. Most importantly, she says she now has a support system for her son through the Men's Ministry.

Examine how God worked in this situation to bring Monique from the street, to the Lounge, into the church. What if Diamond had not have the courage to hold a conversation with Monique? This brief encounter set off a chain of events that eventually changed a woman and her child's life. There was no doctor's appointment, but there was a need for Monique to be on that bus, on that day, at that time.

What about the bank employee? Monique's overhearing of that conversation and her then seeing the young woman at the Lounge that night, was her confirmation that she was in the right place. Her experience was not an accident, luck, or chance. It was God answering her prayer to be led. Finally, here is a woman who has never been to church. She could have been turned off by the whole tent experience, but it was the continued fellowship and love that kept her in the mix where she needed to be. Now God is using her many talents to strengthen the body of Christ. Her life has taken a turn for the better. Is she free from trials? No, but God is working it out and the Lounge was instrumental in initiating that process.

Our fifth testimony comes from "E," who was invited to the Lounge by Dawn who gave her testimony previously in this section after finding the Lounge and then Antioch. "E" explains that she and Dawn knew each other from work connections, then from collaborative

business ventures. She had ended up as good friends. When "E" was questioned about her

experience at the lounge, she provided the comments below:

How was your experience at the Lounge?

First, the word "Lounge" attracted me. Then her [Dawn's] enthusiasm about it
solidified it for me. When I walked in, I was surprised about how it looked. The décor
was like a city venue, it was great to see that in Brooklyn. Then I saw the crowd; the
ages ranged from the 20s to the 40s, which is not a common scene to me in any
church venue. And to hear the music of Da Truth and the other Christian artists,
which fell outside the traditional Gospel mode, was refreshing. All this brought a
sense of accomplishment to me. Three weeks later, I accompanied Dawn to the
Lounge to take some pictures and actually had a chance to meet the pastor.

What made you make a transition from the Lounge to the church?

When I came to the church, I felt as though my kind wasn't accepted. "My kind"
means the ones who are not heavily rooted in the church and do not necessarily walk
with the Bible, but have a bit of spiritually. This is what I feel most 20-30 year olds in
urban areas are and we are the church outcasts. But this Lounge spoke in our
language. It brought religion into our level of communication. I felt if a pastor who
can have the inspiration to do this on his own, then his church must also speak to me.
And so far, it has.

After five weeks, "E" also officially joined the Antioch family. She actively

volunteers in the Health and Fitness Ministry by teaching Pilates on Tuesday nights and

works with Dawn by planning events at the Lounge.

Our final testimony comes from Jack who I first met on the grounds of the church.

Jack explains that he works for FedEx, and ended up visiting Antioch frequently to make

deliveries on his route. At first, he thought I was the janitor because I was always cleaning.

He soon discovered who I was, and we continued to have enlightening conversation. This

went on for seven months, as Jack began to view me as a friend and interim-counselor. After

about four months, I extended an invitation to the Lounge and Jack accepted, "because the

invitation was casual and not insistent or pushy."

Here is Jack's feedback concerning the Lounge:

How was your experience at the Lounge?

My experience at the Lounge was great! But since I had gotten to know the pastor already, I kind of knew that it would be all right. I loved the way it was presented—just my style. The music was good and I really had a nice, enjoyable time. I stayed for about an hour, and had two frozen beverages (and the free wings were on point). I mingled with the people from Antioch and had a nice relaxing time.

What made you make a transition from the Lounge to the church?

This was a gradual process that took eight months altogether. First, I met Pastor Waterman while delivering to Antioch on my FedEx route. I began to confide in him and tell him more of my testimony each time I made a delivery. After about four months of these conversations he invited me to the Lounge. Three months later, I decided to attend the Lounge and then came to visit Antioch the next month. I visited for a month and then recently joined. The reason that I felt so sure that this was the right place for me was because Pastor was really cool and the members of Antioch that I met at the Lounge were so friendly and welcoming that I just felt comfortable. *

Alyce, Dawn, Monique, "E," and Jack all started from the outside and worked their way in because they were met with love and kindness. The Bible tells us in Matthew 22:37-39 that Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. The second is; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The aforementioned testimonies are worth their weight in gold simply because they validate all of the research and implementation that has taken place in the development of this Lounge. The initial plan was to create an interesting venue that could be used as a non-traditional "outer court" or outreach center for attracting un-churched individuals. The next step was to form a professional and knowledgeable team from already existing church ministries to research and develop the best practices for actually reaching and communicating with said subjects. This group would then create a formalized curriculum of sorts in order to gather information about the people that they planned to approach. After that came the actual

invitation to the Lounge, and then the concept gradually came to fruition—like a birth, from conception to life. Five people visited the Lounge first and then joined Antioch shortly thereafter. The entire team, including the GLPT members, Lay Committee and myself, were very satisfied and passionately committed to adopting and continuing this type of outreach, because the outcome was immensely positive.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Going beyond the walls is all about sharing the love of God with the un-churched on their level. The entire team was able to speak from the heart, sharing what they know about God and what He has done in their lives. It allowed them to reach people in a genuine fashion, and enabled them to reach the un-churched in a manner in which they have not been approached before. It is about welcoming people without judgment, restrictions, or requirements— just letting people be free to be themselves. This is an important and very inviting factor in a world where people are challenged daily to fit into some physical, financial, emotional, and even spiritual mold.

Initially, the concept of a gospel Lounge appeared to be far-fetched. This experiment has only scratched the surface of the immense possibilities of developing "outer courts" to assist the church. The traditional format which the church uses for outreach has to be upgraded, and the Lounge is one positive example of how to "think outside of the box." God made human kind unique, so that what works for one individual may not work for another. The point is to remain open and embrace people as they are. Believers who are rooted in Christ have the capability to venture out into the world but not be conformed by it. The surroundings can be unconventional; it is the message of love that is important. Jesus was not confined by walls. Jesus went where the people were, He looked past their flaws and met their needs; and eventually the people came to Jesus.

Today, the people are coming to the Lounge because the venue is helping to meet their needs. Here, men and women of various ages, backgrounds, ethnicities and careers, can come together and exchange ideas about life. They can laugh or cry. They can share their talents and experience the gifts of others. They can encounter a peaceful, joy-filled evening. There are no drinks and no drugs, just good clean fun. As one woman said, "It sounds so corny," and yet it is so real.

Where are you in your Journey beyond the Walls? The project team went to great lengths to build an edifice that would attract the un-churched. They upheld their commitment to creating methods of attracting and retaining the un-churched. To a certain degree, the project can claim success, because they have witnessed individuals who have been ushered in, through the "outer court," into the church, and who are now thriving active members. This experiment not only helped define the church's role in the Kingdom of God, it revealed an uncharted, but nevertheless obtainable concept that can be developed and used in accomplishing the goal of reaching out to those who are un-churched and bringing them into the fold. The Lounge is the quintessential model for this "outer court." The root word here is out. The focus is on venturing out of the building and into the streets. In the current climate, this mandate is not suggestive, it is imperative. Simply put, it is time to upgrade outreach methods. Desperate times require drastic measures. The sheer success of this project should propel other innovative leaders to find familiarity in this composition, to be encouragement and motivated enough to create their own gospel Lounge. Follow the heart, pray, fast, and trust God. The church is not a building—it is a body with many members, it is you and it is me, Going beyond the Walls.

