

A STAGGERING COMMISSION

LEADER'S GUIDE

***A STUDY TO MOTIVATE AND EQUIP THE BELIEVER
FOR THE MINISTRY OF EVANGELISM***

MARTIN PURYEAR

A STAGGERING COMMISSION

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A STAGGERING COMMISSION

Series Objectives

Our *goals* for this study are for each of us

to be equipped to clearly explain the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

to be motivated to regularly practice the privilege of evangelism.

The *discussion questions* that I, your teacher, will ask each week may be found on pages 53-60 in the written materials (Appendix C). If you would like to make the most of this study, you may want to give these questions some forethought before our meetings together.

THE SOBERING REALITIES FACING THE CHURCH

The World's Population
The World's "Unreached"
The World's Birth Rate
The World's Death Rate
The World's Eternal Destinies
Conclusion

[Have several read these sections: pages 6-8.]

[Have someone read footnote 2, page 9.]

? Would some of you be willing to describe what effect these numbers had on you?

? Why do you think these statistics were used to introduce this course?

[Summarize their answers.]

Keep in mind that the Church has been well-established for centuries. Her numbers are in the millions. We live in a world that has high-speed transportation and high-speed communication. Literature production abounds.

? Why do you think that there are still over two billion people in the world today that have never heard a clear presentation of the Gospel? Where are the breakdowns?

[Summarize their answers.]

[Have someone read Matthew 28:19-20.]

GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I COMMANDED YOU; AND LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, EVEN TO THE END OF THE AGE. (MATTHEW 28:19-20)

This, of course, is known as “the Great Commission.” The *statistics* given were used – in part – to impress upon us the immensity and urgency of this stewardship. The word “*staggering*” was also used to do this. It is a “Staggering Responsibility” entrusted to the Church.

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

TWO PARTICIPANTS

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GROUNDWORK IN SALVATION

Two Responses to the Gospel

[Have several read this section: pages **10-11**.]

- ? Have any of you had a "John or Jane Doe" in your life? That no matter what you did or how long you tried, that person showed no interest whatsoever in Christ?
- ? If so, did you gain any insights from that experience? Or are you still left with a lot of unanswered questions?

[Give them time to think.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

Two Kinds of Sinners

[Have someone read this section: pages **11-12**.]

According to this section, a person will respond to his sins in one of two ways: he will either be bothered about their *consequences* ... or he will not. Both attitudes can be seen in the story Jesus told of the Pharisee and the tax collector. At the end of that story, Jesus concluded that only one of the two "went to his house justified": the one who cried out to God for mercy. The other did not.

This section then concluded, "It is *impossible* for an individual to be saved who has a casual attitude toward his sins and their consequences."

- ? Just to be clear on this point, why is that? [*If he senses no need to be rescued from eternal death, he will sense no need to depend upon the sin-Bearer to do so.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

The Gift of Conviction

[Have 1 or 2 read this section: pages **12-13**.]

Two points are made in this section:

First, when it comes to a *believer's* evangelistic efforts, he can try to "do everything right" in word and deed over a long period of time. Yet even then, it is possible for the person he wants to "lead to Christ" to remain unsaved.

Second, a person can be a church member in good standing (he can go through all the motions of the Christian life) and still be unsaved.

In both cases, something is missing that prevents the unbeliever from turning – in true faith – to Christ Jesus for salvation.

? What is missing? *[It is possible for both situations to take place in one's life without being confronted with (or without understanding) the deadly consequence of his sins. Yet, that is the whole purpose of the Cross of Christ: to destroy the eternal penalty, authority, power, and (eventual) presence of sin over one's life. In doing evangelism, sin must be made the issue. Before one can be saved, he must honestly face God's attitude toward his sins. And he must recognize that Jesus Christ, the sin-Bearer, is his only Hope to be delivered from the result of his sins: God's anger and eternal condemnation.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

The Gift of Repentance

[Have 2-3 read this section: pages **13-15**.]

It was stated that repentance “carries the idea of *change*.”

