

ABSTRACT

EMPOWERING METHODIST LAITY IN SOUTH INDIA FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

by

Samuel John Royappa

Local churches need to rediscover the biblical understanding of Church as “a movement of people.” During the seventeen years of pastoral ministry in India, my experiences reveal that lay people have potential to do effective ministry both inside and outside churches. They are looking for ways, opportunities and guidance from pastoral leadership.

The purpose of this research was to evaluate a ten-week self-designed and self-directed study program, designed to equip laity for effective ministry in evangelism.. Thirty lay men and women were chosen from a local Methodist church in South India to study the lessons. Their affective, cognitive and behavioral changes were assessed by using pretest, mid-test and posttest questionnaires.

Major findings included an effective method of ministry of evangelism, equipping lay people, emphasizing spiritual gifts and designing training material.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled
EMPOWERING METHODIST LAITY IN SOUTH INDIA
FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

presented by

Samuel John Royappa

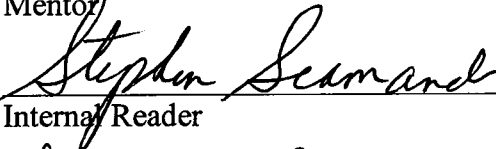
has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for the
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY degree at
Asbury Theological Seminary



Mentor

April 11, 2002

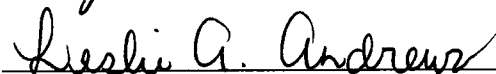
Date



Internal Reader

April 11, 2002

Date



Vice President for Academic Development
and Distributed Learning

April 11, 2002

Date

EMPOWERING METHODIST LAITY IN SOUTH INDIA
FOR EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by

Samuel John Royappa

May 2002

© 2002

Samuel John Royappa

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Chapter	
1. Background of the Study	1
Analysis of the Problem.....	3
Context of the Study	3
Statement of Purpose	7
Research Questions.....	7
Definition of Terms.....	8
Description of Project	9
Subjects.....	10
Instrumentation	12
Variables	12
Data Collection	13
Importance of the Study.....	13
Biblical Foundation.....	14
Overview of Research.....	17
2. Review of Related Literature.....	18
Biblical Understanding	18
Ministry of the Laity—The Concept.....	22
Spiritual Gifts—The Need	38
Training the Laity—The Method.....	46

Hinduism and Priesthood.....	50
The Major Cultural Aspects of the State of Tamil Nadu.....	51
Caste System and Religious Reformation.....	52
Caste Groups and People Groups	52
Caste System and the Indian Church	54
Summary	55
3. Design of the Study.....	60
Purpose of the Study	60
Statement of Research Questions.....	61
Subjects	62
Instrumentation and Data Collection	63
Variables	66
Data Analysis	67
Summary	68
4. Purpose of the Study	70
Background Information.....	70
Profile of the Subjects.....	71
Pre-Test Assessment	72
Brief Description of the Lessons.....	75
Mid-Test Assessment.....	76
Post-Test Assessment.....	77
Generation Study	78
Gender Study	82

Profession Study	84
Religious Study.....	89
Family Study.....	91
Personal Testimonies	94
Summary.....	95
5. Major Findings.....	99
Theological Reflections	100
Limitations of the Study.....	106
Cultural Implications	108
Practical Applications	111
Suggestions for Future Research	117
Conclusion	121
Appendixes	
A. The Major Cultural Aspects of the State of Tamil Nadu	123
B. Self-Directed Study Lessons.....	126
C. Sample Questionnaires: Pre-Test, Mid-Test, and Post-Test.....	161
D. Identification of Participants.....	166
E. A Sample Testimony.....	170
F. A Sample Group Report.....	171
G. A Model Curriculum for Training Teachers.....	172
H. Maps of India, Tamil Nadu, and Madras (Chennai)	174
Works Cited	177
Works Consulted.....	182

TABLES

Table	Page
2.1 Spiritual Gifts.....	41
4.1 Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Test Assessment	74
4.2 Effectiveness of the Program	93

FIGURES

Figure	Page
1.1 Number of Churches and Population in Madras (1981-2000).....	2
4.1 Involvement in Evangelism (before and after the program).....	76
4.2 Opportunity to Witness.....	88
5.1 Growth of Local Church.....	112

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the Beeson Pastor Program, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky; and the excellent faculty of committed and visionary teachers during the Beeson year.

I wish to thank the members of the Methodist Tamil Church, Vepery, Madras 600007, South India, who were instrumental to me in birthing the idea of doing this research for the benefit of lay people. Further, the research subjects were willing to participate in this experimental study and to share their contributions.

I am deeply indebted to Dr. Tom Tumblin for being my efficient mentor with his guidance and understanding of my culture. I want to thank Dr. Leslie Andrews and Dr. Steve Seamands for their encouragement and assistance.

I want to thank Rev. Rhenius Moorthy for serving as a liaison in Madras between the participants and me. He played the roles of translator, editor, mailer, organizer, and coordinator.

I wish to sincerely thank the Research Review Team members, Mrs. Sheila Goehring, Mrs. Alana Dalton, Mr. Louis Glassman, and Mr. Larry Mulder from the Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church, West Bend, Wisconsin. Their support and understanding were remarkable.

In addition to these, I want to thank Mrs. Judy Seitz for copyediting the document in order to improve my work.

I would not have completed this research without the prayers of men and women of faith in India and in the United States of America as well.

I want to gratefully acknowledge the constant encouragement of my wife, Shanti, and our children, Shalom and Shobi, who are indeed a great gift in my life from the Lord.

I want to honor my parents for their continued blessings. I want to dedicate this work to my grandfather, V. P. Natarajan, who was the first Hindu convert in our family and became a great lay missionary among his family members.

Glory to God!

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Can the city of Chennai, India (formerly known as Madras) have a church for every one thousand people at the dawn of the new millennium? In 1994, fourteen hundred churches were in Chennai when the population was 5.7 million, one church for every 4,071 people. The population has reached seven million at the turn of the century. Taking on the great task of planting more churches for the existing churches is a challenge. Chennai is privileged to have the highest number of churches of all the cities in South Asia. From personal observation, most of the churches are full on any average Sunday, ranging from 150 to eight hundred in attendance. Congregations are vibrant with life, and local church activities are on the increase every year. However, I believe the impact of the churches on the pluralist society is much less than biblically mandated and expected, because they have failed to be believers doing ministry in and through the local church.

The Church Growth Association of India has assessed both the growth of the population and the growth of churches in Chennai between 1981 and 2000. To achieve the association proposed goal of one church for every 1000 people in Madras, the existing churches need to plant 5600 churches (Albert, "The Challenge" 1). The number of churches is growing but not keeping pace with the city's rapidly growing population (see Figure 1.1).

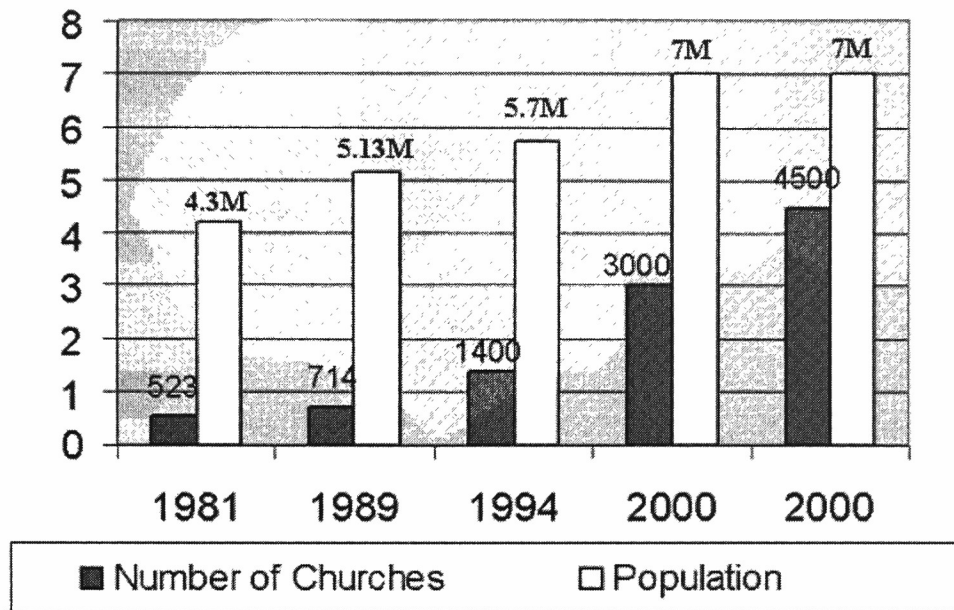


Figure 1.1
Number of Churches and Population in Madras
(1981-2000)

Some churches serve as good “hospitals,” as the preaching brings comfort week after week. Some are crèches where the members are perpetual infants. Some are like old homes where worship is traditional. Churches where the laity are actively involved in specific ministries are hard to find. I believe that the key to a multiplication of churches is to train the believers and send them out as “soldiers” to fight the devil and free his captives for the kingdom of God. The task of church leadership is not to lead the church programs but to equip each believer for ministry. The task of believers is not to participate in the programs but to serve others. The crucial question is not how much one knows but how much one serves. During my conversation with a villager in South India about the most popular Indian game, cricket, the person said, “Eleven players are playing and eleven thousand people are watching.” All believers in local churches are called to play the game of ministry in order to fulfill the mission of the church.

Analysis of the Problem

The role of the laity in a local church is limited to participating and supporting levels. From personal observation and experience, the clergy do not trust the laity; therefore, they do not motivate and inspire the laity to attain the maximum spiritual potential with which God has endowed them. Further, the clergy “guard ministry jealousy for themselves,” as observed by Greg Ogden (21). I have begun to learn that the laity lack discipleship, support, empowering, mentoring, and delegation of responsibilities. The result is that their potentialities are not discovered, developed, and deployed. Ministry has become clergy centered and, therefore, lost its effectiveness. Many church members feel that ministry is the responsibility of a specialized group who are trained for it and do it full-time as their profession. The preoccupation of the church, in general, seems to be to maintain the institutionalized church, its holy orders, its structures, and its establishments. The sacraments are viewed as necessary for one’s own benefit. From personal observation and experience, professional clergy mostly tend to see ministry as totally belonging to their jurisdiction, and the laity’s effective participation is considered insignificant to theirs. Both clergy and laity are content with what they have within the four walls of the church resulting in maintenance mode, not growing method.

Context of the Study

India is a multireligious, multilingual, and multicultural nation. It is constitutionally a secular state providing freedom of religion for all. India’s population became one billion in November 1999. Being the second most populous country, it has 16 percent of the world’s population. According to the Manorama year book of 1999, the six major religions in India are: Hinduism (84 percent), Islam (12 percent), Christianity

(4.5 percent), Sikkism (2 percent), Buddhism (0.8 percent), and Jainism (0.4 percent) (Mathew 460).

In recent years, many changes have occurred in the culture and the country. Politically, regional parties instead of national parties now form the central government. Politics, policies, and the budget are highly influenced by caste and creed. They have become dominant factors for power and position. In recent years, religion is becoming increasingly militant and aggressive. Secularism and religion are in constant conflict across the country. Multinational companies and communications are invading the culture making the people modern and materialistic. Urbanites are carried away with advanced technology, globalization, and modernization. Corruption has become part of the culture and the political system.

The majority of Christians in India believe that Indian Christianity is almost as old as Christianity itself. According to oral tradition, Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, came to India in AD 52. He planted seven churches in Kerala, a Southern state. He then came to Chennai and established a few churches. The Church Growth Research Association estimated that a population of one billion has 200,000 local Christian congregations (Rajan 1). The local congregations have created minimal impact on the society. Their members opine that ministry is the work of a specialized group, and it is not their personal calling. The members think that the clergy should do the ministries all by themselves. I believe that the secular worldview has influenced the Christian value system and priority of the church. Most of the churches are struggling with property, finance, and leadership, resulting in church maintenance rather than church growth.

David Vijayakumar has summarized the beginnings of the Methodist Church in India. The history of Methodism in India had its beginning in 1870 when the famous

American evangelist, William Taylor, came and held revival meetings in India. This movement caused tremendous growth with the establishment of Methodist congregations in all the major cities, including Chennai, where American Methodist missionaries planted two churches (6-8). For nearly one hundred years, the two churches did not grow, primarily because of a lack of indigenous pastoral leadership and, secondarily, because of pastor-centered ministry. The two churches began to launch out only in 1974. Congregations grew up in the city and the state because of indigenous pastoral leadership with a passion for evangelistic ministry. Subsequently, the growth gathered momentum spreading far and wide. Encouraged by the results, the General Conference of the Methodist Church in India declared the Madras Region a separate district in 1979. Then, in 1994, it was declared a Regional Conference. Evangelism has remained the heartbeat of the conference, adding an average of one hundred members a year by conversion from other faiths. The work has grown and spread to the Union territory of Pondicherry and the Islands of Andaman and Nicobar (Royappa 3).

A survey of twelve hundred church members conducted by the Church Growth Research Center for India shows that 80 percent of believing Christians do not know what their spiritual gifts are (Manoharan 2). This ignorance appears to be the primary reason why the percentage of Christians has not kept pace with the population growth. I believe that the discovery and fruitful use of spiritual gifts by the church members is one of the keys to churches growing. Church growth in general, and particularly in Chennai, is directly proportional to the quantity and the quality of potential lay men and women in the local congregations who do ministry. They have more access to the fast-changing, pluralist, secular world than full-time church workers.

Churches in India have positions for lay people. They serve within the

congregation as elders, deacons, stewards, churchwardens, lay readers, lay preachers, and various committee chairpersons or members. The Methodist Church in India has the most highly organized system of government. The Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church in India has a Council on Lay Activities at the national level, a Board of Lay Activities at the regional level, and a Committee on Lay Activities at the pastorate level (103). Sadly speaking, the system is mostly used as “vote bank” for election purposes. Methodist Church historians have observed that John Wesley organized societies for preaching and witnessing, making the Methodist movement as a “brotherhood of ministers.” What is the calling and ministry of the laity in the world today? They form 99.5 percent of the church. They are the chosen people of God, gathering together Sunday after Sunday for worship, instruction, government, and fellowship. After the caretaker sees the pastor out of the vestry, he turns off all the lights, and locks up the sanctuary. From Monday through Saturday, the people of God are scattered in schools, colleges, hospitals, banks, government offices, factories, private businesses, homes, and other places. Still the people are the church.

The presence of the Church, scattered through the institutions of secular society, must be taken with increasing seriousness. This concept means that the laity are called to be the Church in their work places and neighborhood. The fact is that the lay men and women spend the main part of their time in industry or commerce or other work places. Further, Christians constitute a minority in their work places. They can do a better job of servant evangelism or family evangelism or friendship evangelism as citizens and workers in their community and occupation. Lyle E. Schaller, in his article on “Seven Characteristics of Growing Churches,” has noted,

Growing churches of today and tomorrow have a “cadre of lay

evangelists” who have faith to share, a burning desire to share it, a concern for people outside the church and a willingness to help others make a response to the challenge of the Christian gospel (qtd. in Galloway, “Leadership.”).

Lay men and women are to be trained to share their faith in work places, homes, and among neighbors and friends. The ministry of lay persons is to represent Christ and his Church, to bear witness to him wherever they are, and to carry on Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world according to the gifts bestowed upon them.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to develop and evaluate a study program for equipping lay persons who demonstrate potential for effective ministry in evangelism. Such a program, rooted in theological and historical foundations, would hopefully result in a shift from people as ordinary members of local churches to people as competent ministers of the gospel among the non-Christian population on behalf of the local churches. The major part of the research focused on the effectiveness of the study program as an empowering tool for lay ministry.

Research Questions

The research questions that guide this research are as follows.

What understanding of ministry do the potential lay people have before the self-directed study program?

What understanding of ministry do the potential lay people have after the self-directed study program?

How effective was the self-directed study as a tool for the ministry of evangelism at work and in other public places?

Definition of Terms

The word “laity” originates from the Greek word *laikos* and defines the basic community in Christianity. The New Testament writers use the term to refer to all the members of the Church. In a strict sense, laity refers to all people of God, both lay and clergy. However, in most cases in this study, the word refers to those who are part of the body of Christ but do not serve in an ordained capacity as do the clergy. The one significant text addressing this issue in the New Testament is found in 1 Peter 2:9-10:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people (*laos*) belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light. Once you were not a people (*laos*) of God but you are the people (*laos*) of God; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

A close similarity between these verses and God’s call to the original Israel in Exodus 19:5-8 may be identified. Three times in these two verses Peter described his Christian readers as a *laos*. He told them that they were the *laos* of God. This biblical understanding indicates that no essential difference was found in the order of the ministry in the New Testament era. Greg Ogden has summarized the historical background for the word “laity.” The first hint of difference between clergy and laity occurred in the second century, found in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, using terms such as the ordained and the unordained. In the fourth century, the Church followed the secular world, differentiating between “the rulers” and “the ruled.” By the twelfth century, the separation was made clear, hinting at two kinds of Christians. During the Reformation, the wall of separation had a brief break. After the Reformation, clericalism continued in Protestant Christianity (66). Twentieth century Christianity began with “professionalism” of the clergy. As the Church has entered a new millennium, fuller participation of the laity in the life of the church is being rediscovered. The Church

appears to be turning back to its real nature and call to ministry through the spiritual gifts of equipped laity.

“Church” in this study refers to both urban and rural Methodist churches in the context of the Madras Regional Conference of the Methodist Church in India. According to the Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church in India, a full-time ordained pastor, an elder, a deacon, a licensed local preacher, or an evangelist leads the “church” (110). An average organized local Methodist church has more than thirty lay men and women who are called “full members.”

A “spiritual gift” is a special ability, given by the Holy Spirit to all believing Christians. It is not for personal benefit but for the benefit of others in order to build the body of Christ. Every believer must believe, recognize, discover, develop, and deploy his or her gift to serve the Lord and the needs of others, both believers in the Church and non-Christians outside the Church. The Saddleback Community Church in California has categorized these spiritual gifts. Gifts communicate God’s word, educate God’s people, demonstrate God’s love, and celebrate God’s presence (Warren, “Moving” 13). Spiritual gifts are not natural human talents. Natural gifts are given to all people regardless of caste, color, or creed. The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to all Christian believers. For Kenneth Kinghorn, natural talents function independently from the Holy Spirit, although they are given by God (22). Kinghorn sees all gifts working in harmony with our humanity (34).

Description of Project

Thirty believers showing potential for the ministry of evangelism, both male and female, were selected by convenient sampling. I have known them personally for ten years (1989-99). They were full members of the local Methodist congregations in the

city of Chennai. They formed ten groups of three members each. Most of the groups' members lived within a one-mile radius to avoid transportation. They were already meeting for weekly Bible study and cottage prayer meetings conducted by the local churches. I selected members from the same family and different families. I formed them into ten groups of three members per group. This selection helped to compare the effectiveness of the self-directed study lessons between the joint family groups and mixed member groups. I thought that ten groups would be an appropriate size to control, interact with, and assess the effect of the study. Further, the liaison person would find ten groups easy to guide and supervise. The liaison person is a close friend and a former colleague of mine. He is an ordained elder in the Madras Regional Conference. He is currently pastoring one of the organized Methodist churches in the city of Chennai. The liaison person, under my broad guidance, assigned members to the individual groups. The groups met in homes, separately, once a week for a maximum of ninety minutes. They decided the day and time and met for ten weeks. They did a self-directed study on the two-page, researcher-designed lesson. The self-directed lesson had the name of the lesson, a Bible text, introduction, information, reflection questions, and application questions.

Subjects

Seven criteria were established for selecting thirty subjects.

First, they were born again Christians. They had the assurance of their salvation experience. They had a personal testimony. They must continually model prayer, devotion, fellowship, and witnessing. This personal salvation experience is the foundation for doing ministry.

Second, they were active members with good standing in a local Methodist

church. They have been active members in worship, tithing, and participating in weekly activities of the church. This qualification was necessary because those who do ministry will grow the church.

Third, most of them were currently employed. They were wage-earning members. Unemployment is a very serious problem in India, and it causes social and emotional stress, which is not so conducive to participate in the group meetings. Unemployed members would not serve the purpose of the project; however, some were unemployed women and students. The women were homemakers who had access to neighborhoods for ministry opportunities, preferably among women, and the students had influence among their classmates.

Fourth, they were literate. They were able to read and write. This qualification was necessary because they had to do self-directed study or group study followed by interaction and reflection. They had to exercise leadership in the group meetings.

Fifth, they were attending cottage prayer meetings. They had a good record of attending the cottage prayer meetings, which is a common activity of local Methodist churches in South India. This regular attendance provided a model for the group study. They found the study easy because the program was the same but the content, the method, and the purpose were different.

Sixth, most of them were already involved in a ministry. They had ministry experience for a short period of one year in or outside of the local church. This experience would establish a personal passion for doing ministry outside their comfort zone, in the work place and other public places. They had a high level of commitment to the local church and its mission to reach the unreached.

Seventh, they expressed their willingness to be trained. They were willing to

study, learn, apply, and experiment through a system of self-directed study lessons. They were willing to work in a team and learn from others to be effective in the ministry of evangelism. This willingness was necessary because the research focused on knowledge, attitude, effectiveness, and behavioral changes.

Instrumentation

Five instruments were used. First, a researcher-designed, pre-test questionnaire was used before the beginning of the group meetings for getting basic background information about the members. Second, ten researcher-designed, self-directed study lessons were used in every meeting for facilitating the members to know and to do evangelism. Third, a researcher-designed, mid-test questionnaire was used after four lessons for assessing the progress of the project. Fourth, a researcher-designed, post-test questionnaire was used after completing all ten lessons to assess the impact and outcome of the self-directed study for both content and method for effective ministry of evangelism. Fifth, periodical group reports were used to assess the group dynamics such as team effort, influence of caste system, and cooperative ministry involvement.

Variables

The independent variable of this research was the self-directed study lessons used during the group meetings. The dependent variable was the change in the subjects' understanding and behavior in lay ministry involvement beyond the local church after the self-directed study. The intervening variables included generation study (age groups of 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and 61-70), gender study (male and female), profession study (teachers, state government employees, federal government employees, Christian organization workers, church workers, and students), religious or denomination study (Methodists, Church of South India, Hindu converts, and Roman Catholic convert),

and family study (family groups and mixed groups).

