

Empowered Evangelism: Spontaneous or Strategic? Participant Handout

The purpose of this module is:

- To grasp how the Holy Spirit ministered through the church;
- To look for opportunities opened by the Spirit;
- To become useful to the Holy Spirit for evangelism.

Things to Keep in Mind...

1. The disciples' concern was kingdom restoration (Acts 1:6).
2. Evidently the disciples wanted to know more about God's timetable (Acts 1:7).
3. Jesus refused to give them all the information they wanted.
4. He made it clear He was leaving, the disciples were staying, and the Holy Spirit was coming.
5. He assured them they would be filled with His Spirit and they would become witnesses (Acts 1:8).
6. We can view Acts as outlined by Acts 1:8 and conclude the New Testament Church strategically planned to move from Jerusalem to Judea and then Samaria with the Gospel.
7. Some biblical interpreters see the Church selecting certain cities to evangelize.
8. Others point out the Church targeted centers of Roman administration, Greek civilization, Jewish influence and commercial importance, e.g. Philippi, Corinth, Cyprus and Ephesus.
9. The Church appears to focus on specific provinces in which to plant congregations (Acts 19:21).

Lecture

- I. Persecution quickly impacted the fledgling Church.
 - A. Persecution _____ the disciples from Jerusalem (Acts 8:4).
 - B. Philip going to Samaria to minister is an example of the dispersed disciples _____ into new areas.
 - C. The Jerusalem church had shown no signs of becoming missionary.
 - D. Persecution _____ the Church to take the Good News elsewhere.
 - E. The human impulse to _____ to safety united with the divine impulse to witness
- II. Planned or spontaneous evangelism?
 - A. The work of the early church probably was more spontaneous than it was planned.
 - B. Antioch was a city where the Jew/Gentile _____ were slight.
 - C. No official policy in the Jerusalem church _____ this city was to be evangelized.
 - D. Disciples who could not keep quiet about their faith _____ spontaneously where doors were open and people were responsive.
 - E. Berea was not as large as some other cities in Macedonia, but the Spirit seemingly _____ Christians there.
- III. Spirit-directed or humanly led?
 - A. The role of key personnel
 1. Paul seemed to _____ leaders in the community for evangelization.

2. The proconsul of Cyprus, chief man in Malta, procurators, Felix and Festus, King Agrippa, Bernice and the Emperor serve as examples.
3. These individuals had no greater value, but they did have immense influence.
4. On the other hand, the Spirit _____ Philip to encounter the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-40).
5. The Spirit _____ Peter to go to Cornelius (Acts 10).
6. The Church _____ to the Spirit who selected Barnabas and Saul to evangelize.

B. Natural channels

1. Paul chose to _____ along natural means of communication in the Roman Empire.
2. Every major area where Christians were effective in the first century, the Jews were there first.
3. When Paul went to Cyprus (Acts 13:5-8), he preached in synagogues.
4. He _____ first to the Jews in their synagogues (Romans 1:16).
5. Going to the Jewish synagogues seemed to be a good beginning place for Gentile ministry as well, because God-seekers were found in the synagogues.
6. Paul's strategy began in the synagogues (Acts 17:2).

C. Indigenous churches.

1. The longest Paul stayed was two years.
2. He would find converts, _____ them, move on and send letters.
3. He would _____ on the work the Spirit who had preceded him.

IV. People of God as evangelists

A. All Christians _____ evangelists.

1. Roving ministers did not stay long in one place.
2. Congregations _____ upon the spiritual gifts of its members to sustain vitality.
3. Christians were not _____ by a church, but felt called of God to evangelize.

B. Local pastors were _____ in evangelism (II Tim. 4:5).

1. They built up Christians in such a way that each person discovered and _____ their unique ministries.
2. In an address to Ephesian pastors, Paul sets his own evangelistic example before them (Acts 20:17-21).

C. Theologians and philosophers

1. Early schools were set up as evangelistic agencies.
2. The purpose of these schools was to _____ all kinds of people with various intellectual abilities to the truth about God as revealed in Christ Jesus.

D. Informal missionaries

1. The great mission of Christianity was _____ by informal missionaries.
2. Christianity was primarily a _____ movement (Acts 8).
3. Women, such as Dorcas, Lydia, Drusilla, the four prophesying daughters of Philip, upper-class women of Berea and Thessalonica, _____ their faith.
4. Eight of twenty-six greetings in the Book of Romans, are directed to women.

V. The character of Christians

- A. The quality of Paul's life _____ the Thessalonians his message was the Word of God (I Thessalonians 2:1-14).
- B. Law abiding
 1. Claudius Lysias _____ to Governor Felix assuring the governor of Paul's innocence (Acts 23:26-30).
 2. Many charges of wrongdoing were _____ at Paul and the disciples (Acts 24:5-6).
 3. Luke is intent upon showing impartial and competent judges _____ the innocence of Christians.
- C. Humility
 1. When miracles took place, the early Christians wanted to point to the work of God (Acts 3:12-13).
 2. Miracles were to bring people to Christ and to bring glory to God.
- D. Sacrifice
 1. Paul and Barnabas were willing to _____ their lives (Acts 15:26).
 2. Their frequent persecutions _____ their credentials.
- E. Obedience to God
 1. Obeying God _____ higher priority than obedience to humans (Acts 5:29).
 2. The Holy Spirit was _____ to those who obeyed (Acts 5:32).
 3. Even spiritual leaders inside of Judaism began to serve God (Acts 6:7).
 4. Paul _____ his obedience to the Lord (Acts 26:19).
 5. The disciples were _____ to God's commands (Acts 5:20).
 6. They eagerly _____ the impulse of the Great Commission (Acts 5:21).
 7. They were subject to the Holy Spirit's direction (Acts 26:27).
 8. Peter _____ to the Spirit's direction (Acts 10:20-21).
- F. Intensity
 1. Paul _____ himself completely to teaching the Word when he got help from Silas and Timothy (Acts 18:5).
 2. Paul was able to _____ full-time after he made tents (Acts 18:3).
 3. Paul _____ on God's mission of testifying to the Gospel (Acts 20:24).
- G. Joy
 1. The disciples _____ it sheer joy when they were able to share the claims of the gospel.
 2. Conversion and joy were closely related (Acts 8:8, 13:52, 15:3).

Small Group Discussion

Read Acts 16:11-40. Discuss the following questions:

1. How do you see God at work in this story?
2. Describe the human dynamics in this account.
3. Evaluate the divine and human factors in starting a congregation in Philippi.

Action Planning

1. How can you personally and together as a congregation unite with the Spirit to reach people for Christ?
2. What characteristics of the New Testament Christians will you imitate?
3. To whom will you go in your community to share Good News?
4. What groups of people in your community are receptive to the Gospel?
5. Schedule prayer for improved evangelistic effectiveness.