- ? How do you know whether someone has changed his *mind* concerning the consequences of his sins from indifference to concern? How can you tell this change has taken place in someone's *mind*? [*He will turn to God to be mercifully pardoned and, gradually – over time and by the power of the Holy Spirit – his course of action will change.*]

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?”

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

THE BELIEVER'S STEWARDSHIP OF EVANGELISM

The Responsibility and Privilege of Evangelism

[Have 2-3 read this section: pages **16-17**.]

[Have someone read footnotes **4** and **5**, page **18**.]

[Have someone read, once again, the following paragraph (page **17**)]

“Therefore, the Great Commission is a stewardship with great responsibilities. But there is also great privilege in this calling, for it allows us to participate with God in the fulfillment of His will. And if that were not enough, those who are faithful to this command will share in the glory of Christ throughout eternity.”

This section presented three factors that should motivate us to do evangelism. It portrays the Great Commission as (1) a *responsibility*, as (2) a *privilege*, and as (3) a stewardship that promises a *reward*. Yet, sharing the Gospel is something many believers shy away from.

- ? With so much to gain if we are faithful to this calling ... and so much to lose if we are not, why do many believers have such a hard time presenting the Good News of Jesus Christ to others? [*Some feel inadequately trained to do so. Some are not secure enough to face rejection from others. Some are fearful of personal loss (friends, employment, social opportunities, etc.).*]

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

The Types of Evangelism

[Have 1-2 read this section: pages **17-18**.]

Three types of evangelism were listed in this section: proclamation, relational, and confrontational.

- ? Would someone briefly describe in your own words what is meant by each type? *[Proclamation evangelism is to a crowd of people. Relational evangelism is one-on-one with someone you know personally. Confrontational evangelism is one-on-one with someone you do not know (and may never see again).]*

It was stated in your reading, "(S)hould relational evangelism be our *primary* approach? To explain the Gospel to an individual with whom we *already* have a relationship is one thing. But it takes time to build *new* relationships; and if that is the primary approach the Church uses, we will never be able to keep up with world population growth (4.3 births per second)."

- ? Do you believe this line of reasoning is correct? If so, why? If not, why not?

[Summarize their answers.]

- ? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

- ? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

ONE STRATEGY

[Have someone read this section: page 19.]

WHAT THE CHURCH'S EVANGELISM STRATEGY SHOULD NOT BE

Inviting an Unbeliever to *Church*

[Have someone read this section and its footnote 6, page 20.]

The Consequences

(# 1) This strategy has caused confusion regarding the role of the church member in the Great Commission / The Solution

[Have someone read these two sections: pages 20-21.]

Concerning a local church's evangelism strategy, the church member's role in evangelism *should be* to invite someone to *Christ* rather than to invite someone to *church*.

? ***Realistically***, would anything change in your church's evangelism efforts if it were concluded, "We should do both"?

[Summarize their answers.]

? If so, what would change?

[Summarize their answers.]

[Have someone read the four statistics under "Conclusion," page 8.]

? If you believe that nothing would change, would you be satisfied with that?

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

(# 2) This strategy has compromised the maturity level of the local church / The Solution

[Have 2-3 read these two sections: pages **21-23**.]

This section emphasizes the importance of cultivating maturity within a local body of believers. It is true that new converts, even though they have not had time to mature in their faith, are often *more zealous* in their witness than saints who have been in the faith for a longer time. Nevertheless, mature believers are often *more effective* in their witness for Christ.

? Why is that? Why are mature believers more *effective* in their witness for Christ?
[Mature believers can back up their words with lives that validate their testimonies, lives that are more stable in Christ-like character.]

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

(# 3) This strategy restricts the offer of salvation only to those who are willing to "come to church" / The Solution

[Have 1-2 read these two sections: page **23**.]

The idea of presenting the Gospel to a family member or friend or total stranger often causes us to become tense.

? Why is that?

[Have someone record their answers.]