Data Collection

The pre-test questionnaire, along with a letter of introduction about the research project, was mailed to all thirty subjects, individually, through the liaison person in early June 2000. The subjects were given a seven-day period to fill out the questionnaire. They returned them to the liaison person. Their responses provided basic background information such as spiritual history, spiritual maturity, spiritual giftedness, and current involvement in ministry. I designed the ten lessons. The first four lessons, along with the mid-test questionnaire, were mailed in August 2000 and the other six lessons in September 2000. The mid-test questionnaire was given to the subjects individually after four lessons. They were given a seven-day period to fill out the questionnaire. The subjects returned them to the liaison person. Their responses indicated the need, the ministry involvement, and the most helpful lesson of the self-directed study of the first four lessons. The primary variable was established by studying the differences of the responses between the pre-test and the mid-test. The post-test questionnaire was mailed to the liaison person and then to the subjects individually after ten group meetings. They were given a seven-day period to fill out the questionnaire. They returned it, along with group reports, to the liaison person. Their responses indicated the importance of the spiritual gifts, the value of the last six lessons, the most helpful lesson, and the effectiveness of the entire study program. Simultaneously, the intervening variables such as generation, gender, profession, religion or denomination, and family were measured and established.

Importance of the Study

All the local churches in the conference have members with the potential to do

ministry, but they lack “know how.” I have personally seen the programs for lay training, but these are available only outside the church. That, too, is not adequate and has not served to meet the growing ministry needs of the local churches. Most of them are outdated, too. Lay people do not relate and apply the insights in their local churches as they are interested in “independent ministries.” During sixteen years of pastoral ministry in the Methodist church in the central and southern part of India, my experience revealed a dire need for lay training that incorporates a systematic program in the local church, by the church, and for the church. The main task of pastoral leadership is to equip and mobilize the laity for ministry. I developed ten self-directed study lessons for a selected group of active members from local churches that would be evaluated for effective ministry of evangelism. In case of remarkable and significant change, as I envisioned, the program might be applied for other Methodist churches, denominations, and missionary organizations.

Biblical Foundation

The Church around the world is rediscovering the concept of church as a “movement of people.” Mainline churches in India have just begun to preach and teach about lay ministry but in a traditional way. The identity of church must be discovered in the Bible. The identity must be rediscovered in the local churches by the believers so they can more effectively minister in today’s world. Church is primarily people, people of God, *ho laos tou theou*, not an institution. In its common usage, the term “lay” refers to the unordained, “non-professional” persons in the church. The clergy are usually the leaders of the church. As such, they have been specially trained and are paid. They are known as full-time church workers. Nevertheless, the majority of “non-professional” persons are the ones who can make a difference in the local church and its mission.

Therefore, a fresh understanding of the biblical concept is necessary for this project.

Findley Edge has stated the problem:

What does it mean to be the people of God? . . . This is the basic problem in the life of the modern church. We do not know who we are or what we are supposed to be as the people of God. Our problem is not primarily that attendance statistics are declining or that the budget is becoming increasingly difficult to raise. It is that we do not know who we are or what we are called to be as the people of God. (31)

Edge further states the answer to the problem:

What really does it mean to be the people of God? They are people who believe, certainly. But these things do not constitute the heart of the matter. The uniqueness of God's people is that they are called to a mission. (36)

Kittle et al. point out the Old Testament's and the New Testament's usage of the word "lay" as being the people with a mission. In the Septuagint (LXX), the term occurs two thousand times and is used of "people" as unit (the nation) and with the *laos theou*. The LXX uses it almost exclusively for the chosen people of Israel. In the New Testament, the term *laos theou* referred to the Christian community. It was not a racial or national group but a spiritual group or community. It was not a geographical or biological group but spiritual people. God's redemptive plan to save the world has a single thread in both the Old and New Testaments. He was engaged in a redemptive task in the world, and at Mount Sinai he was calling the people of Israel who would covenant with him, giving their lives, in the mission of bringing sinful men and women and God together. For many centuries, Israel failed to understand and to carry out the purpose of its calling. In fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies and renewal of covenantal relationship, God's redemptive acts were enacted to benefit his own people *idioti*, the Jews, by sending his own Son, Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, God's people did not respond to his work of redemption, neither the Messiah nor the Message. God chose to create a

new people because of the Jews' rejection. In the New Testament, the covenant became one of faith in God through Jesus Christ. This relationship is more vital than the Old Testament one based on the law.

At the Jerusalem Conference to decide the fate of Gentile believers, James recognized the results of God's work: "Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles [*ethnon*] a people [*laon*] for himself" (Acts 15:14). Paul also recognized this same work of God when he adduced Hosea's words to God's work among the Gentiles: "I will call them my people [*laon*] who are not my people [*laon*]" (Rom. 9:25). What was applied in the Old Testament to the people of Israel now applies to the New Testament Church. They became known as Christians (Acts 11:26). Other New Testament writers have identified the Church as God's chosen people. Paul claims the phrase "a people of his own," for the Church in Titus 2:14. The writer to the Hebrews finds the Old Testament *laos* a type of Christian community in the New Testament (Heb. 2:17; 4:9; 13:12). Peter implies that Church is a priesthood community of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9-10). John, in the book of Revelation, saw into the future and heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be His people (*laoi*), and God himself will be their God" (Rev. 21:3).

According to the New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology, the honored title of Israel, that of being God's *laos*, is transferred to the Christians, the Church. It has not simply taken the place of Israel as the people of God, but the transfer was based upon faith in Jesus Christ as the *Kyrios*. Therefore, the church becomes the *laos theou*, people of God, regardless of the national background of its members (800). They are called and chosen to be witnesses, ministers, and heralds as part of God's

redemptive mission to the unsaved. They are the embodiment of the kingdom of God. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world in the context of the gathering of believers who worship, fellowship, and serve together. Our gathering together in worship is to be strengthened for the ministry outside the local church. Talking about his conversion experience from Hinduism, my grandfather once said, “The cross in front of our worship place and the exit door in the back are complementary symbols signifying who we are in Christ in the church and what we should be doing for Christ in the society.”

Overview of Research

The second chapter has the theological and historical content for the topic. In addition, it includes cultural implications and values. The third chapter offers a detailed description of the entire project. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the project in the form of a final report. The fifth chapter summarizes the major findings, theological reflections, limitations of the study, practical applications, suggestions for the future, and a model set of self-directed study lessons.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Biblical Understanding

The primary source of any aspect of the Christian ministry is the Bible itself. As the inerrant source of faith, knowledge, and practice, it gives sufficient and dynamic principles in the process of research. The Bible contains several strong references to equipping the laity, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. In Ephesians 4:11, 12, we find

it was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built.

Ephesus was the most important city in western Asia Minor, now known as Turkey. Paul wrote to the saints who were in Ephesus. According to the tradition, the letter was sent to the local church in the city. The church was established as an outcome of Paul's preaching to large crowds of people in the city. He made it a center of evangelism for about three years, and, therefore, the church flourished in large number. The purpose of writing this letter was to expand the horizons of believers regarding Church and ministry. His aim was to make them appreciate the high calling of God to his people to do ministry while understanding the eternal purpose and grace of God for his Church.

In the first three chapters, Paul discusses at length the doctrine of God's call to all the believers in the Church. In the following three chapters, he challenges them to live out God's call by doing ministry. In chapter four, he exhorts them to walk faithfully in their calling, to build up the body of Christ by exercising the gifts, to put away the old person and to put on the new person characterized by righteousness. He gives them the

necessary knowledge of the gifts and emphasizes mutual responsibility.

Gifts are specified. Of important note, the intensive Greek pronoun “he” is emphatic here. He, God, gave the gifts to the church. Usually, the Bible speaks of gifts of grace as spiritual gifts or charismatic gifts that are bestowed upon the believers. The Lord gave believers as ministers to his Church along with gifts such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. He is the savior, and he is the source of all power and authority. He is the sole head of the Church. He controls the Church. The Church does not give but only receives the gifts. St. Thomas Aquinas remarked, “The many different states and functions in the church are designated as the gifts of Christ. He has imparted a variety of gifts on each of the faithful” (162).

These gifted people are given for preparing or perfecting of the saints. The Greek word *katartimos* is variously translated as “equip,” “perfect,” or “prepare.” Greg Ogden has done an extensive study on this word and brought forward the salient features that are applicable to this research. The Greek language has five related words. *Artios* is the root word and also the predicate adjective, which means complete or sound, and basically conveys the goals of equipping. *Katartizo* is the verb form, most commonly used in the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Septuagint, that means mend, adjust, or fit. *Katartimos* is a participle, used only in Ephesians 4:12, and can be simply translated as preparing or equipping. *Katartisis* is a noun that Paul uses in 2 Corinthians 13:9 that means restoration or completion or being put in proper order. *Exartizo* is used only once by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:17, and means to fill out, finish, complete, or equip (99).

The word “equip” in its various forms expresses the need for and calls for a type of ministry and the content of that ministry. First, the implication of equip is to restore what has been lost. After the return from the Babylonian exile, the people of Israel had

the task of rebuilding the broken walls of Jerusalem under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. If the walls had to perform the function of what they were meant to be, they had to be restored, repaired, and replaced. The disciples were originally fishermen. When Jesus saw the first couple of prospective disciples near the Sea of Galilee, they were mending the nets. If the fishing nets were to be useful, they had to be mended and repaired. Second, the implication of equip is to restore to its proper alignment. The people of Israel had suffered under the Egyptian oppressors for four hundred years. God chose Moses to lead them through the wilderness to the Promised Land, the original promised place of their forefathers. Paul in his letter to the church in Corinth advised them to put away the spirit of division and groupism and to “be united in the same mind and the same judgement” (1 Cor. 12:25). He exhorts them to be connected in such a way that they are all aligned with God in the body of Christ. Third, the implication of equip is to provide or supply what is lacking or missing. Paul had equipped several persons such as Timothy, Silas, Titus, Onesimus, Philemon, Aquila, and Priscilla. He believed that the very essence of Christian discipleship is growth. He encouraged them and gave them opportunities to do ministry and evaluated their efforts in the process. He shared their success and failures. He supplied all the resources needed for their faith and ministry. He helped them grow not just to be good and strong leaders in the kingdom but to become reproductive.

The objective for equipping the believers in the Church is for Christian service. The Greek word *diakonia* here conveys the meaning that one man or woman renders service to another. The phrase “works of service” is in the accusative case, which implies mutual service. Those who have the gifts are at the service of God and their fellow men and women. Paul is speaking of saints and gifts in the plural. Saints are connected to one

another as gifts are mutually communicated. Charles Hodge comments, “Christ has appointed the ministries with the view of preparing the saints for the work of serving one another and for the edification of His body” (229). This definition is the primary result of equipping. The Greek word for “edifying” has been derived from two words, *oikodome* and *oikodomeo*. The first word is a noun that means the promotion of spiritual growth. The second word is a verb that means the promotion of spiritual growth and development of character of believers by teaching or by example. The same noun and verb are used for “build,” “builder,” and “building.” Christ has given gifted men and women to his church that they may equip the believers, who in turn do the service. As a result of their mutual service, the body of Christ will be built.

Thomas Oden has connected Ephesians 4:11-12 to the story of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses. When Moses was under tremendous pressure, handling every ministry personally, Jethro gave him a piece of advice to share the ministry of leadership, known as the “Jethro Principle,” so that God’s grace could work through many and reduce the burden of one (156-57).

You must yourself search for capable, God-fearing persons among all the people, honest and incorruptible persons and appoint them over the people as officers over units of a thousand, of a hundred, or fifty or of ten. They shall sit as a permanent court for the people. In this way, your burden will be lightened, and they will share it with you. If you do this, God will give you strength and you will be able to go on. (Exod 18:14ff)

The Jethro Principle enables more people to share the leadership burden, and the different gifts can be used to benefit the whole community. The burden of mission rests upon the shoulders of every individual in the church.

John Stott comments on the significance of Ephesians 4:11-12:

The New Testament concept of the pastor is of one who helps and encourages all of God’s people to discover, develop and exercise their

gifts. His teaching and training are directed to the end, to enable the people of God to be a servant people, ministering actively but humbly according to their gifts in a world of alienation and pain. Thus, instead of monopolizing all ministry by himself, he actually multiplies ministries. Message 167

Further, Stott points out that the laity, the whole people of God, are important because they serve both God and people. The clergy, the ministers of the people, are equally important because they are the “servicing organization.” He has made an interesting connection to 1 Corinthians 3:21-22: “If anybody belongs to anybody in the church, it is not the laity who belong to the clergy, but the clergy who belong to the laity. We are theirs, their servants for Jesus’ sake” (One 52).

Ministry of the Laity—The Concept

Cardinal Aidan Gasquet tells a story about an inquirer who asked a priest what was the position of the layman in the Catholic Church. The priest answered that the layman has two positions: he kneels before the altar, and he sits below the pulpit. The Cardinal adds that the priest has forgotten a third position: the layman also puts his hand in his purse. Most of the lay people in India view the church this way. J. A. T. Robinson and other writers have clearly brought out the present sharp dichotomy between clergy and laity. (Laity are spiritually illiterate, emotionally immature, passive recipients meant to support the clergy, spare-time workers, led by the clergy, and below the clergy in status; whereas, clergy are spiritually literate, emotionally mature, active givers, meant to help the laity, full-time workers, leading the laity and above the laity.) Douglas Webster has made a similar honest observation by quoting Kenneth Heim saying that the church has become a sitting church because the bishop sits in his cathedral, the clergy sit in their stalls or offices, and the people sit in their pews (48-50). This dichotomy is the actual functioning of most of the churches today. Those who are formally trained and ordained

are the active members of the body of Christ, and they can serve in the highest ways as clergy and laity believe. Daniel Walker teaches how lay men and women can become literate through the opportunities in their own parish. They can and should become ambassadors of faith in their home, church, and community. All Christians do have something to say to the world (140).

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, clergy and laity are called to recover from these misguided beliefs and to rediscover the biblical understanding and perspective of church and ministry. The churches are to recover the spirit of the early Christians when the Church was significantly small and young. Paul Minear mentions fifty-three Old Testament passages, 772 New Testament references, and ninety-six analogies that talk about the Church and its mission in the world (294). One of the classical concepts is the Church as the priesthood of all believers. Cyril Eastwood has made the most extensive contribution, through a systematic historical survey, to the understanding and application of this concept from the Reformation to the present day. This concept was germinal for the formation of many denominations of modern Christendom. Further, it has influenced the lives and work of Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, the Swiss reformers, and the major divisions of Christendom. It was also a fundamental concept in several divisions and movements of the Puritan traditions that insisted that the whole worshipping congregation is a priesthood and true priesthood is active participation in worship and service (182). Eastwood quoted Luther who said that worship and vocation flow from one fount (45). Eastwood quoted John Calvin who applied to believers all the characteristics and functions of priests from the Old Testament (87). Eastwood quoted John Wesley who clearly saw the relation of justification of faith to the priesthood of believers. Methodist theology begins with faith as the basis that leads to the

proclamation of the gospel. Methodist history says that an ideal church does not consist of an active few, the ordained clergy, and the passive many, the laity who are just content to be the recipients of benefits from the clergy. All are called to serve in the Church of Christ (199, 236). These historical faith giants understood priesthood as a privilege coupled with responsibilities in the context of the mission of God. Priesthood does not mean “on behalf of the people” or “for the people” but along with the people, treating them as partners and team members. If the gospel is to reach all mankind, every person who has received it must preach it (125). Eastwood has made twelve significant conclusions concerning this concept of laity in the final chapter:

No single church has been able to express in its worship, work, and witness the full richness of this doctrine;

The doctrine has been a living issue in each century since the Reformation;

It is a unitive, positive, and comprehensive principle that springs directly from the evangelical concept of “free grace”;

It affirms that the divine revelation is more important than the means that God uses to mediate it;

It is an assertion that God’s justifying activity is proclaimed in the lives of all believers;

It is intrinsically related to the High Priesthood of Christ;

It is significant for current ecumenical studies;

It is significant for an understanding of the word “ministry”;

The truths inherent in the doctrine should be incorporated in the worshipping life of the Church;

It anticipates the full participation of all Christians in the evangelistic action of the

Church;

It leads to a fuller understanding of the doctrine of divine vocation; and,

It is significant to understand the doctrine of eschatology (238).

Therefore, Eastwood strongly feels that the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers needs to be taken out of the slogan category and be set in its true context as an essential and mandatory element in the theology of the Church. This doctrine has never been entirely lost nor has it ever been fully received (ix). E. Glenn Hinsien has called for the restoration of the priesthood of all believers in the Church by making religion more than a creed recited in a church service. The whole program of the local church needs to be refocused so that people in all situations of life are confronted with the reconciling gospel in the idiom of today (16).

Hans Kung, a Roman Catholic theologian, on the basis of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, calls people to return to the New Testament concept of the Church, not as a highly organized institution but as a ministry of all believers witnessing to Christ in every walk and station of life. He calls the Church as an ecclesial community with liberty, equality, and fraternity. Christ liberates people from the letter of the law, the burden of guilt, and the dread of death. At the same time, they are liberated for life, service, and love. All members of the Church have the same rights and the same duties. The Church is a community of brothers and sisters. They have one Father, one Lord, one Message, and one Mission, and they are all directed to all mankind (34). He examines biblical ministry as reflected in the life of our Lord and also in the functions of the apostles and the early Christians. The priesthood of all believers is clearly the New Testament pattern, and the Church is nurtured by means of the word and the sharing of charismatic gifts. He calls for a new understanding and a restructuring of the Church's

ministry leadership. Pastors are needed to feed the Church of God and to liberate, develop, and utilize the talents and energies of all of God's people. They are the inspirers, moderators, and animators of the congregation. They are responsible to discover and liberate the hidden talents and energies of people. The Church should gather the people in order to be based upon the word and then scatter them into the world in order to live the word (50, 69).

Howard Grimes has emphasized the point that the gathered Church must become a scattered Church if its members and their neighbors are to be renewed by the gospel. This task is achievable only when pastors get clear on the mission of all of God's people because the mission of the Church can be fulfilled only through the entire body of people. The whole people of God are involved in all the ministries of God. Israel failed to fulfill the covenant relationship with God but a remnant of the people remained. The covenant was renewed in Jesus Christ and the Church became the new community with him as the head of the Church. The Church is the people of God, which is the most illuminating image in the Old Testament, and the same is implied in the New Testament specifically with unmistakable clarity in 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10 (29).

Howard Snyder has made a significant point that the priesthood of all believers is the first foundation stone for understanding the ministry of God's people. He has defined "liberating church" as restoring gospel ministry and kingdom work to all God's people, which he called "biblical ecology in God's plan" (171).

All believers have direct access to God; we are priests to each other; priesthood is not just for the internal life of the church, it is for the world. As Priests, Christians are God's missionaries and servants for others. The church is the body of Christ in the world, charged and empowered to represent God to the world and to bring the world to God. The church, then, is God's priesthood in the earth. (171-72)

Many writers have made Christianity a lay religion because *kleros* and *laos* are the same people. David Poling says that organized religion will depend more and more on the brainpower of the lay people because of disbelief in traditional Christianity, which is wasting valuable, human resources (67, 71). Oscar E. Feucht has made stronger the argument that all Christians are God's laity by saying all are God's clergy and both are the agents of institutional change. He has based his argument on the apostolic concept of coworkmanship between Paul and the people of the early churches. He has taken the original meaning of the word *kleros* as "the object used in drawing lots to choose a person for a position that is related to the verb 'call' and is employed in reference to God calling people into the Christian fellowship of the church (23-24). Therefore, all Christians are God's called people and so God's clergy in the world. Even the Greek word *ekklesia* is derived from the basic meaning "to call." Now the word *laos* simply means "people" and usually God's chosen people, the believers in the Church. Therefore, all Christians are God's chosen people and so God's laity in the world (57). Alden D. Kelley made a reference to *laos* as new people, the peculiar possession of God. They are for God, the Church, and the world, in reference to the reminder of William Temple that the Church is the one institution in history that exists for others and not its own members (18, 28).

Hendrik Kraemer has done extensive study on these technical words, *kleros* and *laos*. They are not two, separate definite bodies. The two words denote the same people on the basis of the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, who are the recipients of the means of grace (52). Mark Gibbs has made a point that all God's people are chosen and offered grace, authority, and the strength of his spirit for the agonizing work of serving and ministering to the needs of others (18-19). James L. Garlow has observed that the

difference between clergy and laity is based upon function, not essence. It is not by what they are but what they do. God never intended that the total ministry of his kingdom be the sole responsibility of the professional clergy (22, 58). Jeffrey K. Hadden has observed that although Protestant churches confess the priesthood of all believers, most planning and decision making are entrusted to the clergy. Yet the solution lies in engaging the laity in the struggle (29-30). Robert Worley has stressed the fact that change, growth, and transformation happen through the collective life of Christians, both clergy and laity, because of the ministry of Jesus Christ and the common Christian faith. The purpose of the Church is to live as the body of Christ (96). During the post-apostolic period a gap developed between clergy and laity that has hindered the ministry to the world to a great extent. Feucht is calling the church to retrieve the “torch of the ministry” of all God’s people by recovering and using the apostolate of the laity, in the church of our time. He quotes William Dallmann: “The church is a government of the people, by the people and for the people, and all Christians are the people” (35). Feucht has also taken the powerful statement of R. C. Halverson:

The authentic impact of Jesus Christ in the world is the collective influence of individual Christians right where they are, day in, day out. Doctors, lawyers, merchants, farmers, teachers, accountants, laborers, students, politicians, athletes, clerks, executives . . . quietly, steadily, continually, consistently infecting the world where they live with a contagious witness of the contemporary Christ and His relevance to life. (36)

Elton Trueblood sparks a spiritual reawakening of the churches in the lives of their members right where they are every day of the week (52)). Trueblood has challenged the Church to take the notion that every lay member is really a minister of Christ, in order to experience a “revolution” in a very short time. The emphasis is on the chosen people of God who have a challenging mission that can be fulfilled only by the

participation of the people of God for the sake of the people in the world. Feucht makes ministry by the people to the people as a biblical mandate. God called Abraham to gather a people for him with the promise that he should bless all the families of the earth. “I will make you a great nation and I will bless you , and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:2-3). Jacob and his twelve sons received the same call. “Be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you” (Gen. 35:11). God’s call came to Moses to deliver his people as the bearers of his promise.