APPENDIX A

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE: PT. 1: KNOWLEDGE OF PROGRAMMING – BLANK SURVEY

Required Demographics: (Circle your answers)

Gender: Male Female **Age:** 13-20 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61 & up

Member Status: Visitor New Member – 11 mos 1-5yrs 6 yrs or More

Answer Key: (*Questions 1 – 3*) (Circle your answers)
1 = Always **2** = Sometimes **3** = Occasionally **4** = Never **5** = Not Applicable

1. Over the last 12 months, I attended Bible Study at Antioch or another church.
   1 2 3 4 5

2. I encourage people to get to know Christ for themselves.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I find it difficult to speak to un-churched people about God.
   1 2 3 4 5

Answer Key: (*Questions 4 – 10*)
1 = Yes **2** = No **3** = Maybe **4** = Not Applicable

4. I am aware of Antioch's outreach activities.   1 2 3 4

5. I am aware of Antioch's members' training on outreach.   1 2 3 4

6. I am aware of Antioch's opportunities to prepare and practice outreach.   1 2 3 4

7. Verbal/written communications at Antioch suggest that outreach is a key focus. 1 2 3 4

8. I am aware of Antioch's programs to support new members.   1 2 3 4

9. I believe that the provision of pamphlets and CDs will increase membership.   1 2 3 4

10. I believe that the presence of a Gospel Lounge provides opportunities to increase
    membership.   1 2 3 4

APPENDIX B

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE, PT. 1: KNOWLEDGE OF PROGRAMMING - CALCULATIONS

Required Demographics for all 4 Membership Groups (62)					
Member Category	Visitors	New Member	1yr – 5yrs	6yrs. & Over	Totals
Total Count	3	6	22	31	62
Males	0	2	8	9	19
Females	3	4	13	20	40
Unknown	0	0	1	2	3
13-20	0	0	2	2	4
21-30	0	0	3	1	4
31-40	0	3	4	3	10
41-50	0	2	7	2	11
51-60	0	1	2	10	13
60 & Up	3	0	1	13	17
Unknown	0	0	0	0	0

Visitors (3)					
Question #	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	N/A	Unknown
Q1	1	0	1	0	0	0
Q2	3	0	0	0	0	0
Q3	0	0	0	3	0	0
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	
Q4	3	0	0	0	0	
Q5	3	0	0	0	0	
Q6	2	1	0	0	0	
Q7	2	0	1	0	0	
Q8	1	1	1	0	0	
Q9	1	1	1	0	0	
Q10	2	1	0	0	0	

New Members (6)					
Question #	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	N/A	Unknown
Q1	3	0	2	1	0	0
Q2	2	2	2	0	0	0
Q3	0	1	1	3	1	0
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	
Q4	4	1	1	0	0	
Q5	2	2	1	0	1	
Q6	3	0	3	0	0	
Q7	3	0	3	0	0	
Q8	5	0	1	0	0	

Q9	2	1	3	0	0	
Q10	4	0	1	1	0	

Members 1yr – 5yrs (22)						
Question #	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	N/A	Unknown
Q1	15	3	2	1	0	1
Q2	10	7	4	0	1	0
Q3	1	10	4	7	0	0
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	
Q4	17	2	2	1	0	
Q5	9	8	2	3	0	
Q6	9	5	4	3	1	
Q7	16	2	3	1	0	
Q8	12	3	4	2	1	
Q9	12	2	7	1	0	
Q10	9	2	7	4	0	

We surveyed sixty-two of Antioch's 600 members or approximately 10% of the total membership. Twenty-two of the surveyors fit into the target group who had joined and/or been attending Antioch during Pastor Waterman's five-year tenure. Their answers disclosed the following:

- More than half always attended Bible Study in the past twelve months.
- 49% always encouraged non-members to get to know Christ for themselves
- 49% sometimes found it difficult to speak with the un-churched about God, suggesting that more outreach training and preparation could be useful towards accomplishing The Great Commission.
- 77% of the surveyors where aware of Antioch's outreach activities
- Only 41% of those surveyed were aware of Antioch's members' training on outreach and that same percentage was aware of Antioch's opportunities to prepare and practice outreach, with another 36.4% were unaware of these opportunities.
- 73% of the members felt that verbal/written communications at Antioch suggest that outreach is a key focus.
- 55% of the members were aware of programs to support new members and the same percentage believe that the provision of pamphlets and CDs will increase membership.
- Finally, 41% of the members believed that the presence of the Gospel Lounge provides opportunities to increase membership.

Members 6yrs & Over (31)						
Question #	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	N/A	Unknown
Q1	22	4	1	0	1	2
Q2	15	8	5	0	2	1
Q3	2	10	5	11	1	2
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	

Q4	27	2	1	0	1	
Q5	21	6	1	2	1	
Q6	20	5	3	2	1	
Q7	16	3	10	1	1	
Q8	25	3	1	1	1	
Q9	11	8	11	0	1	
Q10	13	7	7	4	0	

APPENDIX C

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE, PT. 2: PERFORMANCE & PARTICIPATION - BLANK SURVEY

Required Demographics: (Circle your answers)

Gender: Male   Female   **Age:** 13-20   21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61& up

Member Status: Visitor   New Member – 11 mos   1-5 yrs   6 yrs or more

1. Explain your understanding of "The Great Commission?"

_____

_____

Answer Key: (*Questions 1 – 4* - Circle the number for each of your answers)
1 = Always   **2** = Sometimes   **3** = Occasionally   **4** = Never   **5** = Not Applicable

2. I believe Antioch's members would actively participate in an outreach ministry.
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I would participate in Antioch's Outreach Ministry.
   1 2 3 4 5

4. I would encourage others to participate in Antioch's Outreach Ministry.
   1 2 3 4 5

Answer Key: (*Questions 5 – 10*)
1 = Yes   **2** = No   **3** = Maybe   **4** = Not Applicable

5. I believe that Antioch can develop a more effective outreach ministry.
   1 2 3 4

6. Which of the strategies below do you believe Antioch should include in its <u>new</u> outreach ministry?

   6.1 Training members on how to discuss Christ with others individually or in a group
   1 2 3 4
   6.2 Training and taking members as a group into the community to do outreach
   1 2 3 4
   6.3 Encouraging each member to invite <u>at least one person</u> to church every Sunday
   1 2 3 4
   6.4 Having more social events at the church to actively engage the community
   1 2 3 4

6.5   Using existing ministries to conduct outreach, such as YAM and Singles
        1 2 3 4

6.6   Other (please explain) _____

7.   My top three strategies from above.   ____ ____ ____

8.   My top three strategies in order of priority ____ ____ ____

9.   I believe that outreach is an important part of being a member of the body of Christ.
     1 2 3 4

10. I believe that outreach is primarily the role of the Pastor and church leaders.
     1 2 3 4

11. I believe that Antioch's current outreach ministry is achieving The Great Commission.
     1 2 3 4

APPENDIX D

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE, PT. 2: PERFORMANCE & PARTICIPATION - CALCULATIONS

Required Demographics for all 4 Membership Groups (62)					
Type of Members	Visitors	New Member	1yr – 5yrs	6yrs. & Over	Total
Total Count	2	6	22	32	62
Males	1	1	7	5	14
Females	1	5	15	27	48
Unknown	0	1	0	1	2
13-20	1	0	0	1	2
21-30	0	1	3	2	6
31-40	0	0	6	1	7
41-50	0	3	10	1	14
51-60	0	2	0	10	12
60 & Up	1	0	2	15	18
Unknown	0	0	1	0	1

Visitors (2)						
Q#1	Clear Understanding = 1 Somewhat Understands = 0			No Understanding = 1 Unable to Read = 0		
Question #	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	N/A	Unknown
Q2	1	1				
Q3		1	1			
Q4	1	2				
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	
Q5	0	2	0	0	0	
Q6						
Q 6.1	1	1	0	0	0	
Q 6.2	2	0	0	0	0	
Q 6.3	2	0	0	0	0	
Q 6.4	1	1	0	0	0	
Q 6.5	2	0	0	0	0	
Q 6.6	0	0	0	0	0	
	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6
Q7	0	1	1	1	1	0
Q 7A						
Priority 1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Priority 2	0	0	1	0	1	0
Priority 3	0	0	0	0	0	3
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	
Q8	2	0	0	0	0	

| Q9 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | |
| Q10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | |

New Members (6)						
Q1	Clear Understanding = 4				No Understanding = 1	
	Somewhat Understands = 1				Unable to Read = 0	
Question #	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never	N/A	Unknown
Q2	3	0	1	0	1	
Q3	2	0	2	0	1	
Q4	3	0	1	0	1	
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	
Q5	4	0	0	1		
Q6						
Q 6.1	4	0	1	1		
Q 6.2	4	1	3	0		
Q 6.3	6	0	0	0		
Q 6.4	4	0	4	0		
Q 6.5	4	1	1	0		
Q 6.6	0	0	0	0		
	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6
Q7	6	4	5	3	0	0
Q7A						
Priority 1	4	2	0	1	1	1
Priority 2	1	2	2	1	0	0
Priority 3	1	0	2	0	0	0
	Yes	No	Maybe	N/A	Unknown	
Q8	4	0	0	0		
Q9	1	2	0	2		
Q10	3	0	0	1		

APPENDIX E

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE, PT. 2: PERFORMANCE AND PARTICIPATION – TABLE E

Table E – New Outreach Ministry Strategies

(Discussed in Chapter 4)
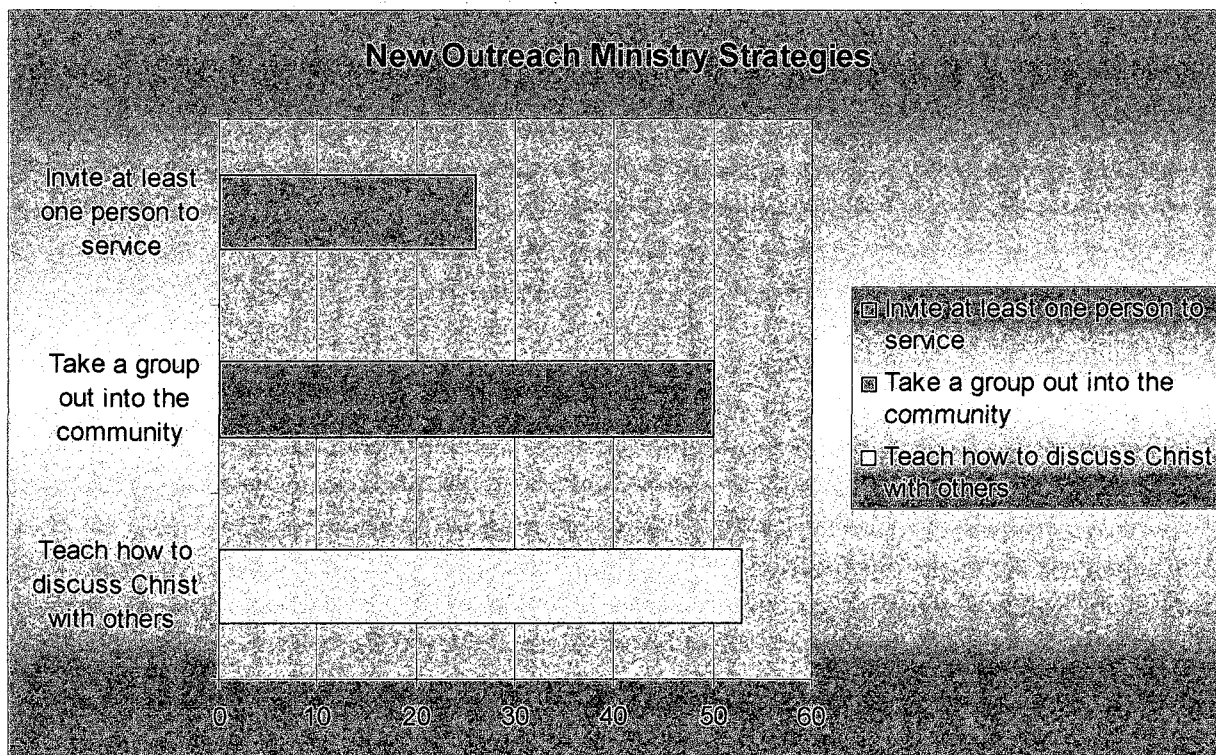
The (3) top polling strategies by members of the Congregational focus group were:

1) Teaching how to discuss Christ with others (53%)
2) Take a group into the community (50%)
3) Invite one person to service (26%)

APPENDIX F

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE, PT. 2: PERFORMANCE & PARTICIPATION – TABLE F

Outreach Ministry Questionnaire

(Discussed in Chapter 5)

Point #1: I believe Antioch's members would actively participate in a new Outreach Ministry program.

Frequency of Outreach	Always	Sometimes	Occasionally
# of Members	6	14	2

Collective Response: This data demonstrates the fact that in general, the overall membership has faith in the congregation as a whole to be responsive to any request to conduct outreach.

Point #2: I personally would participate in a new Outreach Ministry program at Antioch.

Personal Commitment	Always	Sometimes
# of Members	10	12

Collective Response: Members appear to be ready, willing, and able to devote a personal commitment of time to this process.

Point #3: I would encourage others to participate in Antioch's new Outreach Ministry program. *

Encourage Others	Always	Sometimes
# of Members	17	5

Collective Response: Members seem very eager to encourage others to participate; even more so than they are willing to participate themselves.

APPENDIX G

GOSPEL LOUNGE PROJECT TEAM (GLPT):
PRE-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE - BLANK SURVEY

1. Describe the purpose of this project and your role.

2. How do you think about inviting un-churched people to participate in this project?

3. What do you feel will be the most difficult part of this project?

4. What do you think will make the guest feel welcome?

5. What strategies do you think will help you keep guests coming back to participate?

6. Can you identify any potential barriers to the project?

7. Why did you volunteer for this project?

8. What do you hope to gain from this experience?

APPENDIX H

GLPT: PRE-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE - CALCULATIONS

An analysis of the GLPT pre-project expectations produced the following information:

Q# 1: Do you understand the purpose of this project and your role?

- 2 of 7   Good Understanding
- 3 of 7   Basic Understanding
- 2 of 7   Unclear about Project
- 0 of 7   Statement Unclear

Q# 2: How do you feel about inviting *"un-churched"* people to participate in this project?

- 4 of 7   Very Comfortable
- 1 of 7   Somewhat Comfortable
- 2 of 7   Uncomfortable

Q# 3: What do you think will be the most difficult part of this project? (*The following is an overview of all the responses from 7 of the 8 GLPT Members*)

- Getting people to commit to coming out on a Friday night and then back again on the following Sunday   = 2 of 7
- Witnessing about your walk with Christ and how others can get to know Him for themselves   = 1 of 7
- Judgment from others about them and the project   = 1 of 7
- The location and possible travel difficulties   = 1 of 7
- Getting people to come to church   = 1 of 7
- Identifying who to invite   = 1 of 7

Q# 4: What do you think will make the guest feel welcome?
(*This outlines the variety of responses from 7 of the 8 GLPT members.*)

- Fun time
- Free food
- No dress code
- No holy roller
- Polite & timely servers
- Friendly social atmosphere
- Nonjudgmental environment
- Being on-time to greet the people you invited
- Mixture of entertainment & opportunities to participate
- Balancing the conversation between general life and sharing the Word of God

Q# 5: **What strategies do you think will help you keep guests coming back to participate?** (*Below is a compilation of the answers to this question. Some stated the same or similar strategies, which were grouped into six cohesive statements from 7 of the 8 GLPT members that responded.*)

- Allowing them to invite people to the Lounge that they are comfortable being with
- Keeping a balanced mixture of activities and entertainment, so it doesn't become to churchy
- Simply ask them how they felt about the experience and what we can do to make it better
- Just keep inviting them and hope they enjoy the entertainment and the conversation
- Ask them what they would like to see at the Lounge and try to incorporate it
- Letting them know the process will keep getting better

Q# 6: *Can you identify any potential barriers?*

- Too many holy rollers
- Gossip at and/or after the event
- Guests feeling as if they didn't fit in
- People not willing to socialize with people they didn't invite
- Clearly explaining the process and that it would not be "churchy"
- Negative comments about what might be seen or heard at the event
- Getting Antioch members to actively participate; had not seen much outreach being done

Q# 7: *Why did you volunteer for this project?*

- 4 of 7 stated that it was simply a good idea
- 1 of 7 stated that every Christian should want to reach out to others about the Lord
- 1 of 7 stated that it would help her growth particularly as a young Christian
- 1 of 7 stated that it was a good way to show "*un-churched*" people that Christians are open to socializing with them
- 1 of 7 stated that it was very interesting, something different, and a good way to engage the "un-churched"
- 1 of 7 stated that he/she was called to the project
- 2 of 7 stated that they were simply curious about the project and wanted to be a part of it