[Now take each concern and discuss how it should be handled.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

**(# 4) This strategy creates a false assurance of salvation among lost church members /
The Solution**

[Have several read these two sections: page **24**.]

? Why is it easier to invite someone to church rather than to Jesus Christ? [(1) You do not need to bring up one's sins to invite him or her to church. (2) The death sentence he is under does not have to be part of your invitation. (3) The purpose of the cross of Christ does not need to be mentioned. (4) The judgment to come can be left out of the invitation.]

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

An Observation

[Have someone read this section: page **25**.]

[Have someone read footnote **7**, page **25**.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

**A Ladies' Tea
(A Traditional Approach to Evangelism)**

[Have 2-3 read this section: pages 26-27.]

WHAT THE CHURCH'S EVANGELISM STRATEGY SHOULD BE

Inviting an Unbeliever to *Christ*

**A Ladies' Training
(The Biblical Approach to Evangelism)**

[Have 2-3 read this section: pages 28-29.]

AN EVALUATION

[Page 30.]

? What advantages does the *Biblical* approach (pages 28-29) have over the traditional approach (pages 26-27)?

- (1) *One evangelist has now become several evangelists.*
- (2) *Each trained believer will have countless opportunities to share the Gospel.*
- (3) *The believer meets with the unbeliever in the **unbeliever's** comfort zone rather than the believer's local church.*
- (4) *Evangelism becomes a lifestyle instead of an "event."*
- (5) *Less time is needed for evangelism to take place.*
- (6) *Less money is needed for evangelism to take place.*
- (7) *Less effort is needed for evangelism to take place.*
- (8) *This approach will increase the prayer lives of those involved.*
- (9) *The impact is immeasurable.*
- (10) *Prevents the true intent behind the effort (evangelism) from appearing underhanded (disguised as entertainment). Etc.*

[Summarize their answers.]

Not even the *Biblical* strategy for evangelism will work unless the hearts of the redeemed are *concerned* for the lost.

? How can that concern be cultivated in the hearts of the Church? [*By doing evangelism*]

[Summarize their answers.]

TWO SITUATIONS

HOW TO BE PREPARED FOR AN EVANGELISTIC OPPORTUNITY

[Have someone read this section: page 31.]

? Does anyone have anything to add to or take away from these five steps?

[Summarize their answers.]

WHEN THERE IS NO TIME OR OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EVANGELISTIC CONVERSATION

[Have someone read this section: page 32.]

? During your daily, weekly, or monthly routine, with whom could you use a one-minute presentation like the one given?

- (1) a cashier at a grocery store*
- (2) a bank teller*
- (3) a dry cleaner's employee*
- (4) a post office clerk*
- (5) a receptionist at a doctor's office*
- (6) a workman (e.g., a plumber) that comes to your home*
- (7) a service station attendant*
- (8) a server at a restaurant*
- (9) a seller in a retail shop ... to name only a few*

[Give them plenty of time to think of the many short-term encounters they have each week.]

? Let's all put on our creative hats for a few minutes. In what ways could you give out tracts to those with whom you have limited or no personal contact? (For example, if you pay your bills by postal mail, you could place a tract in the envelope along with your payment.) We need to seize the opportunities for evangelism, many of which we may never have considered opportunities.

- (1) insert a tract with every mail-in bill payment*
- (2) offer a tract at every business encounter (at the bank, cleaners, post office, doctor's office, service station, restaurant, retail shop, grocery store, etc.)*
- (3) offer a tract to those who make deliveries*
- (4) give to tradespeople (plumbers, electricians, etc.) who come to your home*
- (5) give to those you encounter while on vacation or on a business trip*
- (6) leave a tract on tables, etc. in public places*
- (7) insert a tract with any returns to Amazon, etc.*

[Give them plenty of time to think of some creative ways to place the Gospel in the hands of those with whom we have little or no personal contact.]

? If we are not careful with this approach, what mistakes could we make as we pass out tracts?