I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God, and I will bring you to the land, I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as possession. I am the Lord. (Exod. 6:7-9)

Aaron’s family was assigned to the priestly function in the tabernacle and temple but every Israelite belonged to “God’s people” and had a mission to fulfill in his own family. “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be His people, His treasured possession” (Deut. 7:6). Therefore, the ministry in the Old Testament was on the basis of God’s call and God’s choice of the people of Israel.

Feucht refers to the ministry of Jesus as the greatest object lesson. He not only called and trained twelve men but also sent out the seventy, two by two to call people to discipleship.

The Lord appointed seventy-two others, sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go. He told them, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field. (Luke 10:1-2)

The Great Commission is “therefore go and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19). Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to empower all believers to be ambassadors for

Christ. He advocated a fellowship of faith and established a brotherhood of believers. “You have one teacher, Christ, and you are all brethren” (Matt. 23:8). The gospels picture the ministry of Jesus as commissioning and sending disciples into the world. Feucht continues to probe into the book of Acts and the Pauline epistles. The twelve apostles took the place of the twelve tribes of Israel to give continuity to the people of God as found in Peter’s address to the crowd on the day of Pentecost: “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39). Again Peter, addressing the spectators, said, “You are heirs of all the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed” (Acts 3:25; 39). Peter understood the ministry as the ministry of the whole church. Therefore, he gives the priestly image to all the believers in the Church in this classic passage, 1 Peter 2:4-10.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, people belonging to God, that you may proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you from darkness into His own wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (1 Pet. 2:9-10)

Here the Apostle Peter is using the word “people” as a functional term. All the titles given to the believers are based on the Old Testament promises and figures of speech. Every believer is claimed by God, belongs to a holy nation, and is set apart for a particular ministry. People of God bring people of the world from darkness into light on the basis of God’s mercy. That is his call and choice. These titles raise all believers to the status of ministers. They make all the believers clergy, the role once performed by the Old Testament priests. Garlow has mentioned that the idea of the involvement of the laity in kingdom building is the concept of both the Old Testament and the New Testament, and the word “priest” is to be applied to all believers. Christianity is not a

spectator sport (22).

Feucht moves on to the apostle Paul's description of believers. "You were called to be God's people. Think of what you were, when God called you" (1 Cor. 1:2, 26).

You are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by the Spirit (Eph. 2:19-22).

"He saved us and called us to be His own people" (1 Tim. 1:9). In his letter to Titus, he speaks of Christ "who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds" (Tit. 2:14). Paul understood Christian ministry by the people of God. For this ministry, the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon every believer various gifts. He has set apart a whole chapter to expand this concept in his first letter to the Corinthian believers. "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). In the one body of Christ, people of God, both clergy and laity, share ministry (38). Feucht also has a reference to the book of Revelation that echoes the priesthood of every believer. "God loved us and by His death He has freed us from our sins and made us a kingdom of priests to serve His God and Father" (Rev. 1:6). "You have made every tribe and language and people and nation to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth" (Rev. 5:10). The Apostle John concludes the biblical thread of the Church as the people of God or the priesthood of all believers by declaring that, ultimately, there shall be a gathering of one people hailing from every tribe, every language, and every nation for the purpose of ruling with him. So there is one body, one kingdom, one people and one heaven (40).

Maxie D. Dunnam has remarked that 1 Peter 2:1-10 answers three questions related to the nature of the Church and the nature of Christian discipleship. Who are we? What is our function? Where is our power? Church is a people of God's possession. Its function is to be witnesses, ministers, and missionaries. The source of power is Jesus Christ, the Living Stone (2-5).

Francis O. Ayres emphasizes the importance of the laity. They are important because of what they are on the basis of their relationship with God who has called, freed, sent, and given immeasurable riches. They are assigned specific roles as the salt of the earth, the light of the world, a colony of heaven, sons and daughters of light, sons and daughters of day, God's field, and God's building for the fulfillment of ministries (28, 33). When people become people of God by becoming the members of the body of Christ, they are being grafted into a living organism in which they have a definite function in response to God's call. Ayres understands ministry as both calling and fulfillment. For this ministry, the Church needs "to change its direction, turns from its preoccupation with self to concern for the world, offering itself as a servant, an instrument through which God's love and justice and mercy may become operative and visible in the world" (132). The Church is not a fragmented body with conflicting groups. There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, neither basic nor primary distinctions. If the Church wants to achieve organic growth, the laity need to be encouraged to see themselves as ministers. The wholeness concept of Church as being the people of God has to be recovered.

Hendrik Kraemer has given both theological and historical foundations for the ministry of the laity. Lay men and women are not objects but subjects and agents. The Christian Church started with the outspoken witness of Peter and John who were

uncultured, *agrammatoi*, and common, *idiotai*, people. “When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). The New Testament deals mainly with functions and vocations rather than offices (19). Kraemer has recorded the role of laity in Church history and also the definition of what a living church is. In the first few centuries, the expansion of the Christian faith and of the Church mainly happened because of the unrecorded witness of the ordinary membership. A number of great Church Fathers, well regarded as theological thinkers, were all lay men of great ability. Few had become bishops, as they were, essentially, by their secular involvement and education, laymen. The origin and by-products of the monastic movement from the fourth century through the medieval period reflect a great amount of lay initiative and lay activity. Kraemer agrees with Father Yves M. J. Congar that the early monasteries were lay driven because a monk, in principle, need not be a priest. Monasticism was just a special form of life of total personal consecration to God and to saintliness. The Franciscan Tertiari in the thirteenth century lived as secular people, staying in their occupations but devoting themselves to works of piety and charity. The monastic knight-orders are another example of lay expression in the life of the Church during the Middle Ages. However, in the Middle Ages, the laity were the submissive and teachable part of the Church. According to Robert S. Clemmons, the Reformation lit a torch of new freedom and new responsibility (28). Melvin J. Steinborn said,

In the first reformation, the church gave the Bible to the people. In the second reformation, the church is giving the ministry to the people. The church is again becoming a classless church. The disparity of laity and clergy is being replaced by the parity of all the people of God. (Lay-Driven 50)

Steinborn further states,

This new reformation regards every Christian as a first class Christian. The biblical model is that of the body, where each part, though different from all of the others, is equally important and exists to serve all of the other parts. Ephesians 4:11,12 instructs pastors to equip God's people and 1 Peter 5:1-4 charges lay people to do pastoral care for God's people. (76)

The Reformation called forth new religious awakening for a movement of the laity. The reform originated mainly from the laity, simple men and women. They claimed the responsibilities in the Church by declaring themselves as the driving power of the Church. They participated in the Reformation by publishing religious and theological books. One of the most conspicuous examples was John Calvin, a lay, self-taught theologian. The so-called modern missionary movement marked the consecration and sacrificial spirit of lay people. The great revival movements such as the Great Awakening in America, the momentous Wesleyan revival in England, and Pietism, the movement of religious regeneration in Europe, changed the situation entirely. The Moravian Brethren encouraged men and women for world missions. In the missionary activity, the laity have found tremendous participation in various aspects of missionary work in non-Christian countries. In Europe, missionary societies recruited their missionaries from the laity. The Student Volunteer Movement of the nineteenth century was another example of this great lay impetus. The main feature of the nineteenth century in regard to the significance of the laity is the organization of well-known bodies like the Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Women's Christian Association and the World Student Christian Federation. They all have sprung up as the result of lay initiative and as offspring of the Great Awakening and the undercurrent of revival. They were established as evangelistic and missionary enterprises. They were intentionally international and interdenominational. They nurtured young people from a Christian perspective (Steinborn, Lay-Driven 20-31). Garlow has said that the increased

involvement of the laity in ministry is one of the hopeful signs of the latter part of the twentieth century (22).

Although Kraemer has sequentially brought out the lay involvement and the lay vision in Church history, he agrees with J. H. Oldham. Oldham pointed out the missing element. The importance of the laity's fuller participation in the life and service of the Church was underestimated. Lay people's place of responsibility in the Church, to a greater extent, remained a principle or a strongly worded paper-doctrine in the Reformation movement. The laity receded into the background while the clergy one-sidedly continued to represent the Church. This situation is aptly described by a German term, *die Pastorenkirche*, the ministers' church. Kraemer quoted Oldham who views laity as the bridge between Church and world. They function in the world as the representatives of the Church, in response to its calling. He calls the Church to accept this challenge and to undertake new teaching and educational activity in order to enable the laity to demonstrate their strategic importance (32-33).

James L. Garlow declares that the ministry of God's people is as much in the world as in the Church (52). William M. Ramsay mentions that renewal comes when the Church helps the members to be in mission in their world, day by day exemplifying their faith out in the world wherever they are (41). It is not just mobilizing or activating or organizing lay men and women for various purposes and projects but leading them in such a way that they become "occupational evangelists" expressing their Christian faith in the secular world. This new, but challenging, concept has added strength to the ecumenical movement as it develops the lay contribution and gives wider perspectives. Kraemer further says that the lay apostolate is called to rediscover the missionary obligation with a slogan that every Christian is *eo ipso*, a witness and a missionary. The

laity, the majority in the Church, has been neglected and also prevented from being a witness and a missionary (45). The Church has not provided equal avenues to vividly express the meaning of the laity in the divine economy of the salvation of the world and the economy of the Church. Although the laity were regarded as the Church, they have always been under the direction and supervision of the clergy. They have remained as the flock, the object, and never the subject in their own calling and responsibility.

Father Yves M. J. Congar has systematically brought out the theology of laity. He understands the place of the laity in the Church in the light of the meaning of the word *ecclesia*. Etymologically, it means “convocation” or “assembly.” In the Septuagint it has a religious value and designates the community of chosen people who gather together to worship God and to listen to his word. In the Greek world, the word means any assembly or gathering, even among common citizens. In the Acts of the Apostles, and also in Pauline letters, the word has the idea of the people of God, the messianic community, or the local congregation of the faithful that exists on the basis of an act of God. The semantic value became the ecclesiological teaching, honored since the very first century of Christianity (22-23). Pope Pius XII, in his address to the College of the Cardinals on 20 February 1949, declared,

The faithful, and more especially the laity, are in the front line of the Church’s life; it is through them that she is the vital principle of human society. In consequence they, they above all, ought to have an ever more clear consciousness, not only belonging to the church, but of being the church, that is, the community of the faithful on earth under the guidance of its common head, the Pope, and of the bishops in communion with Him. They are the church; and therefore from the earliest days of her history the faithful, with the approval of their bishops, have joined together in particular societies interested in the very various manifestations of life. (Congar 49)

This statement of theology is neither Catholic nor Protestant but the biblical

theology of the Church that is a people, a community of the faithful, made up of its members. In the institutional Church, church and people are disintegrated. Father Congar has attempted to integrate the kingdom of God, the people of God, and the world. In the fullness of messianic power, Christ was the king, the priest, and the prophet. His kingly power is not only over the faithful but also over the whole world. His priestly role is to reconcile the world with God, by the message of salvation. As the prophet, he calls and challenges the Church to be part of the process of reconciliation. The kingdom of God at hand and the kingdom of God in its fullness are separated (59, 110-11). The laity as the Church becomes the means of grace to the world in building up the kingdom towards its fullness.

Father Congar understands the mission of the Church as the mission of Jesus Christ because he is the savior of the world and the head of the church. St. Paul was putting this concept into practice as he was making disciples who were equivalent to servants. His converts eventually became his associates in Christ's service. Father Congar mentions St. John Chrysostom, one of the early fathers who faithfully applied this principle in his pastoral work.

The most perfect rule of Christianity, its exact definition, its peak, is this: seek that which is for the benefit of the community. Nothing can make one more Christlike than to look after the welfare of others. Nothing is more useless than a Christian who does not try to save others. Anybody can help his neighbor if he is only willing really to do what he can. If you are a Christian, it is impossible not to have some effect. It is part of the very essence of a Christian and it is as contradictory to say that a Christian can do nothing for others as to say that the sun can not give light. (341)

The Church's apostolic function is to be a living witness and a living testimony in the world. It is not the laity cooperating with the clergy in the mission but fully participating in it. In this regard, the role of the clergy is to help and transition the laity

from membership to discipleship and then to servanthood. Therefore, the theology of laity involves the laity as the subjects of the ecclesial mission under the guidance and education of the clergy. Their function begins at the junction of the gospel and the world. They are necessary for the Church's mission and for the economy of grace.

Spiritual Gifts—The Need

In the development of lay participation, the spiritual gifts play a significant role. Many writers have focused on gifts that empower the people of God to serve. Gordan Lindsay stresses the need of a reappearance of the gifts for the Church today. Without the gifts of the Spirit, the Church becomes something quite different from what God originally intended, as the Church is called to be a supernatural "organism," not a human organization. The gifts have not ceased or disappeared. The Lord did not withdraw the gifts after the apostolic age. After Constantine's edict made Christianity the national religion, the Church became lethargic and lukewarm, more and more institutionalized, and eventually it failed to recognize the presence of the gifts and to appropriate them. The Church has been satisfied without them. The Church needs to realize that it is the body of Christ and, without the gifts, it cannot fulfill the mission of Christ. The purpose of God for ordaining these special gifts was to bestow them upon the Church. The paramount purpose was that, through the operation of them, the Church should become the functioning body of Christ on earth (5-7).

Ray C. Stedma deals with the spiritual gifts from an incarnational perspective. Jesus Christ was the incarnation of God, and the incarnation did not end with the earthly life of Jesus. The incarnational ministry continues, no longer through an individual physical body, limited to one place and one time, but through a complex, corporate body called the Church as the extension of the life of Jesus to the whole world in all ages.

Stedman, like most writers on the subject, takes the Pauline usage of the word *charis* to mean that all believers have gifts without exception. The early Church began to grow so rapidly because when people became converts, they were immediately taught that the Holy Spirit imparted them the salvation experience and equipped them with spiritual gifts, which they needed to discover and exercise. The Apostle Peter writes to some Christians “as each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Pet. 4:10). Paul writes to the Corinthian believers: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7). Each Christian must discover his or her gift and use it for God’s purpose (39-40). David Mains shares his firsthand experiences in Circle Church. He says that no one has every gift but everyone has at least one gift in order to experience the interdependence among the members of the Church. The Church needs to prepare all people to develop their gifts for ministry, not only within the Church but also in the society. At Circle Church, two questions were asked: “What gifts do the believers have?” and “How can the leadership help them use these gifts in ministry either inside or outside the structure of the local church?” This approach indicates that the gifts of the people determine the program of the church. Mains affirms the fact that by means of the gifts of the Holy Spirit God speaks to and through the local church (64-65).

Kenneth Kinghorn has systematically brought out the biblical bases for spiritual gifts and also the process of discovering them. He identifies the term “spiritual gifts” as “a supernatural ability or capacity given by God to enable the Christian to minister and to serve” (22). Ministry in the Church happens only with the use of spiritual gifts.

Kinghorn refers to the major passages of Scripture. They are Romans 12:6-8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 1 Corinthians 12:28, and Ephesians 4:11. He also refers to other

related passages such as 1 Corinthians 1:5-7, 12:29-30, 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:20; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6-7; Hebrews 2:4; and 1 Peter 4:10-11. For Kinghorn, God gives spiritual gifts according to his own discretion for the purpose of ministry and service, so that the ministry of the Church can be accomplished. Therefore, “through the use of the *charismata* that God offers to you, the Holy Spirit will give you an effective ministry far more significant than you could ever imagine” (33). Kinghorn offers six guidelines for discovering spiritual gifts. (1) Open yourself to God as a channel for his use; (2) Examine your aspirations for Christian service and ministry; (3) Identify the needs that you believe to be the most crucial in the life of the Church; (4) Evaluate the results of your efforts to serve and to minister; (5) Follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit as he leads you to obedience; and, (6) Remain alert to the responses of other Christians (108-14). Kinghorn strongly believes that believers, being the household of God, are joined together in his Spirit and indwelt by his continuing presence. God has bestowed upon them the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit to equip his people for service. This is the way the Church expresses the unity of faith with a sense of service to the world. Therefore, spiritual gifts, rightly understood, consciously discovered, and correctly used, would ultimately help the believers mature into the perfection of a new humanity that expresses the fullness of the living Lord. Kinghorn lists the following spiritual gifts (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1
Spiritual Gifts

Romans 12:6-8	1 Corinthians 12:4-11	1 Corinthians 12:28	Ephesians 4:11
Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophecy
Teaching		Teaching	Teaching
Serving			
Exhortation			
Giving			
Giving Aid			
Compassion			
	Healing	Healing	
	Working miracles	Working miracle	
	Tongues	Tongues	
	Interpretation of tongues	Interpretation of tongues	
	Wisdom		
	Knowledge		
	Faith		
	Discernment		
		Apostleship	Apostleship
		Helps	
		Administration	
			Evangelism
			Shepherding

Source: Kinghorn 38

C. Peter Wagner discusses and defines the spiritual gifts from a church growth perspective. In addition to Kinghorn's list; he adds the gifts of celibacy, voluntary poverty, martyrdom, hospitality, missionary, intercession, and exorcism (9). He develops "gift theology" from Romans 12:4-7: "Your measure of faith is the spiritual gift that has determined which member of the Body you are and what is the special task God has given you to perform for the rest of your life" (37). Knowing one's spiritual gift is helpful for knowing God's will for life in a practical way. Faith becomes the spiritual driving force for meaningful participation in the ministry. Wagner specifically prescribes fundamental prerequisites like personal Christian experience, belief in spiritual gifts, willingness to minister, and prayer, to the process of discovering one's gift. Discovering

the gift is not only exciting and fulfilling in mind but also the most essential and practical element.

Wagner offers a well-tested, five-step approach to the process of gift discovery. The first step is to become familiar with the gifts that God has bestowed upon the Church. The basic source for such information is Scripture. The other suggestion is to get acquainted with gifted people who have already experienced the grace of God. He believes that God prefers our energies to be used in seeing that the lost are found and that the Church grows. The second step involves experimenting with a wide variety of gifts on the basis of need. It may not be possible to experiment with all the gifts but making oneself available for any job around the Church is the necessary initiative as the process of discovery is not usually easy. Rick Warren emphasizes experimenting with different ministries in order to discover one's gifts. "Until you actually get involved in serving, you are not going to know what you are good at" (The Purpose 371). Wagner's third step is to examine one's feelings to see whether the person is psychologically prepared to use the gift. Serving God is delightful. Positive motivation behind ministry results in a happy feeling, thereby enhancing and making the ministry more effective. Step four calls for a thorough evaluation of personal effectiveness. Gifted people do have achievements. A corresponding result between the gift and the performance occurs. God has given the gifts for accomplishing something for him in the context of the body of Christ. Step five is expecting confirmation from the Church. This confirmation is in conformity with the working definition of spiritual gifts. This understanding is necessary because confirmation builds in a system of accountability for the use of the gift (116-31). Spiritual gifts are to be discovered by specifically following the prescribed guidelines. In the process, the people of God are already involved and participating in the ministry of

the Church. God wants his churches to grow. He wants his lost sheep found and brought into the fold. He has planned the growth of the Church through the gifts that he has given to each believer in the local church for his glory.

J. O. Sanders gives an interesting study of the Greek word *charismata*. For him, spiritual gifts are “grace-gifts” and those are treasures from God. He defines them as “extraordinary powers or endowments bestowed by the Spirit upon individual believers as equipment for Christian service and the edification of the church” (100). John Koenig has pointed out that spiritual gifts should not be neglected because God bestows them precisely for ministry. He has intended them to be used generously in service to other believers in the Church and also to non-Christians. Koenig further adds, on the basis of Pauline belief, that through the Spirit, God is always distributing *charismata* to a Christian congregation so that the people of God can maximize the church’s potential for harmony and mutual ministry. The people who are the recipients of *charismata* are “charismatic,” because *charismata* carry the power to shape both individual and corporate identity as believers, by leading them into ministries (99-103). *Charismata* is the way the Church would experience the blessings beyond measure in people growth and ministries growth. Michael Green, commenting on the charismatic movement, says that all Christians are by nature charismatic.

All alike are eternally in debt to the sheer *charis* of God who sought us, rescued us, equipped us with varying gifts, and shared His own loving nature with us through the Spirit which He has lavished upon everyone of us who are in Christ. (196)

Koenig makes a list of commands and promises for the people of God, as the message of the Spirit to the churches today.

Paul, with the author of 1 Peter following him, distinguishes certain of God’s eschatological gifts as *charismata*. These are personalized blessings

for individuals distributed among congregations of believers through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Believers are to grow experientially, intellectually and practically in their knowledge of the charismata already granted to them. Paul in particular urges his charismatically gifted readers to fulfill the tasks for which their gifts have equipped them. (180-81)

Charles V. Bryant comprehensively examines the psychological and practical aspects of the gifts. For him, the spiritual gifts are the “job descriptions” for every member ministry in the Church. They are also a means for discovering God’s will for life based on Romans 12:2.

Without the presence and employment of gifts, the church is no more than any other group trying to do good things. Unlike other groups, when the church does not acknowledge and faithfully use the gifts, its fellowship becomes flat and full of crippling conflicts. (44)

Bryant calls the operation of gifts a “sacrament” in conjunction with the Holy Communion. Both are the means and symbols of God’s grace. The sacraments could include the Church, chosen and equipped with grace-gifts. Each member of the body who faithfully uses the grace-gifts is a sacred means of grace. As rain and sunshine bring a variety of beauty, shapes, sizes, aromas, and fruit in the plants, God’s grace brings a variety of beauty, power, and results in the gifts when they are applied in different ways. The grace of God is a spiritual energy that has no physical origin, but it affects and empowers the material of our flesh for spiritual and noble purposes (55-56). The crux of the matter is the energizing grace of God at the heart of all the gifts that make the Church. It is the instrument of redemption for the whole human race. No one can manipulate or manufacture it. Jack W. MacGorman defines the “energizing grace of God” as the power of God in action. This is based on 1 Corinthians 12:6 where the gifts are described as “workings” or “activities.” When the spiritual gifts are operating in a church to equip it for various ministries, God is at work fulfilling the Church’s mission in the world. The

people of God are functional because the gifts of the Spirit are functional (29).