Q# 8: *What do you hope to gain from this experience?* (*Initially the GLPT members had not really considered their own personal gains via the project; furthermore, most only mentioned how the project would help others.*)

- Wanted the people she cared about to get to know God for themselves
- How to bring more unsaved people to experience fellowship with us as Christians
- To help others have a chance to see Christ through them in the process
- Hope to learn to communicate and fellowship more

- To outreach to the "un-churched"
- Just wanted to help

APPENDIX I

GLPT: PRE-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE – TABLE I

Table I – Pre- Participation
(Discussed in Chapter 4)

Pre-Participation (7 individuals)		
Very Comfortable	4 of 7	57%
Somewhat Comfortable	1 of 7	14%
Uncomfortable	2 of 7	29%
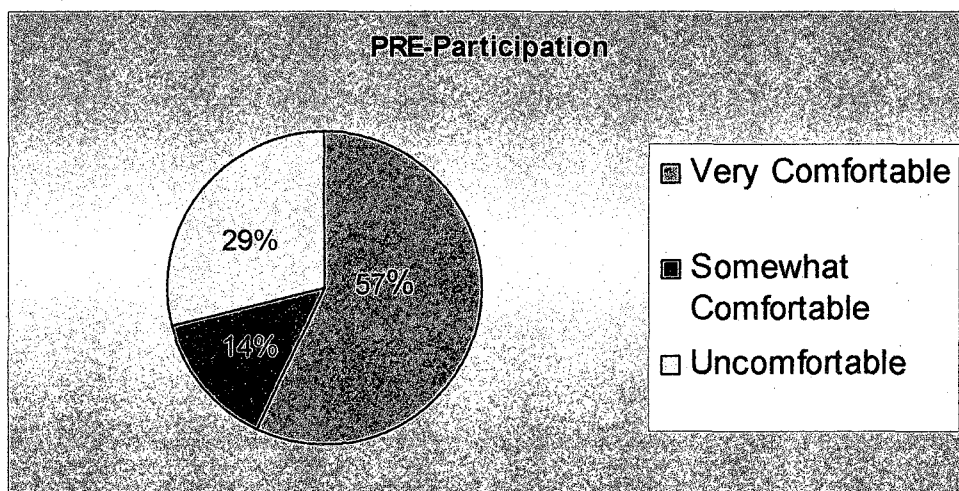
In the Pre-Participation phase (57%) of the GLPT members felt "very comfortable" inviting "un-churched" individuals, (14%) felt "somewhat comfortable" and (29%) felt totally "uncomfortable"

APPENDIX J

GLPT: PRE-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE – TABLE J

Table J – Pre-Participation Survey Opportunities

(Discussed in Chapter 4)
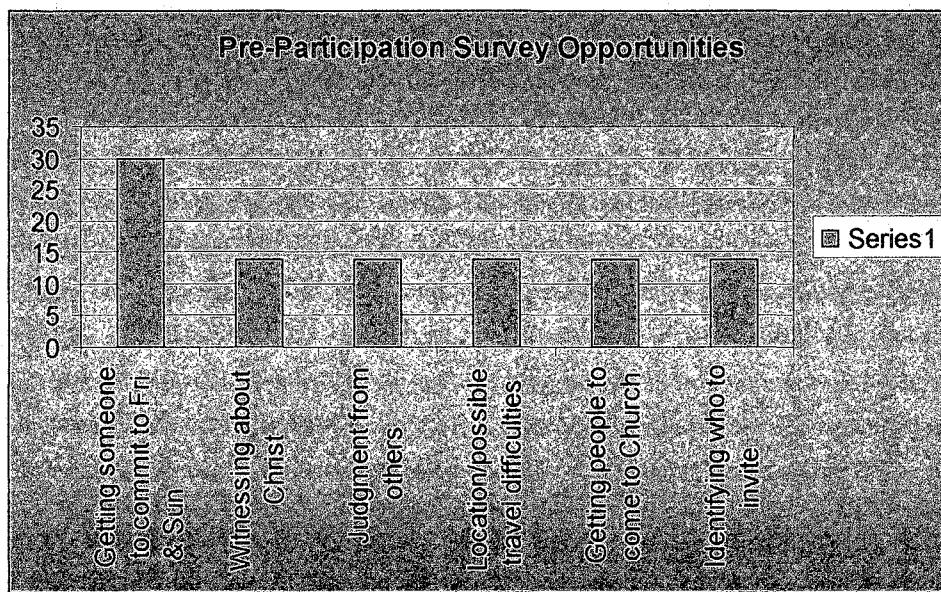
The purpose of this survey was to assess potential challenges and opportunities.

1. Commitment Levels (30%)
2. One-on-one witnessing (14%)
3. Self-Disclosure (14%)
4. Location (14%)
5. Transitioning Settings (14%)
6. Identifying Candidates (14%)

APPENDIX K

GLPT: POST-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE – BLANK SURVEY

1. What did you think was the purpose of the project?

2. How did you feel about inviting others to the Lounge?

3. What did you think was the most difficult?

4. What were your observations of welcoming the invited guests?
   a. What made them feel welcome or comfortable?

5. What do you think will keep people coming back?

6. What do you think would be a barrier to continued involvement?

7. What might you have done differently?

8. What did you learn from the project?

9. What suggestions do you have for follow-up activities? (New Question)

APPENDIX L

GLPT: POST-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE – CALCULATIONS

An analysis of the GLPT post-project experiences produced the following information:

Q# 1: Did you understand the purpose of this project and your role?
- 5 of 8   Good Understanding
- 2 of 8   Basic Understanding
- 0 of 8   Unclear about Project
- 1 of 8   Statement Unclear

Q# 2: How did you feel about inviting others to the Lounge?
- 5 of 8   Very Comfortable
- 1 of 8   Somewhat Comfortable
- 2 of 8   Uncomfortable

Q# 2A did not have an official Part A, participants noted that in many instances the process of inviting others became easier as the project progressed.

Q# 3: Which did you think was the most difficult?
(Some team members answered more than once. The following is an overview of all the responses from 6 of the 8 Lay Committee Members categories.)
- Commitment to coming out on a Friday night   =   3 of 6
- Explaining the project   =   2 of 6
- Type of beverages served   =   1 of 6
- Unclear answers needing clarity   =   3 of 6
- Selecting the proper music   =   1 of 6
- Not being upset when people didn't show up   =   1 of 6

Q# 4: What were your observations of welcoming the invited guests? What made them feel welcome or comfortable? *(Although the question was based on comfort levels, participants focused on issues that produced both comfort and discomfort; therefore, both will be outlined in this overview of responses from 8 of the 8.)*

Situations that increased comfort levels	Situations that decreased comfort levels
- The party/social atmosphere	- Too "churchy" in content
- Friendliness of the people general	- Too much gospel music on screen/in
- Having general conversations with the guests	- People gossiping about others
	- People only socializing with their guests

Q# 5: What do you think will keep people coming back?
- Continued entertainment with opportunities for open mike & time for everyone to participate
- Friendly attitudes & dispositions (welcoming atmosphere)
- Referrals from others

- Being social, open and nonjudgmental
- Continued free food
- Humble doorkeeper to greet them and set the tone when they arrive
- Presenting Antioch as a family focused church that cares about the community

Q# 6: What do you think would be a barrier to continued involvement?
- Too religious and/or only focusing on religion
- Too much gospel music and/or disinterest in listening to gospel music
- Overcrowding in the Lounge, reducing availability of seats, thereby reducing comfort levels
- Lack of available parking
- Potential complaints from the neighbors
- Having or enforcing a dress code
- Church people acting better than the un-churched people
- Any anti-social behavior

Q# 7: What might you have done differently?
(This question appeared to overlap with Q# 6, as some participants referred to the issue(s) identified under barriers*, as things they would do differently.)
- Less entertainment* & more time for socializing
- Longer breaks between the entertainment
- Don't mix and/or plan Lounge events after church events* (referring to religion)
- Ensuring it is not too religious*
- Explain dress code, so that people are comfortable coming as they are
- Improve communications about appropriate guests (referring to bouncers at the door)
- Extend the time for outreach. Some complained of short notice
- Being prepared to start the program on time each night
- Work harder to get more people to attend the event
- Continue the project with the individuals already involved, and adding new guests to the mix

Q# 8: What did you learn from the project?
- People have stereotyped church people, but we all have misconceptions about each other
- We all need help and have a desire to be more connected; therefore, we have to be more open to each other's needs and develop more opportunities to socialize with the un-churched
- More training was needed for the lay team members on outreach strategies
- It helped them come out of their own shell and become more comfortable with outreach
- To always be prepared to witness to someone
- To always be available to be used by God, because you never know how God will use you.