*(1) at a restaurant, leaving a tract for the server without leaving a tip
(2) making a lengthy presentation to someone who is trying to work*

[Give them plenty of time to think.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

WHEN THERE IS TIME AND OPPORTUNITY FOR AN EVANGELISTIC CONVERSATION

[Have someone read this section: page 33.]

? What are some problems that you might encounter in your use of questions? [*losing control of the discussion because the person strays from your original questions or because he is talkative*]

[With each problem ask the group for its solution(s).]

? I am not asking you to answer this question; it is only meant to prompt thought. But does anyone come to mind to whom you could present the Gospel using this series of questions?

[Give them a short time to think about their answer, then proceed.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

How to Initiate an Evangelistic Conversation *with Someone You Know*
How to Initiate an Evangelistic Conversation *with Someone You Do Not Know*

[Have someone read these two sections: page **33**.]

[Have someone read footnotes **8, 9, and 10**, pages **35-36**.]

? Was there any information from these three footnotes that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? What did you think of these two probing questions?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

Assuming You Are Given Permission to Ask Him Questions

“Do You Believe in God?” – “No”

[Have someone read this section: page **34**.]

[Have someone read footnote **11**, page **35**.]

? Was there any information from these two footnotes that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? What did you think of this presentation? Would you change anything about it?

[Give them time to think.]

? Can you think of any other foundational questions that would be helpful to have prepared ahead of time for this approach to evangelism?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

"Do You Believe in God?" – "Yes"

[Have someone read this section: pages **34-35**.]

[Have someone read footnotes **12, 13, 14**, pages **35-36 ... 11**, page **35 ... 15**, page **36**.]

? Was there any information from these five footnotes that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? What did you think of this presentation? Would you change anything about it?

[Give them time to think.]

? Can you think of any other foundational questions that would be helpful to have prepared ahead of time for this approach to evangelism?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

ONE MESSAGE**WHAT THE GOSPEL DOES ... AND DOES NOT ... PROMISE****The Restoration of a Ruptured Relationship****The Restoration of a Broken Marriage****The Healing of a Serious Physical Illness****Conclusion**

[Have 2-3 read these sections: pages 37-39.]

The Gospel message we present should be clear *concerning the salvation being offered*.

It is true: the temporal damage caused by sin can be and, many times, has been healed. But at other times it has not. This is not the salvation that is *promised*. The deliverance promised is that *from sin's tyranny: its eternal penalty, its authority, its power, and – eventually – its presence*.

? What is the danger in making the temporal damage caused by sin the issue? *[the salvation being offered would be an inferior kind of salvation, focused on the symptoms of sin rather than the foundational problem (deliverance from the wrath of God). Furthermore, the salvation promised may not take place, jeopardizing the reputation of God's faithfulness, causing the "believer" to become disillusioned toward God.]*

[Summarize their answers.]

? Was there any information from this section that was especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

? Was there anything that was *confusing* to you or that you *disagreed* with?"

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]

RESCUED BY GRACE**For God So Loved the World****He Gave His Only Son****Whoever Believes in Him****Shall Not Perish****He Shall Have Eternal Life****What About You? Have You Settled this Issue with God?**

[Have a different person read each section: pages **40-43**.]

[After each section is read, ask the following question:]

? Was there anything from this section that you would like to talk about, anything that may have been especially *interesting* or *helpful* or *new* to you?

[Give them time to think.]

I would like to invite anyone who would like to talk with me privately about this question to contact me at any time. If you have not already done so, it is the most important decision you will ever make in your life.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX B: PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELISM

This final section is a mixture of *practices* to follow and *attitudes* to cultivate as you present the Gospel to others. I have no pre-determined questions to ask you. Rather, this time is devoted to any insights or experiences you have that will enhance our understanding of this ministry. Also, if you have any questions you might like to ask.

[Have someone read one section, then pause for comments, clarifications, and questions. Then proceed to the next section, steadily (but not hurriedly) making your way through each principle: pages **45-52**.]

? Insights or comments or questions?

[Be sure to discuss each issue that is brought up.]