David Pytches shows interest in how to integrate the gifts into the ministry of the people of God. Spiritual gifts are neither an academic nor a cerebral exercise, nor are they discovered through research methods, but they are tools that not only enable the believers to effect the ministry but also to develop the ministries in the local church. Pytches integrates gifts [*charismata*], ministries [*diakonia*], and workings [*energemata*] with the common thread of God's grace. When God sees the believers faithfully exercising their gifts, he grows the ministries in the Church. "When this happens, the gift has become a ministry and these ministries may be exercised among the assembled believers or out in the world" (57-59). God would work these ministries in various ways, locally, nationally, internationally, and historically. The Church is the best place to learn to discover and to use the gifts and to develop ministries. "The meeting place is the learning place for the market place" (61). Like Wagner, Pytches puts several preconditions for discovering and administering the spiritual gifts.

Donald Hodensee and Allen Odell offer an interesting distinction between the "fruit of the Spirit" and the "gifts of the Spirit." The fruit of the Spirit is an outward sign of Christian character. The gifts represent ways Christian character can be lived out through a life of ministry and service to others (64). Christian A. Schwarz views church life as "gift-oriented ministry." When Christians serve in their area of giftedness, ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary things. In Schwarz's research for natural church development, the data has revealed a close connection between personal life, "joy in living," and ministry involvement, "gift-orientation" (Natural 24). Many writers have made "love" as the connecting gift of all the gifts based on the Pauline understanding of "love" as the greatest gift of all. It is the underlying expression or result of a gift that has

been faithfully used for effective ministry because love is social, relational, and, above all, dynamic.

Training the Laity—The Method

Leaders of church growth movement continue to teach that a healthy church is a church that encourages, motivates, and trains the laity of the body. How can the Church empower the laity to discover and develop fulfilling ministry? How can people serve in a way that leads them to personal growth and leads the Church to numerical growth? Mark Gibbs calls the local church to nourish, train, and uphold its members for ministries in the world and in the local church.

A church that sees the service of its members in the world as its main witness brings to the clergy a new idea of their tasks. It is as inevitable as it is right that the clergy, being trained, full time servants of the church, should be involved in the training of the laity. (161)

Gibbs also stresses the need of seminary training for the clergy so they know what the training of the laity involves. Diane Detwiler-Zapp and William Caveness Dixon point out the immediate concern that one of the real needs in the area of clergy education is for them “to be schooled to become trainers of persons in caregiving, and not just to be caregivers” (7). The clergy need to be in a position in their competency to design and test a training program.

Robert S. Clemmons defines discipleship as “participation in life-long learning and servanthood. The Christian must be the church in all areas of life. The Reformation lit a torch of new freedom and new responsibility” (36). Ramsay stresses the need for equipping the laity for active discipleship and on-the-job witnessing (18). Russell Bow says, “Traditional cheap church membership can be turned into authentic, personal Christianity through recovery of discipleship” (89). He calls this process development of

membership for mission. Smart emphasizes making learners not merely listeners on the basis of reviewing New Testament patterns of ministry, with specific reference to the ministry of Jesus. Jesus was primarily interested not in having crowds but disciples in whom and through whom his ministry would be multiplied many times over. The Church must meet the world with trained people (Teaching 92-95). Smart writes that every congregation needs to see the significant importance for men and women to be trained in the arena of pastoral work. The key is for the laity to be willing to involve themselves in a training program (Rebirth 117). The other side is for the pastor to lead by equipping the laity for their ministry by instructing and training them.

Snyder understands pastoral ministry as the highest calling for it involves “freeing and equipping believers to be the agents of the kingdom of God” (222). He believes that the pastor’s first priority is to invest himself or herself in a few persons so that they also become disciples and ministers of Jesus Christ. “All pastoral functions should be oriented towards the priority of equipping God’s people for kingdom life and ministry” (249). Greg Ogden attempts to give a biblical overview of the terminology of “equipping.” For him, the word “equip” means “both a style of ministry and the content of ministry,” because it is a complex word with three components of mending or restoring, preparing or training, and establishing or laying foundations (101). The Head Equipper, Jesus Christ, is calling the Church to fix what is broken, to bring it back into proper alignment, and to supply what is lacking.

James Garlow refers to the pastoral function as “enablers” or “equippers.” Quoting A. W. Wist, Garlow agrees with two presuppositions for lay training. First, the people of God exist for service, for which they need training. Second, those who train the laity are their servants, not their masters. They are enablers or equippers who help the

lay members understand their call to ministry, help discover their gifts for ministry, help them learn to select ministry, and provide them some kind of training to develop the ministry (106).

Ministry of the laity is not some reactionary, anti-clergy movement. It is in contrast to that, a movement to bring laypersons into a closer working relationship with their pastors who are not ministers but trainers of ministers. One is called to the ministry of enablement but all are called to minister. (109)

In Garlow's historical survey, he mentions that John Wesley probably had the most extensive network of lay persons trained for ministry ever known in the history of Christianity. Francis Asbury, who was one of Wesley's lay preachers, was sent to America, and he later became the first bishop of American Methodism, which spread across the country so rapidly because of the extensive deployment of lay preachers by Asbury. The Baptist faith also spread rapidly due to the extensive use of laity. Alexander Campbell founded a group, now called the Disciples of Christ, whose rapid growth in nineteenth century America can be attributed to the emphasis on the ministry of laity (77-78). Wesley trained 650 lay preachers during his half century of active ministry; whereas, pioneer bishop Asbury would have trained some five thousand lay preachers during the frontier years of Methodism in America. James Holsinger, Jr. and Evelyn Laycock, two lay leaders in the United Methodist Church, firmly believe that one of the basic places for Church renewal to begin is in the ministry of the laity. The laity must be trained and empowered to work in harmony with the clergy (132).

Stanley J. Menking calls the pastor's role "recruiter." The membership list should be reviewed for the sake of recruiting the "talent bank" in the church. A pastoral responsibility is to identify, enlist, and train the laity for ministry to others (75). Menking emphasizes the need for training with sound biblical and theological content. Training is

required to make a distinct difference in personal spiritual growth, skill development, and methods of feedback and evaluation of the respective ministry. Training is not just scheduling ministries but effectively doing them. Training should directly address four specific questions to the laity. “What am I to do?” “Why am I to do it?” “How should I do it?” “How am I doing?” Effective lay ministry includes both theory and practice. Menking believes that a training program is not complete until it includes actual experience in the ministry. Trainees need opportunities to begin doing the ministry, preferably under some form of supervision (79-82). Ogden states, “One of the pastor’s responsibilities is to motivate and fan the flames of desire for people to discover their gifts and be deployed accordingly” (131). He recommends creating a context for support and accountability where God’s people receive ministry from each other.

From his experience in the New Hope Community Church, Dale Galloway recommends providing specialized training for every person in ministry. When the church grows, the training needs to become much more specialized and geared to particular ministry. Galloway has called every pastor a “trainer” of people in ministry, investing himself or herself in developing people in ministry. Then, people can become trainers of people in their ministry. The New Hope Community Church has four ways to train lay pastors: (1) initial training, (2) regular training, (3) on-the-job training, and (4) continual training. Training will be needed as long as the ministries exist and grow (134-37). Bruce P. Powers calls pastoral leadership “life-giving leadership” and points out three independent commitments for that kind of leadership: a commitment to ministry, a commitment to mission, and a commitment to relationship. These commitments are not only the basis for the pastor but are also the goal of the teaching-learning process (11-12). Commitment is immeasurably costly because it involves modeling, inspiring, and

motivating. Steinborn observes,

Only pastors who genuinely believe that lay people are as authentically called as they themselves can give the kind of support lay people need. A relationship of love and trust will enable the pastor to fulfill this part of the shepherding role. (Lay-Driven 137-38)

Personal commitment and unconditional confidence in the potentialities of the laity are the reasons for Church renewal in witnessing to the world.

Hinduism and Priesthood

Govind S. Ghurye discusses the many features of the caste system in India. All the literary accounts of four periods of Indian history, the Vedic period, the post-Vedic period, the Dharma-shastras period, and the modern period, center around the four orders or major castes in society: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. The four orders are described as having divine origin. The Brahmins are declared to be chief because they were created from the mouth (of God), punning on the word *mukha* that means mouth or chief. They represent the profession of the poet-priest, the most privileged position in the society or the highest caste. Their function is to teach and officiate at sacrifices, and their aim is to be preeminent in sacred knowledge. The priest's profession is hereditary. They only have knowledge about God, and they are expected to speak about the truth. Thus, they become the indispensable mediators in all the important events of both private and public life. They can only do what is right and perfect. They also have an absolute monopoly over all higher education because they are regarded as the most literate group in the society (43-47). Such a Brahmin system exists among the churches in India. For example, the Committee on Mission and Evangelism in local churches has a chairperson from among the members. Invariably, the pastor is the one who chairs the meetings because he or she is a pastor and lay chair is not. The

misconception is that laity can not lead a team for making right decisions. Further, pastors want to have absolute control over all decision-making process. Most churches have special chairs called “bishop’s chair.” No lay person, not even a pastor is allowed to sit in that chair. The priest, the altar, the ministry, the leadership, and the chancel are holy and they belong to the priest class. Christian A. Schwarz remarks about this trend by saying, “The ordained become indispensable as mediators between God and the church—or rather, they make themselves indispensable, for this doctrine was thought up entirely by priests” (Paradigm 178). Pastors are invariably projected as a “jack of all trades”; whereas, the laity are brainwashed to pray and pay—mostly pay. They are the ones with the society at large in constant contact with the common people, throughout the week, sharing much of their lives with them. In biblical terminology, they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the leaven in the bread.

The Major Cultural Aspect of the State of Tamil Nadu

According to the Manorama Year Book 1999, Tamil Nadu represents the nucleus of Dravidian culture in India. Tamil Nadu is situated on the eastern side of the southern tip of the Indian peninsula. It is the eleventh largest state and forms four percent of the country’s total area. The Dravidian language (Tamil) and culture are contemporary to the Chinese, Sumerian, and Egyptian cultures. Agriculture is the mainstay of the state’s economy, and the primary crops are rice, sugarcane, cotton, grains, tea, and coffee. The total population of the state was 58,000,000 in 1995. The number of scheduled castes are seventy-six, and the tribes are thirty-six. The other backward caste groups number about 288 (662-65). For more details see Appendix A.

Caste System and Religious Reformation

The Hindu Charismatic leaders, like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, and Swami Vivekananda, disapproved of the caste system, and they removed the “sacred thread” meant for the upper caste as a sign of renouncing their caste. Keshub went to the extent of encouraging intercaste marriages. They all attempted to bring socioreligious reformation (Firth 27-30). The religious-political leaders like Mahatma Gandhi said that untouchability is a cancer and it is a breach of the doctrine of *ahimsa*, which means non-violence. They campaigned against such a system in the society. The traditional philosophers, like S. Radhakrishnan, suggested improving the Hindu social life by getting rid of castes and sub-castes, by removing untouchability, and by extending initiation of Vedic studies to all Hindus, without any distinction of caste, sex, or creed. Spiritual heritage should be made available to all Hindus. The Hindu prophetic personalities, like Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Rabindranath Tagore, also did not approve the caste hierarchy, promoting brotherhood, national integration, and communal harmony (122-24).

Caste Groups and People Groups

Every human being has at least ethnic, sex, and age categories. In the context of missional strategy, missiologists, especially Donald McGavran, accept different castes as people groups. He says, “The Bible itself authorizes a discipling of the many peoples of the world without destroying these peoples, these minorities, *ethne*, castes and tribes” (254). Their culture will remain unchanged, but their religion will turn from animism or Hinduism to biblical Christianity. There are both advantages and disadvantages of people groups who embrace Christianity. People groups are strong and stable as they continue normal relationships among the members of the group, under the local leadership of the village. They work together as a community in the church as they are

inter-related. The decision is collectively done so they stand firm together even at times of crisis and persecution. People groups movement produces strong indigenous local leadership that has access to the entire group. When such leaders are identified and trained, they become effective leaders in the local churches. They are able to love people as most of them are related to those they serve.

People group churches can easily become self-supporting as together they make decisions to construct their own church building and extend ministry support to the church leader willingly and generously. People contribute their labor or something in kind for any church-related manual work. People begin to share about their new faith with their relatives in other villages or places, in a natural way without any fear. Often group conversion gives religious authenticity that is a positive factor for evangelism. Group conversion has less chance of opposition and persecution. When fellowship and moral support are available for one another in the group, ex-communication from the village or group is not possible. The drawback of people movement is when the leadership fails to spiritually nurture the people after the conversion. Those persons who have joined the new religion do not adequately understand the implications of their commitment to the new faith. People group movement might give a wrong signal to political and Hindu religious leaders that might lead to the closing of doors to the gospel in that area. Right now, the persecution is going on in several parts of India because of so many reasons. One of them is mass conversion of people groups, mostly scheduled castes and tribes. The religious leaders of Hinduism fear that if it continues, one day their religion might disappear from the face of the earth. Proper methods are to be diplomatically used to bring people groups to Christ. The missional strategy should include and begin with wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit so that some of these

dangers could be overcome and effective church planting would be accomplished.

Caste System and the Indian Church

Roger Hedlund, in his article “Confronting Caste,” has pointed out that “unity in Christ does not exclude diversity in language, liturgy, and in the style of preaching. All churches, even though they speak different languages, are one in essence” (Hedlund 261). Hedlund quoted M. M. Thomas, one of the lay contemporary Indian theologians who says, “The gospel has been a liberating power to *Harijans, to the women of India, to tribes and other depressed communities* (original emphasis), for it built them into fellowship of the church and gave them a sense of being God’s people” (261). Hedlund quoted Bishop Victor Premsagar, the former Moderator of the Church of South India, says, “The church is called to enter into all struggles of people for their rights and for a just society” (261). Hedlund referred to William Barclay who comments that the church is the one place where distinctions are wiped out. Rank, place and prestige do not matter when men meet in the presence of God, who is the king of glory (261). Paul says, “in Christ there is neither low or high, for all became one in Christ” (Gal. 3:28).

In the Indian context, the Church cannot ignore or bypass the caste system as it is ingrained in the minds of people because of cultural and other reasons. In the light of the Word of God, the system stands condemned. In this tension or dilemma, the wisdom of Donald McGavran is needed. He opposed all kinds of oppression and discrimination based on color, caste, and race. He advocated the concept of accommodating the cultural aspect that is conducive for evangelization. His primary intention was to bring “all of humanity *to* (original emphasis) faith and obedience to Jesus Christ” (McGavran 254). In other words, the system may play the role of a starting point for evangelistic strategy. He notes, “Conversion to Christ is a first step toward full equality and we must begin with

people where they actually are” (255-56). On the one hand, the castes inspire us to focus on bringing people together into the kingdom where they can really experience the “Christian togetherness.” On the other hand, the Church should practice what the Bible sets forth about “all one in Christ.”

The day has come for reaching the people groups in India who desire to come to Christ because of spiritual, social, and economical reasons. The Lord of history is willing to make this concept of movement missionary strategy work across the country. The churches, both big and small, should come forward to take this challenge for evangelizing the unreached groups. They should bring people first and then nurture them for improving their spiritual standard because of group decision to follow Christ. Secondly, they should be guided with biblical principles to make decisions about their caste. Roger Hedlund gives us the clue that our responsibility is to build the kingdom quietly and renounce the system boldly but leaving the decision to the regenerated people to deal with it (262). The Holy Spirit would do his work of confronting such complicated issues in the life of an individual, society, or group.

Summary

The issue of equipping laity for effective ministry in the local church is not a new issue, but it has been troubling the church since the Reformation. The church is paying lip service to the idea of all people being in ministry. Oftentimes, the local church accepts the truth that Christ came to seek and to save the lost, but in reality it does not carry out the idea of involving people in ministry. Lush Gjergji quotes Mother Theresa:

To carry on the work of Christ, the church needs authentic collaborators who, for the love of God and the church, will dedicate themselves freely and completely to his service. This is a task for the community and for everybody. (133)

For Mother Theresa, a vocation is a gift from the Lord, and it is the duty of all believers. Whenever clergy become the sole doers of all ministries, the church stagnates, declines, and eventually dies. Several barriers are found to intentionally implement lay ministry. Tradition syndrome is an important hurdle, but the Church needs to realize that old ways of doing things become outmoded. It takes a profound degree of courage and vision among the clergy and the laity to turn the unproductive things in the Church into active and practical ministries. The clergy need to learn the value of using their power as player-coaches rather than trying to be lone players on the team. They are called to understand the true pastoral authority that involves both self-modeling of the authentic Christian life for others and equipping the lay members to live that distinctive Christian life themselves for the sake of others. Steinborn calls 1 Peter 5:2-3 the Great Charge in line with the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. "Tend to the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint, but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as dominating over those who you are in charge of but being examples to the flock." Most clergy have not been equipped for equipping. Little emphasis has been placed on training pastors in how to equip others for ministry. Therefore, the pastoral leadership does not place lay ministry as the church's high priority. The church allocates and utilizes its resources such as money, time, people, and programs for so many things except lay training and lay ministry. The Church must recognize the fact that if it invests all its resources to equip the saints for ministry, all its available resources will multiply powerfully.

The issue of equipping the laity for effective ministry is primarily a theological one because the basic, related questions are theological. What is the Church, and what is its mission? What is Christian leadership? What is the meaning of ministry, both lay and

clergy? Authority-centered leadership utilizes fully one person's energies, and that limits the possible productivity of the total group, which is working together. Laissez-faire leadership allows the functions to become so diffused that the group is not benefited but constricts productivity. Christian leadership values and encourages each person's contributions and continues to stimulate productivity because it is rooted in the ministry of Jesus Christ. Its essential meaning has been derived from the word *diakonia*, which Jesus intentionally chose to identify his ministry. Therefore, leadership is ministry and functional, and it is shared. Whenever ministry is shared and entrusted to the body of believers, the Church thrives and makes a great impact in changing lives and the world. The New Testament points out the importance of this principle. In Acts 6, the apostles delegated or shared their responsibilities. This concept is still an important part of the pastors' role today. The challenge of working together, encouraging, and supporting others to accomplish common goals is part of a pastor's job description. Leadership is serving others and sharing with them in the accomplishment of common vision and goals.

The ministry of Jesus was given to the whole people of God. Ministry cannot be restricted to one group or one aspect of the people of God. The first generation of Christians, being the body of Christ, understood themselves as the enactors of the *diakonia* of Christ. All members in the body are endowed with gifts and graces that qualify them to become servants. Spiritual gifts need to be discovered, developed, and deployed to enhance the ministries of the local church. Paul has interpreted the service rendered by the body as a collective function, not an office, in Ephesians 4. No individual member can exercise his or her gift in isolation. Members together can function in one body, and all members are necessary. New Testament scholars have attributed that both grammatically and contextually speaking, the work of *diakonia* in

Ephesians 4:12 is the work of all of the saints who are being brought into the unity of purpose. The health of a church depends upon the proper functioning of each member, and, in the same way, the health of a member depends upon the proper functioning of the body. Clergy and laity are called and challenged to serve as fellow servants in the body of Christ, complementing each other's ministry. The pastor's primary role is to determine lay leadership development in the church through training of active and potential leaders. The laity need to have ownership of the church's ministries to make the leadership development effective. The Church is not to be served and maintained as an end in itself. It is an agent of God to bring people to himself through Jesus Christ. Training helps the laity focus on ministry and mission instead of maintenance. It helps prepare people for leadership by improving the quality of the current leaders and then helping others to find out their potential. The long-range effectiveness of lay ministry depends on adequate ministry assignments after training and supervision with guidance. It further provides an arena where the trainees and the trainer experience a sense of Christian community and commitment to the mission of the church.

The shift in the concept of Christian leadership to the proper understanding of the ministry of all believers, the discovery of spiritual gifts, and the method of training for effective ministry are intimately interlaced to lead the church into reformation, renewal, and revival experience. The people in the churches stand ready, willing, and able but are looking to the clergy for guidance and equipping. The ministry of the clergy can be understood only in the context of the ministry of the whole people of God. People who are empowered will not only do ministry better, but they will grow and excel in ministry and, ultimately, they make the church grow. George Hunter, III has calls the Church to "develop a lucid, biblical, relevant model that you can go with and people can grow with.

Teach your members, new believers and seekers, what we believe God has in mind for all people” (54). He believes that our redemption completes our creation when God relates to us in a way that brings out the best from within us.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Purpose of the Study

This project study lay evangelistic ministry through the local churches. The role of the pastors is to equip the members to be effective in the ministry. Pastors are not to be involved in ministry as a jack-of-all-trades or a sole church worker but are expected to train and equip lay men and women. Even the liturgical and sacramental side of their work is ultimately to train and equip and not to function as mediators between God and people.

If pastors do the work of equipping and training lay men and women effectively, the whole church will be involved in evangelism and the Church will grow rapidly. Christian A. Schwarz has done extensive, statistically valid, worldwide church growth research that has substantially revealed that the first two characteristics of quality church growth are empowering leadership and gifts-oriented ministry.

Scripture calls for lay-driven ministries in the local church. The world Church history and the Indian Church history have enough evidence for a lay-driven church. Because most Protestant denominations are caught up in an institutionalized structure, the people of God have been dichotomized as clergy and laity. This project addresses the issue of rediscovering the biblical concept of one people of God and their respective ministries of equipping and being equipped with training for effective ministry.

The purpose of the proposed research was to develop and evaluate a study program for equipping lay people who demonstrate potential for effective ministry in evangelism. Such a program, rooted in theological and historical foundation, would hopefully result in a shift from people as ordinary members of local churches to people as

competent ministers of the gospel in their work and public places. The major part of the research focused on the effectiveness of the program as an empowering tool for lay ministry in evangelism.