- We have to keep balance in our life, it's okay, to listen to a little R&B and Jazz, but it's what we are doing when we are listening that makes the difference
- That we are a part of a larger family and we all have the responsibility to maintain and encourage each other and those in the world

APPENDIX M

GLPT: POST-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE – TABLE M

Table M – Post – Participation

(Discussed in Chapter 4)

Post-Participation (8 individuals)		
Very Comfortable	5 of 8	63%
Somewhat Comfortable	1 of 8	12%
Uncomfortable	2 of 8	25%
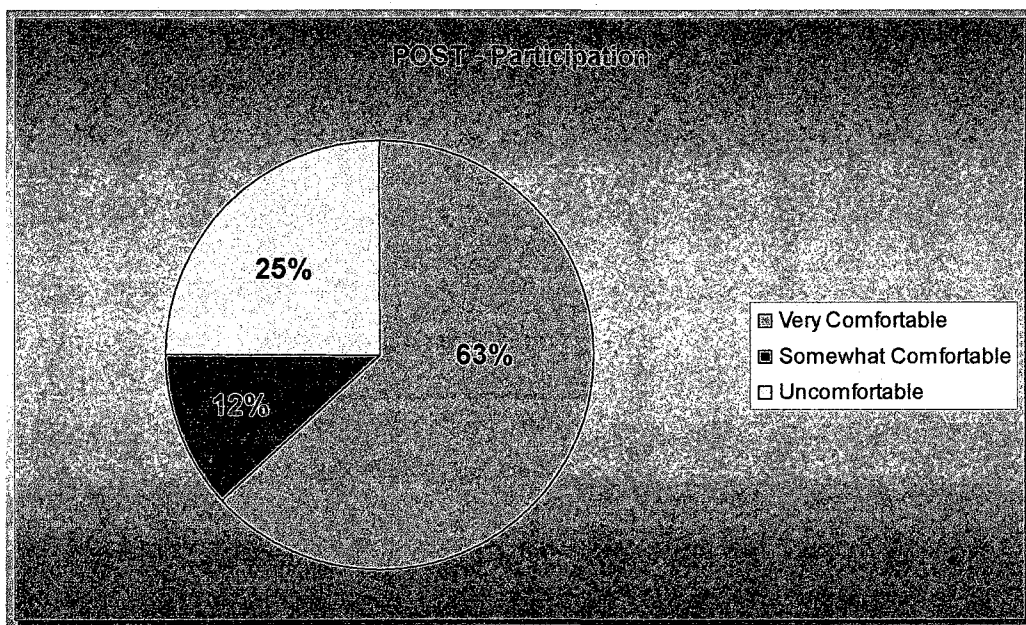
Within the aforementioned Post-Participation data, (63%) of the GLPT members stated they were "very comfortable" with the invitation process, (12%) felt "somewhat comfortable" and (25%) felt completely "uncomfortable."

APPENDIX N

GLPT: POST-PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE – TABLE N

Table N – Post – Participation Survey Concerns

(Discussed in Chapter 4)
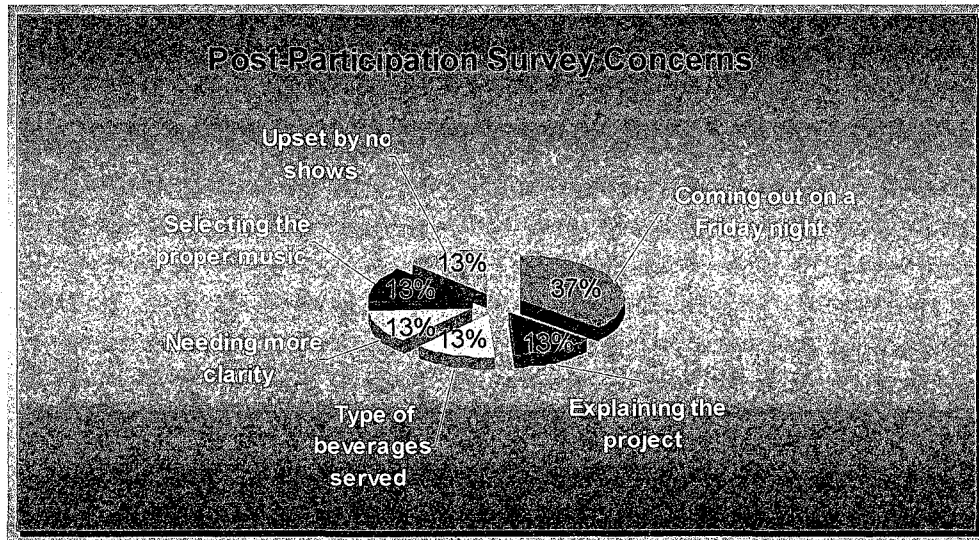
Post- Participation data highlights the prospective obstacles perceived by the participants.

1. Commitment Levels (37%)
2. Communicating the Goal (13%)
3. Beverage Selection (13%)
4. Information/Clarity (13%)
5. Music Selection (13%)
6. No-Shows (13%)

APPENDIX O

GLPT: PRE/POST PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE - BLANK SURVEY

PRE # 1   Describe the purpose of this project and your role.

POST # 1   What did you think was the purpose of the project?

PRE # 2   How do you feel about inviting un-churched people to participate in this project?

POST # 2   How did you feel about inviting others to the Lounge?

PRE # 3   What do you think will be the most difficult part of this project?

POST # 3   What did you think was the most difficult part of this project?

PRE # 4   What do you feel will make the guest feel welcome at each event?

POST # 4   What were your observations of welcoming the invited guests?
4A - What made them feel welcome or comfortable?

PRE # 5   What strategies do you think will help you keep guest coming back as participants?

POST # 5   What do you think will keep people coming back?

PRE # 6   Can you identify any potential barriers to the project?

POST # 6   What do you think would be a barrier to continued involvement?

PRE # 7   Why did you volunteer for this project?

POST # 7   What might you have done differently?

PRE # 8   What do you hope to gain from this experience?

POST # 8   What did you learn from the project?

POST # 9   What suggestions do you have for follow-up activities?

APPENDIX P

GLPT: PRE/POST PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE - COMPARISONS

The purpose of the GLPT Members Pre/Post-Participation Surveys were to compare the GLPT members initial project understanding and concerns to the actual issues faced during the project, and their ability to effectively address these issues to enhance the overall outcomes of the project. The general findings demonstrate how even when we know particular issues exist, if we are unable to change our "mindsets" we may find ourselves unable to effectively counter the barriers faced by 21st century urban church engaged in The Great Commission.

Question #1
We began this process with a little confusion about the focus of the project. The Lay Advisory Team members varied in explanations of the project and target participants from the Antioch membership. When we compared the initial understanding of the GLPT members to those presented at the completion of the project, 60% of the participants in the Post-Survey had a "*good understanding*" of the project compared to the initial 30% in the Pre-Survey. The number of participants with a "*basic understanding*" dropped from three to two in the Post-Survey and participants identified as being "*unclear about the project*" dropped to zero in the Post-Survey.