Statement of Research Questions

This project raises three research questions that come from the purpose statement.

What understanding of ministry do the potential lay people have before the self-directed study program?

This question deals with the present status of laity in the local churches and the reasons for them not doing ministry, even though Scripture makes it a mandate and history has modeled it. This question also deals with the question of how the clergy treat the laity. Further, this question deals with the biblical understanding of the Church by both clergy and laity.

What understanding of ministry do the potential lay people have after the self-directed study program?

This question provides the solution for the problem. This question also deals with the appropriate method of releasing the laity for doing ministry. Further, this question provides the ways and means to encourage, empower, and motivate them to do ministry. This question also calls for a change in the role of the clergy.

How effective was the self-directed study program as a tool for the ministry of evangelism at work and in other public places?

This question explores the effectiveness of the tool. If the program is effective, it can be developed further for future benefit for the local churches. It can also be expanded to all churches and other Christian agencies and missionary organizations. This question also leads to try different methods or tools. It may provide avenues to

think of alternate tools in case of ineffectiveness. It further emphasizes the need for lay people to know the methods for and to be involved in ministry for growing local churches.

Subjects

Seven criteria were established to select the thirty subjects.

First, they were born again Christians. They had assurance of their salvation experience. Each one had his or her personal testimony. They were continually modeling prayer, devotion, fellowship, and witnessing.

Second, they were active members with good standing in a local Methodist church. They have been active members in worship, tithing, and participating in weekly activities of the church.

Third, most of them were currently employed. They were earning members. Unemployment is a very serious problem in India, and it causes social and emotional stress, which is not so conducive to participate in the group meetings.

Fourth, they were literate. They were able to read and write. They were able to do self-study/group-study, followed by interaction and reflection.

Fifth, they were attending cottage prayer meetings. They had a good record of attending the cottage prayer meetings, which is a common activity of local Methodist churches. Their regular attendance in the cottage prayer meetings would provide a model for the group study.

Sixth, most of them were involved in a ministry. They had ministry experience for a short period of one year. Their ministry involvement would establish a personal passion for doing ministry. They had a high level of commitment to the local church and its mission.

Seventh, they expressed a willingness to be trained. They were willing to study, learn, apply, and experiment through a program of self-study lessons. They were further willing to work in a team and learn from others to be effective in ministry of evangelism.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

A liaison was appointed in Chennai, India, to coordinate the research project between the subjects and me. He was given a specifically drafted job description. A letter of introduction about the research project was sent to all the subjects in early June 2000 along with the pre-test questionnaire. I spent the months of July and August 2000 preparing and designing the ten lessons in the Tamil Language. The first four lessons along with the mid-test questionnaire were mailed in August 2000 and the other six lessons in September 2000. The mid-test questionnaire was given to the subjects individually after four lessons. They were given a seven-day period to fill out the questionnaire. The subjects returned them to the liaison. Their responses indicated the need, importance, and effectiveness of the self-directed study program of the first four lessons.

The post-test questionnaire was mailed to the liaison in October 2000 and then to the subjects individually after completing ten lessons. They were given a seven-day period to fill out the questionnaire. The subjects returned them to the liaison along with written group reports. Their responses indicated the need, importance, and effectiveness of the self-directed study program of the six lessons and the entire program as an empowering tool.

The liaison received correspondence, information, three questionnaires, ten self-designed study lessons, and other research-related documents such as periodical letters I sent. He distributed them to the subjects with my approval as planned and scheduled. He

also played the role of being a facilitator when a need was expressed to clarify concepts and points in the study lessons and questionnaires. He gathered materials from the subjects such as questionnaires, group reports, and research-related letters and mailed them to me. He met with all the groups individually, during self-study group meetings at least once, and shared their concerns, expressed by the subjects, to me. He worked out the method for maintaining confidentiality of data and keeping the anonymity of the subject. They were all given codes. He met and interviewed each individual at the end of the ten group meetings about the effectiveness of the program. He sent the three completed questionnaires, written group reports, and personal testimonies back to me, the first set of documents in February 2001 and the second in April 2001.

Five instruments were used, four of which were researcher-designed. The first instrument was a background questionnaire. It pertained to personal information such as name, date of birth, educational qualification, address for communication, church affiliation, period of church membership, personal testimony, a brief description of faith journey, a brief description of spiritual habits or disciplines, a brief description of involvement in ministry, spiritual gifts, covenant to do self-study in a group, and personal commitment for future ministry. All answered questionnaires were filed, and the answers were separately recorded according to age, gender, profession, religious background, spiritual giftedness, and ministry involvement.

The second instrument was a series of two-page, self-directed study lessons, one for every group meeting. Ten lessons were designed for ten weeks. The components of each lesson were name of the lesson, a Bible text, introduction, information, reflection questions, and application questions.

The third instrument was a mid-test questionnaire distributed after four group

meetings (four lessons). It had specific questions such as, “What learning has taken place in the last four weeks?” What knowledge have you gained over the four meetings? What difficulty have you faced? Did you find the study guides or lessons clear, engaging, motivating, and helpful? Which group meeting was the most helpful? Which group meeting was the least helpful? What has been the motivating or influencing factor during the four weeks? How would you rate spiritual maturity or growth, on a scale of one to five, since the first group meeting? Have you discovered your spiritual gifts? Have you been able to exercise them? What are your feelings about this group meeting? Do you wish to continue? Individual answers were filed and recorded separately according to age, gender, profession, religious background, spiritual giftedness, and ministry involvement.

The fourth instrument was the post-test questionnaire distributed after ten group meetings (ten lessons). It related to the overall outcome and impact of the ten group meetings. How have they been affected? What attitudes have been changed and gained? Have you discovered your spiritual gifts? Have you been able to apply or exercise them? Do you see the scope of developing them? Has your passion for ministry increased? What ministry or ministries were you involved in during the ten weeks? Has your ministry developed and expanded? Was the study material clear, engaging, motivating, and helpful? Which ones were helpful, and which ones were not? Was the guide or lesson adequate to meet your spiritual and ministry needs? Did you find the standard of material understandable or too high or too low? What are your suggestions and recommendations about the study guide or lesson? Did you share about this study group with anyone? What was his or her response? Do you recommend this system to someone who has passion for ministry? Individual answers were filed and recorded

separately according to age, gender, profession, religious background, spiritual giftedness, and ministry involvement.

The fifth instrument was the group reports that were filed. The findings were recorded according to family or caste groups and mixed groups. Groups were provided with codes in consultation with the liaison. I organized all the documents in different working summary sheets and extracted the findings. The details in Chapter 4 are from the summary sheets, the three questionnaires, personal testimonies, and group reports.

Variables

The primary variable was established. After four lessons, I measured the subjects' level of biblical understanding of church and ministry between the pre-test and mid-test questionnaires. These findings indicated the need, ministry involvement (in evangelism), and the most helpful lesson of the self-directed study of the first four lessons. After ten lessons, I measured the subjects' level of understanding of spiritual gifts, the ministry involvement (in evangelism), and the most helpful lesson of the self-directed study of the last six lessons. These findings revealed the effectiveness of the self-directed study of the six lessons and the entire study program. Their responses helped to establish how the self-directed study program (the ten lessons) has affected the subjects, what knowledge the subjects have gained or upon which they have improved, how the subjects have applied it in a ministry context outside the church, and what recommendations the subjects have made to promote the program.

The variable of the nature of the group was established. Study was done between family groups (caste groups) where the subjects came from the same family and mixed groups (different caste groups) where the subjects came from different families.

The variable of generation was established. Study was done among six different

age groups: 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, and 61-70.

The variable of gender was established between male and female subjects.

The variable of profession was established. Study was done among eight different professions: teachers, state government employees, federal government employees, private company workers, Christian organization workers, church workers, retirees, and students.

The variable of religion and/or denomination was established. Study was done among the four different religious background groups: Methodist, Church of South India, Hindu converts, and Roman Catholic converts.

Data Analysis

In order to categorize, study, examine, review, and find the data collected, some steps were needed and developed. I read and recorded all the answers of pre-test, mid-test, post-test questionnaires and the group reports carefully.

The pre-test background information was classified according to the age groups of 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, male, female, Christians, converts, professions, involvement in ministry, awareness of spiritual giftedness, and interest in self-directed study programs. The information was the primary tool to measure the responses in the mid-test and post-test questionnaires.

Weekly group reports were recorded according to the usefulness of the self-directed study lessons, the benefit of interaction and reflection questions, the practical aspect of application questions, and the objective evaluation of the self-directed study program. A comparison was made between two types of groups, family or caste groups and mixed groups, to assess the effectiveness of the lessons, group dynamics and group involvement.

The mid-test responses were studied, compared, and contrasted among the six age groups, male and female, Christians and converts, professions, and spiritual giftedness. Major ideas, similarities and differences regarding the effectiveness of method, material, and sense of confidence in using gifts were identified and recorded.

The post-test responses were studied, compared, and contrasted among the six age groups, male and female, Christians and converts, professions, and spiritual giftedness in the light of the pre-test. Major ideas and similarities and differences regarding the effectiveness of method, material, and sense of confidence in using gifts were identified and recorded.

Major ideas and similarities and differences of mid-test and post-test answers were studied, reviewed, compared, and contrasted to find out the effectiveness of method, material, and sense of confidence in using gifts. The assessment report on the weekly group reports was incorporated into the study and reviewed for final findings.

The biases in this method of treatment were few. First of all, the subjects came from an urban setting, while rural population is the majority in South India. Second, they were all from one denomination, except one subject, while there are many denominations in the city of Chennai.

Summary

The findings were categorized on five levels. The first level was to find out the subjects' understanding of church, ministry, and spiritual gifts, before and after the self-directed study program. The second level was to find out the subjects' ministry involvement in the local church and in evangelism, before and after the self-directed study program. The third level was to find out the most helpful lesson in the first four lessons and in the last six lessons. The fourth level was to find out the awareness and

deployment of the spiritual gifts. The fifth level was to find out the effectiveness of the program among the different categories. In addition, the findings included assessment such as which category had more opportunities to evangelize and the immediate responsibilities of the local churches for equipping the lay people for doing ministry outside the church. In other words, what do the local churches need to do to empower lay people to become involved in the ministry of evangelism?

CHAPTER 4

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the research was to develop and evaluate a study program for equipping lay people in local churches who demonstrated potential for effective ministry in evangelism. Such a program, rooted in theological and historical foundation, resulted in a shift from people as ordinary members of local churches to people as competent and effective ministers of the gospel in their work and public places. The major part of the research focused on the effectiveness of the study program as an empowering tool for lay ministry in evangelism. In the South Indian culture, empowering laity in the local churches is a challenging ministry for clergy because of the reasons, cited in chapter two. Priestly class is the most privileged position in the Church whereas laity have been taught to give the privileged position to clergy.

Background Information

All the subjects were born again Christians. The subjects confidently expressed their assurance of salvation in their personal testimonies. The subjects were active members of the Methodist Tamil Church in Chennai, South India, except one who was an active member of the Church of South India, also in Chennai. The Church of South India is one of the mainline Protestant denominations in South India. The subjects regularly attended Sunday worship services, weekly activities such as cottage prayer meetings, Wesley prayer groups, and other Bible study fellowships or groups. Eleven subjects (50 percent) served on various administrative boards and committees of the local churches, such as the Committee on Mission and Evangelism, Committee on Nominations, Committee on Stewardship and Finance, Committee on Social Concerns, Committee on Membership and Records, Methodist Youth Fellowship, and Women's Society of

Christian Service. Nineteen of the twenty-two (86 percent) were currently employed. Three subjects (14 percent) were retired, two in June 1999 and one in April 2001, but their spouses were employed full-time. Two subjects (9 percent) were students, but their parents were employed full-time. Two subjects (9 percent) were homemakers but with professional degrees and well-settled families. The subjects were able to participate in the group meetings without constraints. Twenty-two subjects were literate; however, the liaison had to translate the pre-, mid-, and post-test questionnaires into the Tamil language and help the subjects in completing them.

Profile of the Subjects

The total population for this research was thirty. The total number of study groups was ten. Twenty-two subjects (73 percent) met for ten weeks between September 2000 and January 2001. The subjects met for 1 1/2 hours for each lesson. The subjects completed the ten study lessons. The subjects each submitted the pre, mid, and post-test questionnaires and written group reports. Six groups had three subjects in each group, and two groups had two members each, although all the groups were originally intended to have three subjects each. Of the eight groups, five were family or caste groups, and three were mixed groups. One subject did the program individually in addition to group participation.

Of the original groups, a group of three and another group of two did not meet at all, although they had committed for the program. In addition, three subjects met in a group and studied a few lessons but discontinued the program and did not return either the questionnaires or group reports.

Of the twenty-two committed subjects, twelve (55 percent) were female, and ten (45 percent) were male.

The age of the subjects ranged from sixteen to sixty-six. Thirty-nine was the mean age of the subjects. The subjects were grouped as follows: 11-20, one subject; 21-30, three subjects; 31-40, three subjects; 41-50, six subjects; 51-60, seven subjects; and, 61-70, two subjects.

Of the twenty-two subjects, nineteen were born Protestant Christians (86 percent). Of these nineteen, eighteen were born Methodist Christians (82 percent), and one was born Church of South India Christian (4.5 percent). Two were Hindu converts (9 percent), and one was a Roman Catholic convert (4.5 percent).

Of these twenty-two subjects, three were retired (14 percent), five were teachers (23 percent), three were state government employees (14 percent), three were Federal government employees (14 percent), two were church workers (9 percent), two Christian organization workers (9 percent), two were private company workers (9 percent), and two were students (9 percent).

Pre-Test Assessment

Before the self-directed study program, the potential lay people had a shallow understanding of three biblical concepts. They are church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. The pre-test questionnaire revealed that the subjects had a high level of commitment to the local church. Their present status in local churches was “good standing and faithful members” of praying, giving, assisting, and participating in weekend and weekday programs of local churches. Twenty of the twenty-two subjects (91 percent) were actively involved in the local church ministries. Eight subjects (36 percent) were actively involved in ministry of evangelism. Eight subjects (36 percent) were actively involved both in local church ministries and in evangelism. Four subjects (18 percent) were occasionally involved in the ministry of evangelism. Two subjects were not involved

either in local church ministries or in evangelism. Four subjects expressed their desire to do evangelism more often than before.

Twenty-two subjects were willing to study the self-directed lessons. Further, the subjects were willing to work in a team for group study and learning experience in order to do effective ministry in evangelism. Eighteen subjects (82 percent) practiced one or more of the spiritual disciplines such as prayer, devotion, fasting, witnessing, and family prayer. The average time set apart for such exercise was one hour daily. Twenty of the twenty-two subjects (91 percent) never heard preaching or teaching on spiritual gifts before the self-directed lessons on spiritual gifts. Two subjects read about the spiritual gifts. Thirteen of the twenty-two subjects (59 percent) believed that they had discovered their spiritual gifts at the time of their conversion. The subjects had been trying to develop them by being involved in ministry mostly in the local church and occasionally in evangelism. Seven subjects (32 percent) did not know their gifts but were involved in ministry mostly in the local church. Two subjects (9 percent) did not know their gifts and were not involved in ministry. In the same way, the clergy were satisfied with the supportive role of the laity. Two group reports revealed that the clergy treated the laity in local churches as “Sunday worshippers” and not as competent and effective ministers of the gospel in their work and public places during weekdays (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1
Pre-, Mid-, and Post-Test Assessment (N=22)

Themes	Pre-test	Mid-test	Post-test
Ministry Involvement			
?? Active in local church	20	21	21
?? Active in evangelism	08	15	15
?? Active in local church and evangelism	08	15	15
?? Occasional evangelism	04	06	07
?? No ministry involvement	02	01	0
Most Helpful Lessons			
?? Lesson 1		04	
?? Lesson 2		04	
?? Lesson 3		07	
?? Lesson 4		08	01
?? Lesson 5			06
?? Lesson 6			10
?? Lesson 7			09
?? Lesson 8			05
?? Lesson 9			01
?? Lesson 10			04
?? All lessons		03	05
?? I need more lessons			04
Spiritual Gifts			
?? I knew my gifts	13		
?? I did not know my gifts	09		
?? I identified my gifts			13
?? I discovered more gifts			08
?? I discovered my gifts			06
?? Discovering gifts was motivational			09
?? I need more lessons on gifts			04
Effectiveness of the Program			
?? Evangelism was expanded			15
?? Evangelism was not expanded			02
?? Evangelism was expanded but discouraged			03
?? Increasing passion for doing evangelism			21
?? Not sure about passion			01
Recommendations for the Program			
?? To all church members/believers			09
?? To other Methodist churches			04
?? To other denominations			04
?? To lay leaders & Chairpersons			03
?? To publish the lessons			12

Brief Description of the Lessons

Lesson 1 was about the biblical understanding of the Church as the priesthood of all believers and the privileges and responsibilities of all the believers in the Church.

Lesson 2 was about the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of Jesus Christ, which have been entrusted to the Church for fulfilling its mission to the world.

Lesson 3 described ministry as sacrificial service following the model of Jesus Christ, the Master-Servant, and put emphasis on the function rather than the status.

Lesson 4 described the witnessing ministry of the local church by the power of the Holy Spirit for reaching out to all people. Further, the lesson had models from history.

Lessons 5-7 explained about the spiritual gifts, their definitions, their categories, the multiple meanings of the Greek word for “equip,” and the importance to discover, develop, and deploy the gifts for doing ministry effectively.

Lesson 8 explained the biblical understanding of healing, physical, emotional, and spiritual, and encouraged identifying areas for doing the ministry of healing.

Lesson 9 was about diverse ministries but maintaining unity in order to fulfill the mission and the passion of the local church. In addition, the lesson invited the gifted people to celebrate the unity in diversity.

Lesson 10 was about growing the local church by using the different gifts and ministering to all people, thus building the kingdom of God. The lesson brought out the principles from the first century church (see Appendix B).

Figure 4.1 pictures the active and occasional involvement in ministry of evangelism by the subjects before and after the self-study program.

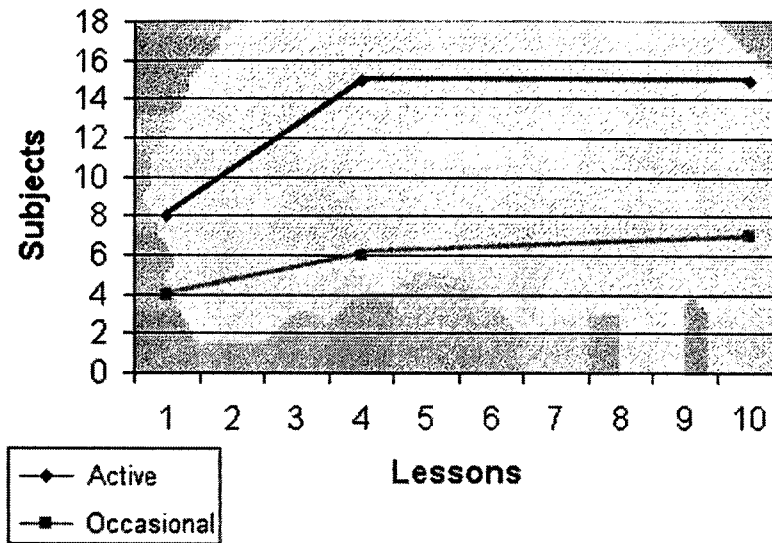


Figure 4.1
Involvement in Evangelism

Mid-Test Assessment

The mid-test questionnaire, after four lessons, revealed that the potential lay people had a broad and missional understanding of the biblically patterned church and ministry. From lesson 1 to lesson 4, twenty-two subjects learned about the biblical understanding of the Church (lessons 1 and 2) and the ministry (lessons 3 and 4). The subjects found the four study lessons clear, engaging, motivating, and helpful. One of the questions in the mid-test questionnaire was “Which lesson or group meeting has been the most helpful in the last four lessons?” Eight of the twenty-two subjects (36 percent) found lesson 4 the most helpful, as the focus of the lesson was on the ministry of witnessing in the work and public places. Seven subjects (32 percent) found lesson 3 the most helpful as the focus of the lesson was on Christ being the model for doing ministry. Four subjects (18 percent) found lesson 2 the most helpful as they understood the word “neighbor” from an entirely new perspective in the context of doing ministry in

evangelism. Another four subjects (18 percent) found lesson 1 the most helpful because they discovered for the first time the concept of the Church being the priesthood of all believers. Three subjects (14 percent) found all four lessons the most helpful. The mid-test questionnaire further revealed the subjects' intentional involvement in evangelism. Fifteen subjects (68 percent) began to be actively involved in evangelism. Six subjects (27 percent) tried to be involved in evangelism. One subject (4.5 percent) did not take efforts to be involved in evangelism.

Post-Test Assessment

The post-test questionnaire, after ten lessons, revealed that the lessons on spiritual gifts rated the highest (39 percent) among all the subjects. From lesson 5 to lesson 10, twenty-two subjects learned about the spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7), the ministry of healing (lesson 8), the unity in diversity (lesson 9), and the church growth (lesson 10). The subjects found the six lessons clear, engaging, motivating, and helpful. One of the questions in the post-test questionnaire was "Which lesson or group meeting has been the most helpful in the six lessons?" The lessons on spiritual gifts greatly affected them in changing their attitude toward doing ministry in evangelism. Ten of the twenty-two subjects (45 percent) found lesson 6 the most helpful because it taught them about the spiritual gifts being the equipping tools for ministry. Nine subjects (40 percent) found lesson 7 the most helpful as they were able to know about all the spiritual gifts, their categories, and their meaning. Further, thirteen subjects (59 percent) could identify their gifts in them. Six subjects (27 percent) found lesson 5 the most helpful as they understood the origin of the spiritual gifts and the importance of unwrapping the gifts. The subjects discovered their gifts. Sixteen subjects (73 percent) realized the importance of spiritual giftedness for doing ministry effectively in the work and public places. In

addition, eight subjects (36 percent) discovered more gifts. Four subjects (18 percent) asked for more study lessons on spiritual gifts. For nine subjects (41 percent), discovering gifts was a motivational factor. Four subjects (18 percent) found lesson 10 the most helpful because of the spiritual gifts being tied into church growth. One subject (4.5 percent) found lesson 9 the most helpful because of the strength of unity in deploying the diverse spiritual gifts. One subject (4.5 percent) found lesson 4 the most helpful in both the mid-test and post-test questionnaires. Five subjects (27 percent) found all lessons the most helpful. Four subjects (18 percent) asked for more study lessons.