Pre-Participation		Post-Participation
• 2 of 7	Good Understanding	5 of 8
• 3 of 7	Basic Understanding	2 of 8
• 2 of 7	Unclear About the Project	0 of 8
• 0 of 7	Statement Unclear	1 of 8

To address the barriers identified between the pre and post surveys, written procedures were developed by the Lay Advisory Team with opportunities for role-playing to ensure that they could appropriately discuss the details of the new Outreach Ministry.

Question #2
Outreach is a major component of The Great Commission, but Christians are not always comfortable with this process. Question #2 assessed their beginning and ending comfort levels with inviting "un-churched" people to a church sponsored event. GLPT members began and ended the project at the same levels of comfort (see table below- with one more respondent included in the Post-Participation Survey).

Pre-Participation		Post-Participation
• 4 of 7	Very Comfortable	5 of 8
• 1 of 7	Somewhat Comfortable	1 of 8
• 2 of 7	Uncomfortable	2 of 8

These numbers create major concerns with the initial training, as the GLPT members should have became more comfortable with engaging the "un-churched" after the Preaching Series/Training. Furthermore, the actual experience of inviting "un-churched" people gave them the opportunity to practice their techniques and enhance their comfort levels in this area. In the future, we will re-visit this area and identify strategies and techniques members can use to enhance their comfort levels, which will also enhance their ability to attach and engage the un-churched.

Question #3

We knew that several areas of difficulty may arise during the project and we wanted to obtain first-hand insight from the GLPT members on the issues they felt would be most difficult to accomplish via this project. The initial comments were grouped into six key categories; however, the post comments mirrored many of those concerns—suggesting that even though the GLPT members knew particular issues would be difficult, they were unable to identify/implement strategies to overcome them effectively.

Pre-Participation	Post-Participation
Getting people to commit to coming out on a Friday night and then back again on the following Sunday = 2	Commitment to coming out on a Friday night = 3
Witnessing about your walk with Christ and how others can get to know him for themselves = 1	
Judgment from others about them and the project = 1	Explaining the project = 2
The location and possible travel difficulties = 1	Not being upset when people didn't show up = 1
Getting people to come to Church = 1	
Identifying who to invite = 1	

The other post-participation comments where specific to activities/entertainment provided:
- Type of beverages served   =   1
- Selecting the proper music   =   1
- Unclear answers needing clarity responses)   =   3 (2 were second

These conditions imply that there may be issues related to understanding, teaching, and applying The Great Commission that cannot be immediately removed in an urban environment, but must be addressed by applying a variety of strategies and analyzing which are most effective towards achieving our goals with specific populations/demographics

Question #4

The goal of a church environment is how to make people feel welcome. We addressed this issue with our GLPT members to assess what they initially felt would make their invited guests feel welcomed, and what they actually observed did make their guest feel welcomed/unwelcome.

Pre-Participation Survey Answers	Post-Participation Survey Answers
Fun time	
Free food	
No dress code	
No holy roller	Too "churchy" in content
Polite & timely servers	
Friendly social atmosphere	The party/social atmosphere & Friendliness of the people
Nonjudgmental environment	People gossiping about others
Being on-time to greet the people you invited	People only socializing with their guests
Mixture of entertainment and opportunities to participate	Too much gospel music on screen/in general
Balancing the conversation between general life and sharing the Word of God	Having general conversations with the guests

The outcome of this comparison clearly denotes that issues the GLPT members mentioned would make their guests welcomed in the Pre-Survey were not effectively implemented, and where re-identified as actual items that made the guests feel un-welcomed in the Post-Survey. Issues such as creating an environment that reflects the church, but is still not considered "too churchy" to the un-churched particularly when we are creating social activities that involves both groups. The goal is to achieve a balanced approach to reaching people with activities/language that meets them at their level of need in today's society.

Question #5:

In this project, getting guests to come to the event was just the first step; more important to this process was keeping them engaged in the process with repeated visits to the Lounge. Question #5 asks the GLPT Members to look forward and identify strategies to address these issues, and the Post-Survey comments reflected that some of the same issues were presented

- **Pre- Survey** -- Allowing them to invite people they know and are comfortable being with to join them at the Lounge
  - *Post – Survey -- Referrals from others*
    - Unfortunately, a survey of the guests was not developed to assess the value of this strategies

- **Pre- Survey** -- Keeping a balanced mixture of activities and entertainment, so it doesn't become to churchy
  - *Post – Survey -- Continued Entertainment with opportunities for open mike & time for everyone to participate.*

o Unfortunately, a survey of the guests was not developed to assess the value of this strategy; however, the GLPT Members did mention these issues throughout their assessment as a key positive as well as a negative issue impacting the project.

- **Pre- Survey** -- Just keep inviting them and hope they enjoy the entertainment and the conversation
  - *Post – Survey -- 1)Being social, open & nonjudgmental, 2) Friendly Attitudes & Dispositions*
    - o Unfortunately, a survey of the guests was not developed to assess the value of this strategy.

The final comments from the GLPT suggest that we should have developed a formalized assessment for the guests. Moving forward we intend to have a final One-on-One Nite Social where the guest will be surveyed so we can gather direct input regarding the value of the social.

1. Simply ask them how they felt about the experience and what we can do to make it better
2. Ask them what they would like to see at the Lounge and try to incorporate it
3. Let them know the process will keep getting better

Question #6:

The GLPT Members were asked to identify potential barriers before and after the project. Interesting enough many of the barriers mirrored many of the issues noted as situations that would prevent the un-churched from feeling welcome. Also in the Post-Survey, Question #7, appears to overlap, see them added in red.

Pre-Participation Survey Answers	Post-Participation Survey Answers
Too many holy rollers	• *Too religious and/or only focusing on religion* • *Too much gospel music and/or disinterest in listening to gospel music* • *Ensuring it is not too religious*
Gossip at and/or after the event	• *Any anti-social behavior*
Guests feeling as if they didn't fit it	• *Church people acting better than the un-churched people* • *Too much gospel music and/or disinterest in listening to gospel music*
People not willing to social with the people they didn't invite	• *Any anti-social behavior*
Clearly explaining the process and that it would not be "churchy."	• *Too religious and/or only focusing on religion* • *Ensuring it is not too religious* • *Don't mix and/or plan Lounge events after church events* (referring to religion)* • *However, someone else suggested adding/moving to after*

	church on Sundays
Negative comments about what might be seen or heard at the event.	• *Church people acting better than the un-churched people*
Getting Antioch members to actively participate when they had not seen much outreach being done in the church	• *Church people acting better than the un-churched people* • *Work harder to get more people to come out to the event*

Particular themes continue to emerge: 1) Christian perspective, 2) potential language barriers and 3) the concept of things being "too churchy" which support our original theory on the importance and the impact of the previously stated three critical factors. In the new Outreach Ministry, we have to identify strategies to address these three critical factors as the church embarks on The Great Commission.

Question #7:

In the Pre-Survey, the GLPT members were asked why they volunteered for this project, since Question #7 in the Post-Survey did not address this issue.

Question #8:

The GLPT members were asked what they hoped to gain from their participation in this project, and in the Post-Survey they were asked what they actually learned.

Pre-Participation Survey Answers	Post-Participation Survey Answers
Cared about the people she would be inviting and wanted them to get to know God for themselves	• That we are a part of a larger family and that, we all have the responsibility to maintain and encourage each other and those in the world.
How to bring more unsaved people to experience fellowship with us as Christians	• We all need help and have a desire to be more connected; therefore, we have to be more open to each other's needs and develop more opportunities to socialize with the un-churched
To help others have a chance to see Christ through them in the process	• People have stereotyped church people, but we all have misconceptions about each other • We have to keep balance in our life, it's okay to listen to a little R&B and Jazz, but it's what we are doing when we are listening that makes the difference.
Hope to learn how to communicate and fellowship more	• More training was needed for the Lay Committee Members on outreach strategies • To always be prepared to witness to someone
To outreach to the "un-churched"	• It helped them come out of their own shell and become more comfortable with outreach
Just wanted to help	• To always be available to be used by God, because you never know how God will use you.