The post-test questionnaire further revealed the effectiveness of the program. Twenty-one of the twenty-two subjects (95 percent) felt the increasing passion for doing evangelism. One subject (4.5 percent) did not know. Fifteen of the twenty-two subjects (68 percent) expanded the ministry in evangelism to the work and public places, and neighborhood as well. Two of them decided to become full time evangelists. Three subjects (14 percent) expanded but got discouraged. Two subjects (9 percent) did not expand. One subject (4.5 percent) did not know. Nine of the twenty-two subjects (41 percent) recommended the program to all church members or believers. Four subjects (18 percent) recommended the program to other Methodist churches and denominations as well. Three subjects (14 percent) recommended the program to lay leaders and committee chairpersons. Twelve subjects (55 percent) suggested publishing the lessons for wider participation in the program resulting in more peoples being involved in the ministry of evangelism.

Generation Study

Before the study program, the age group of 61-70 (9 percent) did not have adequate understanding of church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. The subjects were

involved in ministry mostly in the local church, occasionally outside the church. After the study program, they gained new understanding about ministry from the lessons (lessons 3 and 4). The subjects specifically learned that believer, church, and evangelism are connected to each other and cannot be separated. In addition, they realized that ministry must be done for all people by meeting all of their needs by using the gifts. The lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, 7, and 9) helped them to identify their gifts and to discover additional gifts. The subjects regarded the program as a motivational tool because the lessons enhanced their commitment level and subsequently, involvement in ministry of evangelism more often. One subject recommended the program to the members of the Committee on Mission and Evangelism and to all the members of the local church. The subjects made a definite commitment to do ministry in evangelism in the villages and among the slum-dwellers. One of them decided to become a full-time evangelist in the Methodist church from June 2001. He said,

Some years back, I made a decision to work for the Lord full time after my retirement. The principles from the ten lessons have confirmed my decision and further encouraged, affected, and urged me to do ministry full time. I have clearly understood, with the help of the Holy Spirit, who are my neighbors and what are my Christian responsibilities.

Before the study program, the age group of 51-60 (32 percent) did not know the church being the priesthood of believers. Three subjects were involved in ministry very effectively in the local church. Four subjects had limited knowledge about the spiritual gifts. After the study program, five subjects learned about the church being the priesthood of all believers who have been entrusted with privileges and responsibilities (lesson 1). Two subjects began to regard ministry as witnessing for Christ (lesson 4). Six subjects clearly understood the importance of giftedness from the lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7). The subjects could see Church growth (lesson 10) as the goal

of the local church through discovering, developing, and deploying spiritual gifts. The subjects received confirmation of their spiritual gifts. Four subjects learned to become a community of believers in the local church for doing ministry in their work and public places. All seven subjects regarded the lessons a challenging tool to go into the non-Christian community. Four subjects committed to expand the ministry of evangelism to the non-Christian neighborhood. Three subjects wanted to continue in the program. Five subjects recommended the program to the believers and leaders in the local church.

Before the study program, the age group of 41-50 (27 percent) did not know that ministry belonged to the whole church. Two subjects were actively involved in ministry in the local church. One subject was involved in ministry both inside and outside the church. Four subjects were effectively supporting the local church ministries. After the study program, all six subjects understood that ministry belonged to the people of God, both clergy and laity (lessons 1 and 2). The subjects further understood anew the growth of the local church as being the responsibility of the people, and the clergy. However, three subjects expressed concern about the lack of motivation and encouragement from the pastoral leadership. Two subjects had already discovered their gifts. Four subjects discovered their gifts and committed to develop and deploy them by setting apart more time for ministry (lessons 5, 6, 7, and 8). One subject set specific goals, such as sharing the gospel with at least ten non-Christians every month in her work and public places.

She wrote in the testimony,

I met a young man, 25 years old, from the Brahmin community (highest caste in the order), in the government hospital. He was in the hospital because of a road accident. For the first time, I was able to speak boldly about the gospel and its power of healing to a high caste Hindu. After meeting with him several times, he decided to receive Christ into his life. Since then, I have begun to see a new kind of passion for such people.

Two subjects asked for more study lessons on spiritual gifts. Three subjects recommended the lessons for others in the church.

Before the study program, the age group of 31-40 (14 percent) had a limited understanding of ministry that existed only for the local church. All three subjects were actively involved in the local church ministries. After the study program, the subjects acquired a tremendous amount of knowledge about the priesthood of all believers and its direct implications for doing ministry outside the local church (lessons 1 and 2). Two subjects identified their spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7) and were motivated to use them in ministry of evangelism. The subjects saw a significant change in their approach to ministry by going beyond their comfort zone, which is from “inside” to “outside” the church. Two subjects regarded the program a powerful tool to effect in thinking and doing. Nevertheless, the subjects began to intensify their ministry in the local church. Two subjects recommended the lessons to the local church workers, members, and leaders.

Before the study program, the age group of 21-30 (14 percent) thought of church a place of worship, ministry a profession for clergy, and spiritual gifts a qualification for full-time church workers. All three subjects were actively participating in all the local church events. After the study program, they began to feel the need to understand the biblically patterned church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. The lessons (lessons 3 and 4) enabled them to identify their neighbors and to do Christian service to them. The lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7) were helpful to discover their spiritual gifts, and to match the gifts to ministries outside the local church. All three subjects regarded the lessons a high-powered educational tool for their generation. However, two subjects experienced the other side of doing ministry among non-Christians, such as resistance to

the gospel, encountering discouragement and non-cooperation. Two subjects asked for more study materials. All three recommended the program for young Christians in the local church.

Before the study program, the age group of 11-20 (4.5 percent) who was a female school student, had many questions about ministry. The subject thought that local church pastor was everything in the church. The subject was faithful in attending the church events along with her parents. The subject did not know about spiritual gifts. After the study program, the subject learned many Bible texts related to doing ministry and about the spiritual gifts. The subject realized that ministry belonged to every member in the local church and even young persons like her must do ministry in a given opportunity (lesson 4). The subject began to see her non-Christian friends in the school from a different perspective. The subject began to pray for her non-Christian playmates from the neighborhood. The subject did not fully understand a few lessons (lessons 8, 9, and 10) but she decided to get involved in ministry outside the church in the near future. The subject could see the spiritual growth in herself after going through these lessons. The subject regarded the program a helping tool.

Gender Study

Before the study program, the ten male subjects (45.5 percent) had knowledge of ministry only in the local church context. Two subjects were involved in ministry outside the church during weekends. Four subjects were involved in ministry inside the church but occasionally. Another four subjects were faithful participants in all church events, thinking that ministry belonged to clergy. Eight subjects opined that they did not get encouragement from the local church pastor for doing ministry either inside or outside the church. After the study program, all ten subjects acquired a tremendous amount of

knowledge about the ministry of witnessing for Christ (lesson 4). Five subjects began to understand the connections between church, believer, evangelism, and spiritual gifts. Three subjects felt motivated, encouraged, and found opportunity to grow personally and to grow the Church by following the model of Jesus Christ (lesson 3). Two subjects affirmed the fact that doing ministry is not optional but mandatory because of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment (lesson 2). Two subjects organized prayer fellowships for non-Christians in their work places. Three subjects began to be involved in the outreach ministries of other Methodist churches. One subject expanded the ministry of evangelism to the neighborhood. Three subjects were looking for new avenues for doing ministry outside the church. One of them became a full-time evangelist in the Methodist Church. Another subject began exploring the possibility of starting a film ministry as an independent evangelist. Eight subjects regarded the program as a facilitating tool for more ministries outside the church. Six subjects recommended the lessons to all local church members and leaders.

Before the study program, the twelve female subjects (54.5 percent) had similar knowledge about ministry like male subjects, only in the context of the local church. Three subjects were involved in ministry outside the local church. Four subjects had ministry inside the church. Three subjects were involved in ministry during weekends. Two subjects had no ministry but faithful worshippers. After the study program, all twelve subjects learned that ministry was for all by all. Four subjects learned that ministry must occur not only inside the local church but also out in the community throughout the week. The lessons on identifying neighbors and ministry of witnessing changed the attitude of three subjects towards their non-Christian neighbors, from loving people conditionally to loving people unconditionally (lessons 2, 3, and 4). Two subjects

developed a sense of responsibility and a new kind of passion for their Hindu friends in their work and public places. One subject organized a prayer fellowship for non-Christian women in her neighborhood. Another subject decided to encourage more women in the church to organize such fellowship groups for non-Christian women. Another subject decided to minister among the non-Christian children in the slum. Eight subjects regarded the program as an educational tool. Two subjects asked for more study lessons. Two subjects asked for more lessons on the spiritual gifts. Eight subjects recommended the lessons to all the women in the church.

Profession Study

Before the study program, five teachers (23 percent) did not see the connection between church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. After the study program, three subjects clearly understood the meanings of the spiritual gifts and their importance for doing ministry outside the local church. Two subjects learned about ministry as being witness among the non-Christians. The lessons (lessons 2, 3, and 4) encouraged all five subjects to spend more time studying the Word of God in order to save people for Christ. All five subjects made a commitment to develop and deploy their spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7). Two subjects were encouraged to continue the ministry of evangelism among the non-Christian children in the Methodist schools more effectively. One subject began to see opportunities to expand the ministry of prayer, counseling, and evangelism to the non-Christian parents. Two subjects started child evangelism in their neighborhood. The program was a training tool to all five subjects. Two subjects asked for more lessons on the spiritual gifts. Two subjects recommended the lessons to all the believers, especially the Christian teachers.

Before the study program, three federal government employees' (14 percent)

understanding of ministry is not known. After the study program, two subjects learned the importance of an individual's ministry being vital for doing evangelism. One subject found the lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6 and 7) useful not only to their spiritual life and growth but also the lessons challenged him to do ministry in his work place. However, all three subjects expressed their concern about opposition and potential persecution for doing ministry in their work places. Two subjects committed themselves to reflect the love of Christ in their work places (lesson 3). One subject was convinced that the laity are responsible to grow the Church (lesson 10). All three subjects recommended the program to all local church members.

Before the study program, three state government employees (14 percent) knew little about ministry and spiritual gifts. After the study program, all three subjects learned about the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of Christ for doing ministry outside the church (lessons 2 and 3). Two subjects were convinced about ministry being a witness in the work places among coworkers. One subject felt the need to discover his spiritual gifts, to develop them, and to deploy them (lessons 5, 6, and 7). The subject believed that spiritual gifts are beneficial to do more ministries outside the local church. Two subjects saw a significant change during the ten-week study as they were intentionally trying to get involved in ministry outside the church. Two subjects found the program a helpful tool. One subject needed more time to assess the effectiveness of the program. One subject stated, "I tried to share the gospel with one of my coworkers in the office during the lunch break but I could not because of the presence and influence of fanatic non-Christians." Two recommended the program especially the lessons on spiritual gifts to others in the local church and other denominations, too.

Before the study program, two private company employees (9 percent) did not

know about doing ministry in their work places intentionally. After the study program, both subjects were excited the concept of the Church as being the priesthood of all believers (lesson 1). The subjects learned about who their neighbors are. The subjects began to treat all people equally in their work places (lessons 2 and 3). The lessons on spiritual gifts helped the subjects to discover new gifts and develop them by using them in ministry (lessons 6 and 7). One subject began to tell about Christ openly for the first time in his work place. Both subjects started fellowship groups in their neighborhood for non-Christians. Both subjects found the program a great training tool. One subject expressed the need for more study materials.

Before the study program, two parachurch workers' (9 percent) understanding of ministry is not known. After the study program, one subject learned about doing the ministry of witnessing (lesson 4). The other subject found the lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7) useful because they challenged the subject to develop his spiritual gifts by doing ministry outside the comfort zone. Both subjects considered the program a motivational tool to the laity for getting involved in evangelism. Both began to see their role as full-time Christian workers among their neighborhood non-Christian friends and families. One subject asked for more study materials. Both recommended the program for the lay leaders in the local church.

Before the study program, two church workers (9 percent) had knowledge about church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. Both subjects did not understand them from missional perspective. After the study program, the subjects gained more knowledge than before about doing ministry among the unchurched people (lessons 1, 2, and 4). The subjects learned to do ministry based upon spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7). The subjects found the lessons on identifying neighbors, church growth, and using gifts

without conflicts (lessons 2, 9, and 10) helpful. Further, both subjects strongly felt the need for the clergy to motivate the lay people to do ministry in and outside the local church. Both subjects considered the program an effective tool to fulfill the immediate need to train lay people in the local churches. The subjects recommended the program for all local church workers, members, and leaders. One subject suggested appointing a pastor-leader for each group meeting.

Before the study program, two student subjects (9 percent) had very little knowledge about ministry. One subject did not know about spiritual gifts. The other subject had limited knowledge about spiritual gifts. One subject thought that local church pastor was everything in the church. The subject was faithful in attending the church events along with her parents. After the study program, one subject learned about the privileges and responsibilities of church membership from the perspective of priesthood of all believers (lesson 1). The subject learned that all must do ministry regardless of age, gender, status, and color. The lessons on identifying neighbors and becoming a witness among non-Christians (lessons 2 and 4) challenged the subject to do ministry in the study places. The lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5 and 6) helped one subject to discover her spiritual gifts and challenged her to develop and deploy them. One subject began to pray for her non-Christian friends. The subject began to see her non-Christian friends in the school from a different perspective. Both subjects recommended the program for all the Christian teenagers in the local church. Both found the program a helping tool for their generation. One subject did not fully understand a few lessons but she decided to get involved in ministry outside the church in the near future. The subject could see the spiritual growth in herself after going through these lessons.

Before the study program, three retired subjects (14 percent) had good

understanding of ministry from a traditional perspective. All three subjects were faithful members of the local church. One subject was involved in ministry inside the church on regular basis and outside church occasionally. Two subjects were actively involved in ministry mostly inside the church and occasionally outside the church. After the study program, two subjects learned that they needed to reverse the order of “mostly” and “occasionally” because evangelism is not optional but mandatory (lesson 4). All three subjects discovered additional spiritual gifts by studying the lessons (lessons 5, 6, and 7). All three subjects regarded the program a great empowering and encouraging tool. One subject became a full-time evangelist, and another started a film ministry. Two subjects recommended the program for the members of the Committee on Mission and Evangelism. One subject recommended it for all the leaders of the local church.

Figure 4.2 pictures the opportunities to witness among different professional groups.

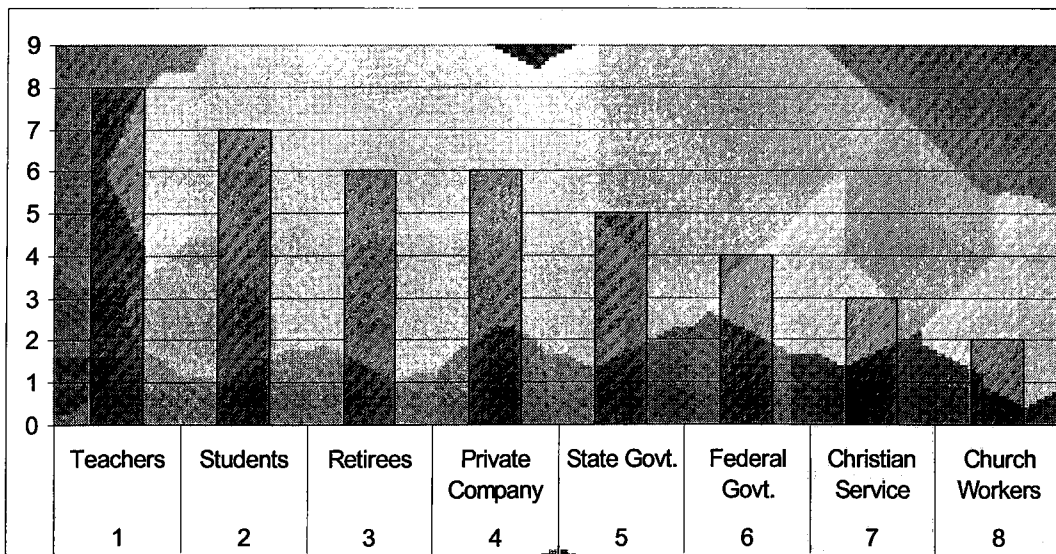


Figure 4.2
Opportunity to Witness

Religious Study

Before the study program, eighteen Methodist Christians (82 percent) had a denominational understanding of ministry, which was that clergy being a paid position had all the responsibilities of doing ministry inside the church. Further, clergy had to recruit full-time missionaries or evangelists to work outside the church. Eight subjects were faithful members in praying for and supporting the local church ministries that included missionary support outside the church. Four subjects had ministry involvement mostly inside the church. Three subjects were involved in ministry outside the church (on their own) occasionally. Another three subjects had ministry involvement. Ten subjects had known their spiritual gifts. Nine subjects did not know their gifts. The lessons on identifying neighbors and ministry of witnessing (lessons 2 and 4) challenged eight subjects to get involved in ministry outside the local church. The lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6 and 7) helped nine subjects to know their gifts. The lessons on healing and church growth (lessons 8 and 10) stirred four subjects' "frog in the well" thinking of ministry. This proverb meant that the subjects must come out of their local church ministry and go into the community during the weekdays. Twelve subjects recommended the program for all the Methodists in the conference, the elders or leaders, and the chairpersons of various committees in the local churches. Fourteen subjects regarded the program a tool that could release people for ministry in evangelism. Four subjects did not say about the program but required more study lessons.

Before the study program, lone subject from the Church of South India (4.5 percent) had a traditional understanding of ministry, which was that laity were to be spectators of the ministry performed by clergy. The subject had discovered his spiritual gifts but never attempted to develop them by using them. The subject was a faithful

member of the local church and one of the elders too. After the study program, the subject learned about local church being the priesthood of all believers (lesson 1). The subject gained a tremendous knowledge about being a living witness in his work place (lesson 4). The subject began to see the change of his attitude towards the shift from inside to outside the church. The subject committed to develop his spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7). The lessons on healing and church growth (lessons 8 and 10) motivated to organize fellowship groups in his work place and neighborhood for non-Christians. The subject planned to hold special meetings during festivals like Christmas, Independence Day, Easter, and New Year for non-Christians. The subject strongly recommended the lessons to other denominations.

Before the study program, lone Roman Catholic female convert (4.5 percent) did not have clear understanding of ministry, church growth, and healing. The subject was involved in ministry outside the local church occasionally. The subject believed that she had the gift of healing but not developing it. After the study program, the subject learned from the lessons (lessons 1 and 4) that she was a called to be a priest in order to become a witness in the community. The subject was convinced of the fact that Christianity is not just confessing about Jesus Christ but it is about life-giving service (lesson 3) to others on a daily basis. She discovered her spiritual gifts and saw the scope of developing them (lessons 5, 6, and 7). The lessons on healing (lesson 8) brought significant change in her life as she began to organize more ministries for non-Christian women. She wrote,

I have begun to claim the promises of God for performing miracles by using the gift of healing among children and women in order to build my local church. Every person is looking for healing of some kind. I feel I have been equipped to release my gifts. I am glad I was part of this self-study program.

The subject distributed copies of a few lessons (lessons 5, 6, 7, and 8) to her friends. The

subject recommended the program for all deaconesses in the conference. The subject suggested designating leaders to study groups.

Before the study program, two Hindu converts (9 percent) thought of ministry as optional and clergy as primary owners of ministry. Both subjects were faithful members in the local church. One subject was involved in ministry outside the church occasionally. The other subject had no ministry involvement but served on committees in the local church. Both subjects had limited knowledge about spiritual gifts. Ironically, both subjects were looking for a training program for doing ministry among their non-Christian family members. After the study program, both subjects found the lesson on the ministry of witnessing (lesson 4) the most helpful. The lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7) challenged both subjects to discover their gifts and to begin using them. Both subjects found opportunities for doing ministry right in their homes. Both regarded the program as a great training and eye-opening tool. One subject desired to have more lessons on spiritual gifts. Another subject recommended the lessons for other converts.

Family Study

The three families of father, mother, and daughter (37.5 percent) learned the value of doing ministry by all the members of the church. They learned to model a Christian witnessing life (lessons 2 and 4) as a Christian family for the sake of evangelizing the neighborhood. They gained knowledge about loving people unconditionally at all places. They began to see the need for family evangelism. They faced the difficulty of finding time to meet together for all ten meetings. The daughters suggested separate study groups for teenagers rather than meeting with their parents.

The couple, husband and wife, (12.5 percent) learned about doing service with

humility to all people. Further, they committed to do sacrificial service to the Lord and his people (lessons 2 and 3). They fully understood and agreed too that all the members in the local church have a responsibility in growing the Church (lesson 10). They began to see spiritual gifts in each other and to work towards unity in diversity (lesson 9). They asked for more guidance and encouragement from the local church pastor to understand the study lessons in a better way.

The siblings, brother and brother, (12.5 percent) gained knowledge about doing ministry outside the church, particularly in the neighborhood, through a clear biblical understanding of church, ministry, and witness (lessons 1, 2, 3, and 4). Both subjects identified their spiritual gifts and committed to use them. Both decided to design and implement some programs for non-Christians in their neighborhood. One subject wrote, “We have found the gifts and the ministries in the right place” (lessons 5, 6, and 7). One subject expressed the need for more study lessons.