Although we did not match each individual GLPT member's comments from the pre/post survey, we were able to identify a connection between their projected gains and the resulting outcome.

APPENDIX Q

GLPT: PRE/POST PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE – TABLE Q

Table Q – Pre & Post Participation Comparisons

(Discussed in Chapter 4)

Pre-Participation Survey What would make the guest feel "welcomed?"	Post-Participation Survey What would make the guest feel "unwelcome?"
Fun time	
Free food	
No dress code	
No holy rollers	Too "churchy" in content
Polite & timely servers	
Friendly Social Atmosphere	Non-friendly people (staff and other guests)
Nonjudgmental environment	People gossiping about others
Being on-time to greet the people you invited	People only socializing with their guests
Mixture of entertainment & opportunities to participate	Too much gospel music on screen/in general
Balancing the conversation between general life and sharing the Word of God	Having one-sided conversation with the guests

This wide range of responses highlight the fact that Pre-Participation Survey strategies that the GLPT members initially considered "would make their guests feel welcome" were not effectively implemented. Subsequently, obstacles arose in the Post-Participation Survey that actually inhibited the creation of a completely welcoming environment.

APPENDIX R

GLPT: PRE/POST PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE - QUESTIONNAIRE #1

(Discussed in Chapter 4)

Additional topics for discussion:

(Suggested by GLPT Members)

1. Simply ask them how they felt about the experience and what we can do to make it better.

2. Ask them what they would like to see at the Lounge and try to incorporate it

3. Let them know the process will keep getting better

APPENDIX S

GLPT: PRE/POST PARTICIPATION SURVEY & ROUNDTABLE - QUESTIONNAIRE #2

(Discussed in Chapter 4)

GLPT Questions
1) Why did you volunteer for this project?
2) What did you hope to gain from this experience?
3) What did you actually learn?

Why did you volunteer for this project? (Group Responses)
- Simply a good idea
- Every Christian should want to reach out to others about the Lord
- Promotes growth as a young Christian
- A good way to show *"un-churched"* people that Christians are open to socializing with them
- Very interesting, something different, and a good way to engage the *"un-churched"*
- They were called to the project
- Simply curious about the project and wanted to be a part of it

What did you hope to gain from this experience? (Group Responses)
- Cared about the people invited and wanted them to get to know God for themselves
- How to bring more unsaved people to experience fellowship with us Christians
- To help others have a chance to see Christ through them in the process
- Hope to learn how to communicate and fellowship more
- To outreach to the *"un-churched"*
- Just wanted to help

What did you actually learn? (Group Reponses)
- That we are a part of a larger family and that we all have the responsibility to maintain and encourage each other and those in the world
- We all need help and have a desire to be more connected; therefore, we have to be more open to each other's needs and develop more opportunities to socialize with the un-churched
- People have stereotyped church people, but we all have misconceptions about each other
- We have to keep balance in our lives. It's okay to listen to a little R&B and Jazz but it's what we are doing when we are listening that makes the difference
- More training was needed for the Lay Committee members on outreach strategies
- To always be prepared to witness to someone

- It helped them come out of their own shells and become more comfortable with outreach
- To always be available to be used by God because you never know how God will use you.

APPENDIX T

CHURCH LANGUAGE SURVEY (CHURCHED/UN-CHURCHED) – BLANK SURVEY

<u>For the Churched</u>

Required Demographics: (Circle your answers)

Gender: Male   Female

Age: 13-20   21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61 & Up

Member Status: Visitor   New Member – 11mths.   1-5yrs   6yrs or More

When sharing your experiences and/or expressing your emotions with the un-churched, do you use the phrases below? Do you believe that the un-churched understand these phrases and/or do you feel that the use of these phrases bring comfort to their situation?

Language Used	Uses Phrase Yes/No	Un-churched Understands Yes/No	Comforting to the Un-churched Yes/No
I'll pray for you			
Let go and let God			
Too blessed to be stressed			
God is breaking the yoke over your life			
It's not by chance you came here today			
God says your best days are ahead of you			
God is going to give you double for your trouble			
Favorite Phrase of Your Own		Un-churched Understands Yes/No	Comforting to the Un-churched Yes/No

Think about your daily use of language. Identify how often you use the phrases below with the un-churched and explain what message you are trying to convey.

<u>Answer Key</u> (*Circle the appropriate number for each answer*)

    1=Always   2=Sometimes   3=Occasionally   4=Never

■ Rely on the Lord

    1 2 3 4 5

- I am in the midst of spiritual warfare

    1 2 3 4 5

- The power of his name

    1 2 3 4 5

- Totally surrender to the Lord

    1 2 3 4 5

- I have the victory/ I am victorious

    1 2 3 4 5

- I have a thirst for His Word

    1 2 3 4 5

- Lord of my life

    1 2 3 4 5

- Come fellowship

    1 2 3 4 5

- He touched me

    1 2 3 4 5

- My sister/brother in Christ

    1 2 3 4 5

- I want to share my walk with the Lord

    1 2 3 4 5

■ The Christian community

    1 2 3 4 5

■ I am blessed

    1 2 3 4 5

■ Filled with the Holy Spirit

    1 2 3 4 5

■ The salvation of the Lord

    1 2 3 4 5

■ I have a testimony

    1 2 3 4 5

Do you believe that the use of terms and/or phrases similar to the ones in this survey create barriers between the church and the un-churched communities?
Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Maybe [ ]

Please explain your answer:

Would the use of more common and/or "street" terminology or phrases decrease the barriers between the churched and the un-churched communities?
Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Maybe [ ]

Please explain your answer:

What does the term "too churchy" mean to you?

CHURCH LANGUAGE
For the Un-churched

Required Demographics: (Circle Answer)

Attends Church:
      Weekly   Monthly   Quarterly   Annually   Holidays Only   Never

You are: Religious   Spiritual   Both   Neither

Age: 13-20   21-30   31-40   41-50   51-60   61 & Up

Sex: Male   Female

Think of the last time you had the opportunity to have a conversation with a churched person regarding an experience. Where any of the phrases below used? If so, did you understand what they meant and/or did the expression make you feel better about your situation?

Language Used	Heard Phrase Yes/No	Understood Meaning Yes/No	Made you feel better Yes/No
I'll pray for you			
Let go and let God			
Too blessed to be stressed			
God is breaking the yoke over your life			
It's not by chance you came here today			
God says your best days are ahead of you			
God is going to give you double for your trouble			

Think about the language you have heard church people use. Identify how often you hear the following phrases and what they mean to you: (*Church person/people – Anyone who admits/claims that he/she regularly attends Church*)

◼ Rely on the Lord

     1 2 3 4 5

_____

◼ I am in the mist of spiritual warfare

     1 2 3 4 5

_____

◼ The Power of his name

     1 2 3 4 5

■ Totally surrender to the Lord

    1 2 3 4 5

■ Victory/victorious

    1 2 3 4 5

■ I have a thirst for His Word

    1 2 3 4 5

■ Lord of my life

    1 2 3 4 5

■ Fellowship

    1 2 3 4 5

■ He touched me

    1 2 3 4 5

■ My sister/brother in Christ

    1 2 3 4 5

■ I am blessed

    1 2 3 4 5

■ Filled with the Holy Spirit

    1 2 3 4 5

■ Salvation

    1 2 3 4 5

■ Let me share my testimony

    1 2 3 4 5

Do you believe that the use of terms and/or phrases similar to the ones in this survey create barriers between the church and the un-churched communities?

Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Maybe [ ]

Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

_____

Would the use of more common and/or "street" terminology/phrases decrease the barriers between the churched and the un-churched communities?
Yes [ ]   No [ ]   Maybe [ ]

Please explain your answer:

_____

_____

What does the term "too churchy" mean to you?

_____
_____
_____
_____

APPENDIX U

CHURCH LANGUAGE SURVEY - RESULTS - CHURCH MEMBERS 1– 5YRS

Required Demographics:

Gender: Male [4] Female [17] NL[ ]

Age: 13-20 [1] 21-30 [5] 31-40 [6] 41-50 [6] 51-60 [2]
61 & up [1] NL[0]

When sharing your experiences and/or expressing your emotions with the un-churched, do you use the phrases below? Do you believe that the un-churched understand these phrases and does the use of these phases bring comfort to their situation?