The three mixed groups (37.5 percent) learned the connection between who they are in the local church and what they do in their work and public places. One group began to see the local church as the community of believers with privileges and responsibilities (lessons 1 and 2). Another group understood the ministry of healing as the solution for the broken world (lesson 8). The group realized the need for every believing Christian to do ministry in evangelism. One group identified discouragement by other members in the local church as the primary reason for believing Christians not doing ministry either inside or outside the local church; therefore, they found the lessons very encouraging and motivating. The group wrote,

Group study has stimulated our thinking about ministry by our sharing ideas, thoughts, and experiences. We were able to understand the new concepts and felt encouraged. We are looking forward to have more

group study and participation that will build up teamwork and efforts. We have developed a passion for evangelism.

Two groups committed to devote more of their time to study the Bible and to be involved in ministry more frequently than before. One group could not assess the change in their ministry involvement after studying the lessons, as they required more opportunities and experiences. Two groups recommended the lessons for all the local church members to study in a group context.

Table 4.2 indicates the effectiveness of the program as per the categories. What was the most helpful lesson (s) after mid-test (lessons 1-4) and post-test (lessons 5-10) to each category? How did each category regard the program (lessons 1-10)?

Table 4.2
Effectiveness of the Program

Categories	Pre-test (N = 22)	Mid-Test (L = 1-4) Most Helpful	Post Test (L = 5-10) Most Helpful	Program (L = 1-10) was regarded
Generation Study				
Age 61 – 70	2	3-4	5-7, 9	Motivating
51 – 60	7	1, 4	5-7, 10	Challenging
41 - 50	6	1-2	5-8	-
31 – 40	3	1-2	5-7	Powerful
21 - 30	3	3-4	5-7	Educating
11 – 20	1	4	-	Helpful
Gender Study				
Male	10	1-4	5-8, 10	Facilitating
Female	12	1-4	5-7, 9	Educating
Profession Study				
Teachers	5	2-4	5-7	Training tool
Federal Employee	3	-	5-7, 10	-
State Employee	3	2-3	5-7	Helpful
Private Company	2	1-3	6-7	Training tool
Parachurch	2	4	5-7	Motivating
Church Workers	2	1-2, 4	9-10	Effective
Students	2	1-2, 4	5-6	Helpful
Retired	3	4	5-7	Encouraging

Table 4.2, continued

Categories	Pre-test (N = 22)	Mid-Test (L = 1-4) Most Helpful	Post Test (L = 5-10) Most Helpful	Program (L = 1-10) was regarded
Religious Study				
Methodist	18	2, 4	5-8, 10	Releasing Power
CSI	1	1, 4	5-8, 10	-
Roman Catholic Covert	1	1, 3-4	5-7, 9	Training tool
Hindu Converts	2	4	5-7	Training tool
Family Study				
Families	3	2, 4	-	-
Couple	1	2-3	9-10	-
Sibling	1	4	5-7	-
Mixed	3	2	8	-

Personal Testimonies

A subject from the age group of 41-50 wrote,

We met regularly once a week to study the lessons. In the meetings, we shared our thoughts based on the reflection and practical questions. Then we would decide how we could implement the principles in the following week. We always desired to present Jesus Christ to others.

A female subject wrote,

The lessons immensely motivated all our group members. I am happy to know that I am a priest, entrusted with a responsibility of proclaiming Christ to my Christian community and in my neighborhood. As a group, we have begun to hunt for opportunities to present Christ with the help of the Holy Spirit. I am involved in personal evangelism, in my work place through the gift of counseling. I might get some people for the Lord.

A male subject wrote,

I was discouraged to do ministry due to various reasons. The lessons have lifted me up and helped me see the need and the urgency for doing ministry beyond my comfort zone. I have decided to pray for my Hindu neighbors and other non-Christian friends. For the first time, I could share the gospel with few Muslim friends. I have begun to see people responding to Jesus Christ through my ministry. I believe it is going to be a long journey.

A teacher subject wrote,

I am already involved in Children's ministry in the school among the non-Christian children. I am a Methodist but the Lord has begun to use me in a non-Methodist church through friends. I have begun to see people being delivered from satanic forces and darkness. I am making all efforts to bring people to Christ. God keeps taking me from one place to another to be His living witness. The lessons have given me opportunity to be involved in ministry more effectively, intentionally, and frequently than before. I used to think that I had only the assurance of salvation but now I have the confirmation of my gifts too.

A student subject wrote,

I used to believe that ministry belongs to pastors and adult members in the church. The lessons have opened my eyes to see the opportunities everywhere and the urgency of doing ministry to all by all. I began to talk about Jesus with my Hindu friends. Most of them have refused to listen but few seem to be open to the gospel. I feel like giving up but I will not. I am looking forward to get some encouragement from the elders and the pastors in my church. I am in the process of developing my spiritual gifts.

A retired subject wrote,

The lessons were clear and we were able to understand and practice them in our daily living. The lesson on 'my neighbor' has opened our eyes and urged us to proclaim the love of God in every way possible. The best lessons were the ones on the 'spiritual gifts.' After the learning experience, we are making efforts to use them on a daily basis. After retirement, my husband struggled for a year whether to go as a full-time evangelist or not. The lessons have confirmed God's call to him, and his commitment to become an evangelist in the Methodist Church. We praise God for that.

Summary

The mid- and post-test questionnaires revealed that the subjects had a clear, broad, and missional understanding about the Church, the ministry, and the spiritual gifts. The subjects gained specific knowledge about identifying their neighbors, witnessing, healing, and being equipped for doing ministry in evangelism. The subjects' attitude changed from being in the ministry to doing ministry. The subjects felt engaged, motivated, and helpful by the program. Although the subjects had been part of Bible study groups in

their local churches, for the first time they had an opportunity to study ministry-focused lessons for a period of ten weeks. Further, the subjects studied all ten lessons without pastoral or designated lay leadership. Two subjects suggested that designated leaders might lead such study group meetings in the future. Twenty-one subjects felt an increased passion for doing evangelism. The subjects' area of ministry from the church compound was expanded to the neighborhood, work places, and public places. The subjects' potential to be involved in ministry outside the church was greatly empowered and developed. The subjects' ministry needs were adequately met. The subjects became bold in proclaiming the gospel and were equipped to come out of their comfort zone.

Nine of the twenty-two subjects (41 percent) recommended the program to all members or believing Christians in the local church. Four subjects (18 percent) recommended the program to other Methodist churches and denominations as well. Three subjects (14 percent) recommended the program to lay leaders and committee chairpersons. Four subjects (18 percent) asked for more study lessons. Four subjects (9 percent) asked for more study lessons on spiritual gifts. Twelve subjects (55 percent) suggested publishing the lessons for wider participation in the program resulting in more peoples being involved in ministry outside the local church.

Among the professional groups, five active schoolteachers (23 percent) had easy and viable access to the non-Christian world without threat and being misunderstood. The study program was a great revelation for the subjects, who were highly motivated to see the enormous opportunities to identify their non-Christian neighbor, students, parents, and fellow teachers and to witness to them (lessons 2, 3, and 4). The one subject who found lesson 4 the most helpful in both mid-test and post-test questionnaires was a teacher. Two subjects asked for more lessons on spiritual gifts.

Among the professional group, two students (9 percent), one high school and another college brought a new dimension to this research. After the study program, one subject learned about the privileges and responsibilities of church membership from the perspective of priesthood of all believers (lesson 1). The subject learned that all must do ministry regardless of age, gender, status, and color. The lessons on identifying neighbors and becoming a witness among non-Christians (lessons 2 and 4) challenged the subject to do ministry in the study places. The lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5 and 6) helped one subject to discover her spiritual gifts and challenged her to develop and deploy them. One subject began to pray for her non-Christian friends. The subject began to see her non-Christian friends in the school from a different perspective.

Among the religious groups, two Hindu converts (9 percent) realized the fact that they are potential evangelists among their relatives. After the study program, both subjects found the lesson on the ministry of witnessing (lesson 4) the most helpful. The lessons on spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7) challenged both subjects to discover their gifts and to begin using them. Both subjects found opportunities for doing ministry right in their homes.

Among the religious groups, lone subject from the Church of South India had significant contribution to this research. After the study program, the subject learned about local church being the priesthood of all believers (lesson 1). The subject gained a tremendous knowledge about being a living witness in his work place (lesson 4). The subject began to see the change of his attitude towards the shift from inside to outside the church. The subject committed to develop his spiritual gifts (lessons 5, 6, and 7). The lessons on healing and church growth (lessons 8 and 10) motivated to organize fellowship groups for his non Christian coworkers in the work place and his non-

Christian friends in the neighborhood. The subject planned to hold special meetings during festivals like Christmas, Independence Day, Easter, and New Year for non-Christians. The subject strongly recommended the lessons to other denominations.

Among the groups, the mixed groups were the most effective. Although the subjects represented different caste or ethnic groups, the social system did not affect their functioning, group meeting, and learning experience as expected. Despite the caste system, so prevalent in the Christian churches, these mixed groups celebrated and complemented their caste differences for the sake of reaching out to non-Christians. The subjects in the mixed groups creatively applied the principle of unity in diversity (lesson 9) for doing ministry in evangelism.

Teachers, private company workers, Roman Catholic convert, and Hindu converts (45 percent) regarded the program a training tool. Age group 61-70 and para church workers (18 percent) regarded the program a motivational tool. Age group 21-30 and female subjects (68 percent) regarded the program a educational tool. State government subjects and students (23 percent) regarded the program a helping tool. Methodists (82 percent) regarded the program a tool that could release the laity in local churches for doing evangelism. In other words, the program trained, motivated, educated, helped and released the laity for evangelism through the local churches.

CHAPTER 5

MAJOR FINDINGS

Before the self-directed study program, the potential lay people had a shallow understanding of three biblical concepts. They are church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. Their status in local churches was “good standing and faithful members” of praying, giving, assisting, and participating in weekend and weekday programs of local churches. A majority of the subjects practiced one or more of the spiritual disciplines. A majority of them was actively involved in the local church ministries. Two-thirds of them had known their gifts. One-third did not know their gifts. Two group reports of six subjects revealed that the local clergy treated them as “Sunday worshippers” and not as competent and effective ministers of the gospel in their neighborhood, work, and public places during the weekdays.

After the self-directed study program, the potential lay people had a clear understanding of the three biblical concepts of church, ministry, and spiritual gifts. The lessons on church, ministry, and spiritual gifts influenced the traditional thinking pattern of the subjects about doing evangelism. Further, the lessons motivated the subjects to get involved in evangelism. The mid-test questionnaire revealed that the lesson on witnessing rated the most helpful. The post-test questionnaire revealed that the lessons on spiritual gifts rated the highest among the subjects. Further, a majority of them had their passion for evangelism increased. Two-thirds of them expanded evangelism to their neighborhood, work, and public places such as schools and hospitals. One-third of them asked for more study lessons. A majority of them recommended the program for all lay people, lay leaders, other Methodist churches, and other denominations as well. A majority of them felt engaged, motivated, and helped by the program.

The generation study revealed that the six age groups found the program motivating, challenging, powerful, educating, and helping. The gender study revealed that male and female subjects found the program facilitating and educating. The profession study revealed that eight professional groups found the program to be an effective training, a helping tool, a motivating instrument, and an encouraging source. Further, teachers and students had easy and viable access to the non-Christian world without of being misunderstood. The religious study revealed that four religious groups found the program to be a releasing power and a training tool for the laity. Further, Hindu converts found opportunities for doing evangelism among family members. The family study revealed that both family and mixed groups were effective in their own way, barring the caste differences.

Theological Reflections

The issue of empowering laity for effective ministry in the local church is not a new one, but it has been troubling every local church since reformation. The local church leadership does not carry out the biblical concept of involving potential lay people in doing evangelism. Clergy want to do all ministries that include recruiting trained evangelists. Clergy need to realize that this traditional way of doing evangelism is outmoded, and it does not fit into the present trend of religious intolerance and conflicts. The pastor's primary role is to determine lay leadership development in the local church through educational and empowering programs. The church allocates and utilizes its resources such as money, time, people, and programs for so many things except lay training and lay ministry in evangelism. All members in the church are endowed with gifts that qualify them to become ministers of the gospel in their neighborhood, work, and public places. Spiritual gifts need to be discovered, developed, and deployed to enhance

the ministries beyond the local church. The health of a church depends upon the proper functioning of each member, and in the same way, the health of a member depends upon the proper functioning of the church. Clergy and laity are called and challenged to work together as teacher and students or trainer and trainees for the sake of expanding evangelism to the non-Christian world. A shift in the biblical understanding of church, ministry, and spiritual gifts must occur. Further, the method of training for effective evangelism is to be put in place in the local churches.

First, an effective method of evangelism must be properly understood. The research revealed that traditional church membership could be turned into authentic, personal Christianity through recovery of discipleship and discovery of gifts for doing evangelism. The thinking of an average pastor, as well as an active lay person, is that churches must always arrange evangelistic crusades or the traditional “dawn preaching” for church growth. Of course, such meetings had a role in church history. However, the fact is that evangelistic meetings, though claimed for non-Christians, are filled with Christians. Making disciples does not mean working among the Christians. Most of the Christian programs are organized and sponsored to make Christians better Christians under the name of “revival.” The expected results are seldom seen. Christians are constantly re-evangelized instead of being trained to become disciple makers. Not more than 5 percent of non-Christians come to big public meetings. The Lord Jesus Christ gave the Great Commission (lesson 2) to make disciples of all nations. He gave the Great Commandment (lesson 2) to love the neighbor. He gave the great promise that he would send the empowering Spirit. In the New Testament, the Great Commission and Commandment were enacted through individual Christians in the context of the local church. The research further revealed that the Great Commission and the Great

Commandment are to be the focus for understanding the mission of a local church.

Individual disciples need to be equipped for evangelism and church growth. The whole thrust of the Indian churches, in fact any church on this globe, must be to make disciples. Indian Christians will never grow in their faith and spiritual strength if they are not involved in making disciples of their non-Christian friends, coworkers, classmates, and families.

Second, lay people need to be systematically and intentionally equipped. The research revealed that teachers, private company workers, Roman Catholic convert, and Hindu converts regarded the program a training tool. Every congregation needs to see the significant importance for men and women to be equipped in the area of doing evangelism. Programs are essential ingredients of the local church, though they may not give the church an identity. Equipping programs develop leadership potential and skills among the church members. They sharpen and enlarge their vision and enable them to minister in various ways and capacities, both inside and mostly outside the church. One subject in this research shared, “My wish and my prayer for this year is that a dozen more lay people, like me, will actively get involved in the evangelistic ministries of the church. That is the need of the hour.” This wish is the heart-cry of many other agonizing, kingdom-conscious Methodist believers and other church believers as well. Leaders of church growth movement continue to teach that a healthy church is a church that encourages, motivates, and trains the laity of the church. Strong visionary leaders are found in growing churches. The ability of pastors to communicate the vision is not enough. Pastors need to encourage the active members to develop leadership qualities and empower them in every possible way. One-third of the study participants had the gift of evangelism but did not use it effectively because of the lack of encouragement from

their pastors, as implied by them. Retired subject found the program an encouraging instrument for doing evangelism. The relationship between the pastor and the members is based on the concept of empowerment. Pastors do not drive and manipulate people to fulfill their own vision. They do not keep the potential members under their shadow and thus stand in the way of their development. Their calling includes trusting lay men and women and allowing them to attain the maximum potential with which God has endowed them. One of the primary responsibilities of pastors is to equip, support, motivate, and mentor the laity. Age group 61-70 and parachurch workers regarded the program a motivational tool. The pastors need to invest their time in discipleship, delegation, and development. In the process of empowering others, pastors will grow in their spiritual life and leadership quality. Thus, their energy is multiplied infinitely. The clergy need to be in a position in their competency to design and test a training program.

Third, spiritual gifts need to be intentionally emphasized. The people of God are functional because the gifts of the Spirit are functional. The principle of gift-oriented membership is to be put into practice in local churches. God has given every believing Christian one or more spiritual gifts. Each member of the body who faithfully uses the grace-gifts is a sacred means of grace. The gifts are to be used for the common good. Without them, local churches cannot fulfill the mission of Christ. Whether in a small group or on a serving team, every believing Christian knows he or she is truly part of the church when his or her spiritual gifts are being used to further God's work in the church and beyond. The subject of spiritual gifts is largely ignored and misunderstood by much of the Church. Many people try to limit the spiritual gifts to the early Church, and some others are overemphasizing the spiritual gifts without healthy understanding of them and their effective usage for church renewal and evangelistic potential. Emphasis on spiritual

gifts is not popular among the evangelical churches. Until 1970, books on spiritual gifts were rare. Therefore, most Christians are ignorant about spiritual gifts, including pastors in the non-Pentecostal circles. Among the Pentecostal and charismatic churches, spectacular gifts like healing, prophecy, and tongues are elevated above other gifts.

However, the New Testament gives us a clear picture about the spiritual gifts, stating emphatically that the exercise of such gifts is part of the normal life of the Christian community. Since the Reformation, churches have believed in the watchword “the priesthood of all believers.” However, this doctrine has found very little practical expression in local churches. Releasing the spiritual gifts is the key to break this traditional double standard prevalent among many churches. Lay training in the churches is discussed but not incorporated. The reasons are many. Pastors are not trained to be trainers; therefore, they are not aware of the training needs. Believers are not excited about the training because of a lack of systematic curriculum or programs. When the ministry involvement matches the spiritual gifts, believers get deep satisfaction. Nine subjects (41 percent) found discovering gifts as a motivational factor. Four subjects (18 percent) asked for more lessons on gifts. No other factor influences Christians more than the utilization of their gifts. Thus, ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary tasks.

The Church is the spiritual body of Christ, a community of redeemed people, the priesthood of all believers, and its function is to redeem others while being redeemed. God’s eternal master plan is salvation of the whole world. He wants to reach the whole world with the truth. Therefore, the Holy Spirit has especially empowered and enabled the members of the body to carry out the evangelistic mission of the Church. In the Old Testament, Israel was God’s vehicle to reach the world. In the New Testament, Jesus and his disciples were the vehicles. Today, the Church, Christ’s body is the vehicle. The

Church, led by the Spirit, regenerates members in the Church and equips them with gifts.

Fourth, well-designed training program is essential. The research has revealed that effective training is needed for effective ministry. Empowerment is not the simple tool it was once thought to be. The people of God exist for service, for which they need training. Churches are in the business of developing competent and effective leaders. Jesus appointed the twelve that they would be with him and that he might send them forth to preach, to have power, to heal the sick, and to cast out demons. His life was the training tool for the disciples. He washed their feet, setting an example that they would wash others' feet. He coached them in practical methods. He challenged his disciples to think about and evaluate their ministries. He helped them to assess the development of their leadership. He helped them to correct themselves in their weaknesses. He gave them individual responsibility to accomplish the purpose of Christian ministry. The purpose of his training was to fulfill his work. He himself was an example for the disciples. This was the most powerful influence in the training of the twelve. It was a life of leadership in the power of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul spent many years developing and training lay persons like Timothy and Titus. Young men and women, whom he trained and mentored as future leaders of the church, always surrounded Paul. Subjects asking for more lessons indicated that a program of training and equipping lay men and women within the local church is a definite need. Without it, a person can not effectively communicate the gospel in the church, community, and world.

Training builds up both faith and knowledge and ignites motivation to do ministry. Faith is enhanced; knowledge is gained. Spiritual gifts are discovered, developed, and deployed. The purpose of such training is to recruit and develop leadership adequate to fulfill the mission of the Church. The only way for any church to

have really adequate and effective leadership is for that church to train its own leaders. Training is a vital part of the biblical pattern. Moses, Joshua, Elijah, Elisha, Jesus, Paul and many others are the most outstanding examples in the Bible. The tragic thing in many local churches is that they lack proper emphasis on the significance of training events and training programs for doing ministry in evangelism. The churches have gifted believers with potential but their potential is not explored, experienced, examined, and expected. When the potential lay people discover the purpose for which God made them, they would understand the ministry God made them to do.

Limitations of the Study

Four significant limitations of this research can be identified. They are inactive participants, instruments' weakness (mid- and post-test questionnaires), caste system, and proximity.

First, out of the initial thirty subjects, eight did not continue the study lessons for a variety of reasons, although they had originally committed to this project. They also did not submit reports and questionnaires for what they had done, despite several reminders by the liaison and myself. Consequently, two of the ten groups could not be organized as originally planned. This failure resulted in having less participation by Hindu converts and young people. In addition, the mixed groups were reduced to three instead of five like the family groups, losing the balance between the groups. The impact of the study program might have changed if the original plan of thirty participants and ten groups had been in place. Nevertheless, twenty-two participants were adequate for extracting the expected assessment and comparison. At the same time, if there had been an equal number of Hindu converts, the findings would have indicated confirmations about the effectiveness of the program.

Second, out of the twenty-two participants, fourteen gave specific answer to the question both in the mid-test and post-test questionnaires, “Which lesson or group meeting was the most helpful?” Four subjects indicated that all four lessons were helpful in the mid-test questionnaire. Five subjects indicated that all six lessons were helpful in the post-test questionnaire. This generality was not helpful to assess the effectiveness of the program fully. Therefore, I believe that third and fourth instruments (mid- and post-test questionnaires) had questions that needed more clarity and specificity. Neither the liaison nor I framed the question in English and Tamil languages to the subjects’ level of understanding. I could have asked the subjects to rate the helpfulness or value of each study lesson, by providing rating numbers in the questionnaires.

Third, I did expect a significant change between family groups and mixed groups because of the ethnic group factor. The family groups’ members belong to the same caste; whereas, the mixed groups’ members are from different castes. The group reports revealed a low effect between these groups because of the unifying gospel factor, biblically understood and practically experienced by all the participants. The low effect was a significant revelation and disproved my assumption. However, the family groups were successful in completing all the ten lessons as scheduled, not because of caste factor but because of accessibility to each other. The mixed groups took more time to complete their tasks. Their level of effectiveness is detailed in the next segment. Two mixed groups did not meet, which resulted in imbalance between family and mixed groups. The principle of people groups is certainly useful for future recommendation for professional groups.