0 = No Answer   1 = Yes   2 = No

Language Used	Uses Phrase Yes/No	Un-churched Understands Yes/No	Comforting to the Un-churched Yes/No
I'll pray for you	(20) Yes (1)No	(18) Yes (3) No	(19) Yes (1) No (1) NA
Let go and let God	(16) Yes (4) No (1) No Answer	(6) Yes (15) No	(4) Yes (16) No (1) NA
Too blessed to be stressed	(14) Yes (6) No (1) No Answer	(11) Yes (10) No	(9) Yes (12) No (1) NA
God is breaking the yoke over your life	(4) Yes (16) No (1) No Answer	(4) Yes (17) No	(3) Yes (17) No (1) NA
It's not by chance you came here today	(13) Yes (7) No (1) No Answer	(11) Yes (10) No	(8) Yes (12) No (1) NA
God says your best days are ahead of you	(16) Yes (6) No	(9) Yes (11) No (1) No Answer	(10) Yes (10) No (1) NA
God is going to give you double for your trouble	(9) Yes (8) No (4) No Answer	(7) Yes (11) No (3) No Answer	(5) Yes (12) No (4) NA

CHURCH LANGUAGE SURVEY RESULTS (CONT.)

Answer Key: 0 = No Answer   1 = Yes   2 = No

Phrase			
I'll Pray for you	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Uses	20	1	0
Understands	18	3	0
Comforted	19	1	1
Let Go and Let God	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Uses	16	4	1
Understands	6	15	0
Comforted	4	16	1
Too Blessed	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Uses	14	6	1
Understands	10	10	
Comforted	9	11	1
God is breaking the yoke over your life	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Uses	4	16	1
Understands	4	17	0
Comforted	6	14	1
It's not by chance you came here today	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Uses	13	7	1
Understands	11	10	
Comforted	8	12	1
God says your best days are ahead of you	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Uses	15	6	
Understands	9	11	1
Comforted	10	10	1
God is going to give you double for your trouble	**Yes**	**No**	**NA**
Uses	9	8	4
Understands	7	11	3
Comforted	5	12	4

CHURCH LANGUAGE SURVEY RESULTS (CONT.)

Favorite Phrase of Your Own	Un-churched Understands Yes/No	Comforting to the Un-churched Yes/No
Jesus Loves You	1	1
God Bless You	1	1
God is Good	0	0
Jesus Wept.	0	0
Thank you God, Thank you Jesus	1	0
You'd rather have the Blesser than the blessing	1	1
Your latter would be greater	0	0
I made another day, grace be to God	2	2
God has got you covered—He got you	1	1
He hears your cries	1	1
No weapon formed against me shall prosper	1	2
Jehovah is my strength and might. In Him I trust	1	1
Let go and let God	1	1
God will never leave you or forsake you	1	2
God loves you and He can and will make a way	1	1
I am a living witness	1	1
This too shall pass	1	1
The blood of Jesus	1	2

CHURCH LANGUAGE SURVEY RESULTS (CONT.)

Think about your daily use of language. Identify how often you use the phrases below with the un-churched and explain what message you are trying to convey.

Church Language	0=No Answer	1=Always	2=Sometimes	3=Occasionally	4=Never	5=Survey Error
Rely on the Lord		12	7	2		
I am in the mist of spiritual warfare		1	5	6	8	1
The power of his name		7	6	3	5	
Totally surrender to the Lord		6	8	3	4	
I have the victory/ I am victorious		8	6	1	5	1
I have a thirst for his word		6	5	4	6	
Lord of my life		9	9	4	1	
Come fellowship		12	5	4		
He touched me	1	6	7	4	4	1
My sister/brother in Christ		10	2	3	5	1
I want to share my walk with the Lord		5	5	5	6	
The Christian community		2	2	9	7	1
I am blessed		15	4	1		
Filled with the Holy Spirit	1	6		6	3	
The salvation of the Lord		8		5	8	
I have a testimony		6	8	5	2	
Totals	**2**	**119**	**85**	**63**	**64**	**5**

Do you believe that the use of terms and/or phases similar to the ones in this survey create barriers between the church and the un-churched communities?
Yes [10]   No [1]   Maybe [9]   NL [1]

Please explain your answer:
1. Because the un-churched do not know the Bible's terminology.
2. The un-churched say bad things about us Christians.
3. Sometimes people receive what you say to them and sometimes they don't, it depends on the situation.
4. Some are afraid not ready for change, so they hesitate to conform.
5. Because you will get someone unsaved who will challenge these phrases and if you cannot give them the correct answers then they won't believe.
6. Even the sinner knows at some point that there is a God, maybe they don't say God, but a higher power in heaven that guides them.
7. Sometimes it's a barrier because you may sound overly religious, like you are better or different.

8. Because if they have not experienced God and his goodness, they would not truly understand who God is.

Would the use of more common and/or "street" terminology/phrases decrease the barriers between the church and the un-churched communities?
Yes [8]   No [3]   Maybe [11]   NL [0]

Please explain your answer:

1. Because they would be able to identify and relate on their own level.
2. As a Christian, I am taught not to be conformed to the world but be transformed by renewing of the mind.
3. Sometimes you have to go places you don't want to.
4. It might help un-churched people to understand a little better.
5. If you can continue to be saved while talking to the unsaved in a way that is understandable to them, you can reach them better.
6. The only way to know this is to try it.

What does the term "too churchy" mean to you?

1. All the time it is church (church talk).
2. Can't function in the world, too good to praise God, don't want to shout next to me.
3. Having a strong church atmosphere, even though you are not in the church.
4. Somebody who wants to be in the middle or straddling the fence. Worldly and Christian would use this term.
5. Hearing from unsaved people that I am too involved in the church.
6. Someone that is always in church.
7. People who walk around like they're better than the rest of the congregation and so "holy."
8. Everyone tries to be so sanctified and holy more than others.
9. Implies strictness, unbending, that you must "align" with them (the church); always being serious; stern, no sense of humor; that you breathe, sleep and eat the Bible all the time.
10. Goody two shoes, holier than God; too holy like you have been saved all your life (from the womb).
11. Feel they know everything. Never open to learning new things.

APPENDIX V

LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table Z - Language Questionnaire

(Discussed in Chapter 5)

Question #1 - Do you believe that the use of terms and/or phrases similar to the ones in this survey creates barriers between the churched and the un-churched communities?

Yes	No	Maybe
10	1	9

General Consensus - The results seemed to be split. Language barriers exist largely because the un-churched do not know the Bible in its' entirety nor its terminology. They have to learn gradually and sometimes challenge the churched in ignorance. The churched have to embrace them with tolerance and patience and admit that neither do they "know it all." Taking steps to eliminate the barrier is a process in which both parties have to be willing to learn about each other, while the Creator institutes or ushers in change.

Question #2 - Would the use of more common and/or "street" terminology/phases decrease the barriers between the church and the un-churched communities.

Yes	No	Maybe
8	3	11

General Consensus – There was a bit of uncertainty with this answer. Some thought that they were not supposed to be transformed by the world; therefore, it seemed confusing to even entertain "street language" in church. On the other hand, others felt that maybe people would be able to relate to and understand each other more easily.

In conclusion, we asked all of our respondents to provide general feedback to the following question.

Question #3 - What does "too churchy" mean to you?

General Consensus - *As a collective group, everyone basically felt that it meant "church activities - all of the time" with no variation in content or subject matter. They felt that "too churchy" implied strict old-fashioned tradition and projected an air of superiority or extreme holiness.*

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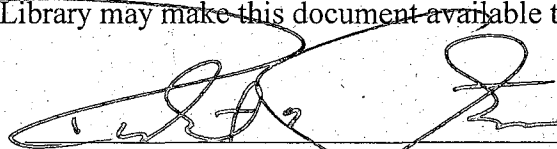
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	School (Name and Address)	Degree	Date
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