Fourth, the entire research project was practically carried out by the liaison person in the city of Madras. I received personal communications from the participants about

the lessons, their usefulness, and their testimonies; however, I could not provide on-the-spot leadership in the group meetings as expected by the participants. I was neither physically accessible nor personally approachable. Consequently, the subjects lacked adequate guidance on the part of the liaison person whenever they needed guidance for clarification or confusion or misunderstanding in the lessons or questionnaires or group reporting process. Language was a barrier during the months when the groups were meeting to study the lessons. I sent the needed guidance in English through email and the liaison person translated it into the Tamil language. The lessons that were mailed got lost twice in the mail. Neither the liaison nor the subjects had access to e-mail. I could have invested more time with the subjects than the liaison, which might have provided more materials in the group reports and complete answers in the questionnaires. Nevertheless, I am satisfied with what has been received.

Cultural Implications

This research has not proved the distinct caste differences among Christians since the number of subjects was limited and their commitment to follow Christ is “without strings attached.” In reference to Chapter 2 on the major cultural aspects, specifically the caste groups or people groups, this research has few lessons to learn. While accepting the strong philosophy of Donald McGavran, the father of the church growth movement, to reach the people groups by the same groups, the same philosophy can be extended to family evangelism and professional evangelism. An average mission-minded lay person can easily be influenced by using some of the oft-repeated slogans of McGavran such as “Winning the winnable,” “Harvesting the harvestable,” and “Focusing on the responsive” (Sargunam 1).

When the Hindu converts are trained or equipped to become missionaries in

“Jerusalem,” which means among their immediate family members, it becomes a cultural issue. Hindu converts realized the fact that they are potential evangelists among their relatives or immediate family members. The lesson on witnessing created the importance of doing evangelism among the family members. The lessons on spiritual gifts challenged them to discover their gifts and to begin using them among the family members. The subjects found the program a training tool. Caste is a part of Hindu culture. The mission-minded converts have an opportunity to reach their own caste members. Those converts who have a deep commitment to the cause of reaching out to the lost must be encouraged to engineer the movement. When a caste determines choice in marriage, occupation, custom, food, and other social obligations, why not religion? The gospel does oppose humanity being put in various divisions, such as some are noble and some are mean. The gospel does not limit us to take the message in various cups and vessels. The missionaries from the West brought the message in a Western cup. The time has come to adhere to Christian leaders like McGavran to take the message in all possible Indian cups. One of them is caste or people groups. Of course, the predominant and popular theory about the origin of the caste group is religious. Nevertheless, it can be ignored and the caste be considered as a social institution. The book “Perspectives on World Missions” has recorded that Sadhu Sundar Singh (1889-1929), a Sikh convert, also known as “the apostle of India,” used to speak of his efforts “to give the water of life in an Indian cup” (Athyal 272). Therefore, the churches have a direct responsibility to empower the first generation Christians in the congregation to become effective missionaries to their immediate families.

The principle of people groups can be applied in professional groups, too. In the research, teachers and students had easy and viable access to the non-Christian world

without threat and being misunderstood. They found evangelism opportunities among non-Christian students, parents, and teachers. The lesson on witnessing was the most helpful for teachers and students. One subject who found the lesson on witnessing the most helpful both in mid-test and post-test was a teacher. Two of them asked for more lessons on spiritual gifts. The churches have to think seriously, immediately, and urgently about the congregation as “the working world in the proclaiming parish.” Evangelizing fellow teachers is easy. In the same way, evangelizing fellow engineers, doctors, farmers, factory workers, businessmen/women, government employees, computer personnel, and other professionals is easy, too. The work place is the mission field. The whole life becomes a witness for the non-professional missionaries in their professions. Bishop James Matthews, while addressing a group of pastors in Madras, said, “Mahatma Gandhi answered E. Stanley Jones to the question ‘How can we make Christianity naturalized in India?’ by saying to “emphasize love and make it your working force, for love is central in Christianity.” The Christian working force of love must become reality in the working places. The Caleb Project calls this a “tentmaker approach.” The Apostle Paul was involved in a secular job to support his Christian witness. While making tents, he was equally making disciples, being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. This method is one of the powerful ways the lay men and women can reach people in their work places. Work is a context and witnessing is a Christian character. The local churches have a challenge to facilitate the professional lay men and women by developing a tool by which to equip them.

In the caste hierarchy, the Brahmins are the priestly group. They have exclusive priestly functions, such as having authority to teach and recite Vedas and performing all the rituals in the temple. The other caste groups are expected to be just spectators. If

Christianity is different from Hinduism by claiming to have unique characteristics, then everyone called Christian, both clergy and laity, is commissioned to serve. Then the major bulk of the ministry task force is the laity and not the clergy. The laity are the ones who are in the society in constant contact throughout the week, sharing much of the people's lives and knowing their needs. They know the people's mood, culture, and the heart of the common people who need to know Christ. They are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and the leaven that can enrich the whole loaf. The main task of the clergy is to mobilize and equip the laity for their ministry as is unmistakably emphasized in the New Testament. Ordinary people become competent ministers of the gospel among the non-Christian population.

Practical Applications

Throughout the research, specifically through the sources of questionnaires, testimonies, and group reports, a number of practical applications have surfaced with respect to the need to equip the lay people in the local churches for doing ministry effectively. These applications are discussed here for the local church pastoral leadership to implement.

First, local churches are the transforming agents of the society and the community provided they become dynamos in developing lay people to become change agents. The very presence of such a dynamic church brings Christ consciousness among the non-Christians. The program helped the subjects to identify their neighbors and to become a living witness or a change agent among them. This kind of church is always a growing church. The Bible has given the mandate, and history has set the precedence in the South Indian Christianity. Vimala Manuel has recorded that Francis Xavier, a Jesuit missionary from Spain, recommended by the King and appointed by the Pope as Apostolic Nuncio

(Special Messenger of the Pope), came to South India on 6 May 1542. His method of evangelism was visiting the sick, the prisoners, and gathering them together, especially children and youth, in a place for elementary Christian teaching. Using the same method, he organized a people group called “Paravas,” which is a fisher caste in thirty scattered villages. When he went from one village to another, he had always trained someone to carry on the work (28-29). One of the first Protestant missionaries, Bartholomew Ziegenbalg, started house groups for lay people like teachers, wardens, and hostel superintendents to be trained as evangelists (76). Theodore Williams has written that in 1716, William Carey started the first Protestant seminary to train lay people (10). These historical evidences indicates that the wheel should not be reinvented but only revisited.

The following picture illustrates that when the lay people go into the community of the local church as change agents, the membership of the local church continues to grow from year to year. The post-test revealed that fifteen subjects (68 percent) expanded evangelism to their neighbors, work, and public places (see Figure 5.1).

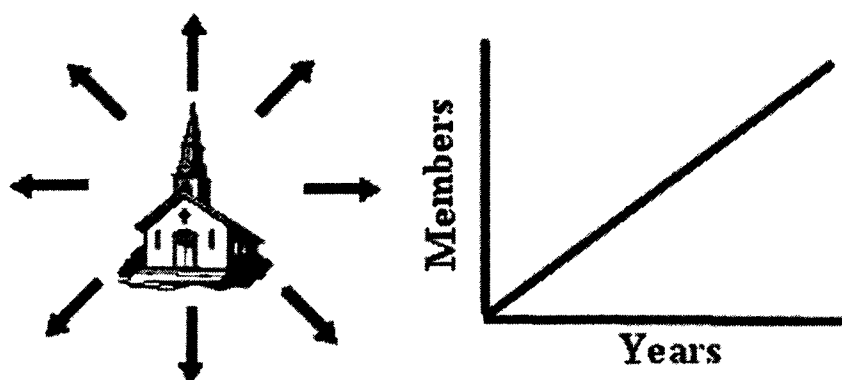


Figure 5.1
Growth of Local Church

Second, local churches can not exist without volunteers for doing ministry. A self-directed study program can make a difference in the number of people involved in evangelism. When a pastor or a church leader limits the number of lay people to do ministry, either by discouragement, or not giving them opportunity to do their jobs, or not providing them training and support, then the church stagnates, and it is soon in decline. A study by the Church Growth Research Center in Madras has shown that 30 percent to 65 percent of church members are willing to serve if they know they are needed (Albert, "Empowering" 1). This research has confirmed their finding. The church needs to function as an equipping center. The members must be equipped to function inside, but mostly outside, the church. All members must be intentionally provided opportunities and training to function effectively. In the contemporary complex world, churches can grow only with motivated lay people. Young people with lots of energy seek avenues for contribution. Churches can be legitimate outlets for their aspirations. All successful church movements in the history had highly motivated lay people. Church growth cannot be an exception.

Third, the pastors are to be totally convinced that the church growth is directly proportional to the quality of lay people. Methodists regarded the program a tool that could release the laity in local churches for doing evangelism. The pastors are to design the ways and the steps to develop and nurture the people. Pastoral ministry involves freeing and equipping believers to be the agents of the kingdom of God. What can I do in my local church to grow faithful and effective lay leaders? How can I unleash the potential of the lay people? What do I want them to be and to do? In the light of such questions, the pastoral leadership must explore the potential of church members. With discernment, the leadership can find several people with potential. Just like a sculptor

who sees a beautiful statue in a rock or an artist a picture in a canvas, a pastor must see lay evangelists among the members. King Saul did not have the gift of discernment; therefore, he could not see David as a future leader. Moses had the gift so he could mold Joshua as his successor. Pastors must deliberately expose the upcoming lay people to ministry. Opportunities must be created for them to exercise their gifts. This style of pastoral leadership can build up lay leadership qualities and confidence in the process of developing their gifts. When the potential leaders realize their call, abilities, and gifts, they would be empowered. Pastors ought to have a large heart to encourage the lay people and to celebrate their achievements. Blessed is the pastor who multiplies himself or herself by developing leaders of high caliber. A couple of group reports clearly indicated that the participants lacked motivation and encouragement from the pastoral leadership. Motivation is the oxygen in the church for the lay people. Pastoral function ought to be directed towards equipping people for kingdom life and ministry. The role of Ananias and Barnabas in the life of Paul may seem small, but it is significant. Behind every Paul, background mentors can be found. Paul became the most powerful church planter among the Gentiles because he received, as well as gave, training.

Fourth, evangelism must become the heartbeat of the local churches. The self-directed study program has shown some specific methods of evangelism to reach non-Christians like neighbors, colleagues, and family members. Spontaneous evangelism by lay people is one of them. The subjects are not ashamed of talking about the gift of faith they have received and having a copy of the gospel with them. When non-Christian people are ready to listen, why not let the Christians make use of every opportunity at home, in the field, in market places, work places and wherever they are? The spontaneous missionary work by lay people was the root cause for most of the mass

movement. Friendship evangelism is another method for reaching out to neighbors for Christ. The lone subject from the Church of South India was highly motivated to organize special events for Christmas, Independence Day, Easter, and New Year's Day for their friends with a definite plan of introducing the Divine Friend. After non-Christian friends come to know Jesus Christ personally, they will need help and love as never before. They need to be nurtured and trained in the Christian life, and Christians are the natural people to help them to reach spiritual maturity. Family evangelism is another area that needs to be explored, especially by Hindu converts. Conversions of people of other faiths are a normal occurrence among the Methodist churches. Hindu converts must be motivated to be the evangelists among their own family members. Practically, it is a difficult task because of animosity and direct opposition since they had switched their age-long allegiance to a "foreign or Western religion" as always perceived. Witnessing must begin in "Jerusalem" despite its challenging look. They cannot afford to keep the good news secretly. If they have experienced something special and extraordinary in Jesus Christ, they must share it with their immediate family members. One of the missionary methods of the Protestant churches is that hearing the gospel for the very first time from the lips of one's family members is a privilege. Equipping the new Christian believer is one of the keys for church growth.

Fifth, this research has suggested that young people need to be empowered. The students were challenged to identify their neighbors and to do evangelism in their study places. The lessons on spiritual gifts helped one of them to discover her gifts and to develop them by using them. King Solomon was right in every sense. When young people are trained up, they will not depart from what they are trained for when they become old (Prov. 22:6). Theories on mission strategy point to the truth that student

groups and young people as a whole constitute a very fertile field for gospel proclamation. Local churches must grasp this insight and make good use of it. The students had a clear message that they, too, could create a significant impact in schools and colleges because they were part of the study plan. The Methodist Youth Fellowships, the Evangelical Union Movement, the Scripture Union, and the Evangelical Graduate Fellowships must come out of their comfort zone and design study lessons for reaching non-Christian boys and girls in the educational institutions. In other words, the evangelical organizations that are committed to work among the young people must intentionally change their focus and reach the non-Christian boys and girls through the Christian boys and girls. This research has found that Christian academic teachers proved to be the most beneficial in the research. The lessons have greatly challenged them to make use of the readily available opportunity. In the same way, the teachers have affirmed the fact that they could make use of the opportunity in schools by reaching out to non-Christian students, fellow teachers, and parents. Schools and colleges are non-threatening places where evangelism can take place in a subtle way.

Sixth, I found an unexpected but most exciting and remarkable finding in the professional study. The retirees found the program very encouraging. They were looking for opportunities to do evangelism outside the church, full-time, part time or volunteer. Two of them are currently serving as full-time evangelists, one salaried and the other as a volunteer since June 2001. The bishop in the Madras Regional Conference of the Methodist Church in India has appointed one of them. He is an evangelist covering eight non-Christian villages in a remote district in the state of Tamilnadu. The evangelist writes,

The basic principles from the ten lessons have confirmed my call to the

ministry of evangelism and inspired me to take the bold decision to go to these villages. I am convinced that the non-Christian illiterate poor people in these remote villages are my neighbors and I want to be a living witness among them by using my gifts of gospel preaching, healing, praying, and counseling.

The full text of his testimony is appended. The other subject has started a film ministry as an independent evangelist. He writes, “Lessons on spiritual gifts have helped me to finally discover my gifts. I have made a definite decision to use them in the film ministry until the Lord calls me home.” The churches have traditionally downplayed the role of retirees and limited their ministries to ushering, greeting, offertory counting, senior citizen fellowshiping, and politicking. This research has greatly challenged such thinking and modeling. Not all the retirees may have potential, but the need for training the potential ones has surfaced. It sounds paradoxical for the churches to train the young people and the retirees at the same time. I suggest the former to be intentional and the latter to be optional.

Suggestions for Future Research

This research was the first of its nature among the Methodist churches in South India, specifically in the Madras Regional Conference. Thirteen subjects recommended the program to local church believers, other Methodist churches, other denominations, and lay leaders. Twelve subjects highly recommended the lessons to be published in both Tamil and English. The publication is underway in Chennai. The Methodist Men’s Fellowship in the Fifth Avenue United Methodist Church in West Bend, Wisconsin, used the program for their Saturday Bible study from September to November 2001. The Indian Christian Fellowship in Detroit and Washington Metro Tamil Congregation in Landover, Maryland are considering the program for their weekday Bible study. The liaison in Madras has made an appeal to organize more self-study groups representing

different Methodist Churches and other denominations in the city of Madras to study the lessons.

This research has not directly addressed the present trend of Christianity being attacked by the fundamental Hindus all over India. Three subjects expanded evangelism to their work and public places but got discouraged because of opposition. The federal employees and the state employees feared repercussions for expanding evangelism to their work places. The state of Tamilnadu has witnessed seven visible incidents of direct attack on Christians, missionaries, Christian schools, churches, and orphanages in 1999 alone. On 12 November 1999, a Methodist Church in Vellore in South India, under the jurisdiction of Madras Regional Conference, was completely burned down. On 26 July 2001, nineteen villagers who recently embraced Christianity were forced to reconvert to Hinduism in the Korua village in the state of Orissa. They are also facing prosecution by the district administration for violating provisions of the State Freedom of Religion Act. The Prime Minister of India made remarks in October 2001 that social and educational programs by Indian churches are disguises through which they proselytize the Hindus to Christianity. Religious fundamentalism continues to increase among all sections of the society. It has become a sophisticated philosophy and a worldview that is capturing a growing number of both ordinary and intellectuals. The world religions are divided into traditional, moderate, and fundamental or radical. A recent world-acknowledging example of religious intolerance in the United States of America is the attack of 11 September 2001.

The context in India is very complex. Christianity is a minority community. Hinduism is no longer a tolerant religion. The context of the Indian church, Christian institutions, and missions reveal the struggle for survival. The overarching challenge

before the churches in India today is the task of reaching millions of people for Christ by being obedient to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. How can they move forward in the wake of opposition, population growth, and other obstacles? Direct evangelism and indirect evangelism seem completely impossible and largely outdated. However, evangelism, being the heartbeat of the Indian churches, must happen at any cost. I think of the four letters WWJD. What would the Lord do to accomplish this task? What are the relevant strategies and resources needed? The churches must return to their roots, to those glorious years after the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost when the world was turned upside down by the members of the first century church. The church must also travel back five hundred years to the Reformation when the concept of “the priesthood of all believers” was restored.

First, the pastors of the local churches must equip the church members to become the community missionaries or mobile ministers. It is not an overnight job. It involves a long and hard-working process. It means faithfulness, commitment, priority, and diligence on the part of the church leadership. It begins with the conviction that laity are the Church; they have the potential; and, they need to release their potential in ministries in order to be effective in doing evangelism in farms, factories, schools, hospitals, government offices, cities, villages, and neighborhoods. Every local church needs to be a functional church all through the week. The program trained, motivated, educated, helped, and released the laity for evangelism. One of the functions of the Committee on Mission and Evangelism in the Book of Discipline of the Methodist Church in India is “to plan and promote an effective program of evangelism and missions within and outside the church by training lay members” (Lal 206).

Second, following the present model of the general Christian education program,

the local churches must design a Mission education program for the entire congregation focusing on different levels. The churches must intentionally develop a philosophy of continuous learning about mission and evangelism. The potential pockets in the congregation, such as teachers, students, Hindu converts, private company or industry workers, retirees, and others, need to be identified for training. The single Roman Catholic convert and the two Hindu converts made their opinion clear about the need to equip the laity in the local Methodist churches. Their responses called and affirmed for a mission education program. The mission curriculum may include theology of mission, history of mission, principles of church growth in the light of a changing scenario, visionary thinking, communication skills, human relations, methods, strategies, team building, and leadership development. Eight group reports revealed that the laity can become competent and effective when they are tuned into learning, listening, interacting, and broadening their understanding of both the challenges and the urgency of evangelism. A positive attitude towards the challenges is already in place. The challenges may be God's opportunities and timing for a change in the traditional approach. Paradigm shifts have to happen in mission thinking and doing.

Third, all the subjects except one came from just one local Methodist church. Of course, the research was originally intended for the laity in Methodist churches. The lone subject came from a local church affiliated to the Church of South India, one of the mainline churches in South India. He actively participated in the study program along with his wife who is a Methodist. He made significant contribution in the group study. Further, he made a concrete suggestion to make the self-directed study program available to other denominations. Another suggestion was about friendship evangelism from his personal experience. This suggestion opened avenues for doing research to assess the

effectiveness of ministry in evangelism among the laity in other denominations in South India. He was one of the subjects who recommended publishing the study lessons for wider participation.

Fourth, while developing the Mission education program for continuous learning and training in the local churches, designing study lessons for intensive short-term courses, weekend mission seminars, and a special curriculum for non-Christian children for vacation Bible school is also needed . Rather than focusing on a single training program, the churches have to be as viable as possible to have a full range of possibilities from which each person can choose and get the benefit. God can use the willingness and openness of the churches and use them to overcome the shortcomings.

Fifth, the local churches must be deliberately committed to encourage the congregation to use their gifts for Great Commission purposes. The sole responsibility lies with the local church leadership in helping the congregation to discover, develop, and deploy their gifts. Again, an appropriate tool is needed to unlock the resources in the congregation. Christians will know who they are when they discover their gifts. They will know what they can do when they integrate the gifts into ministry of the people. This research has served as a vital key to open the floodgates of the high potential of the twenty-two subjects who experienced a sudden evangelism explosion.

Conclusion

God wants committed people in all professions and walks serving him. God wants every local church to make this commitment become reality. God has given varied spiritual gifts to all believing Christians in the Church. All are expected to discover, develop, and use those gifts for God in the work and public places. People are ready but looking for equipment. When all believing Christians identify their neighbors and invest

their time and talents or gifts for services, mercy deeds, counseling, and witnessing for Christ in the name of Christ, the churches will make a radical difference in growing the kingdom of God.

The need of the hour is for more missionaries that are non-professional and more trainer-pastors to make the missionary outreach more effective. The churches need to develop a definite and specific plan, policy, objectives, and strategy to come up with a lot of programs for doing ministry in evangelism. The missionary concern of every local church must not end in the theology of mission, but continue with the appropriate methods and the responsibilities of the priesthood of all believers. This research will surely help the churches not only in South India but also in other parts of India and other countries as well where evangelism appears as the topmost priority.

APPENDIX A

The Major Cultural Aspects of the State of Tamil Nadu

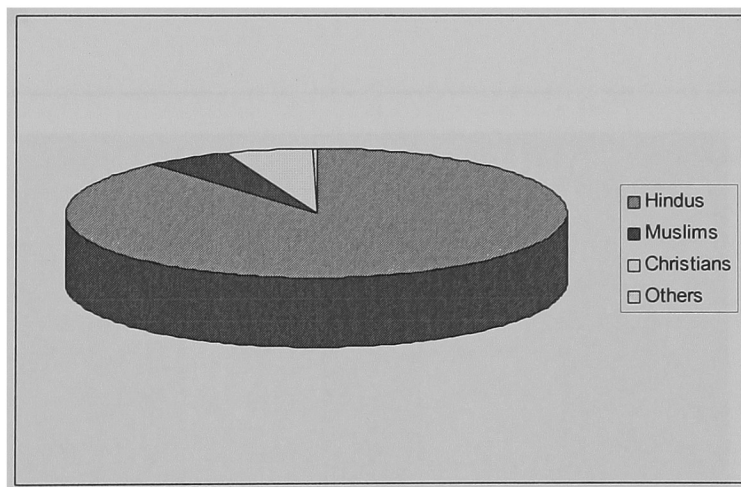
Population

Total	58,000,000 (1985)
Rural Population	61%
Urban Population	39%

Geographical Data

Districts	29
Taluks	168
Blocks	510
Towns	469
Cities	25
Villages	19,099

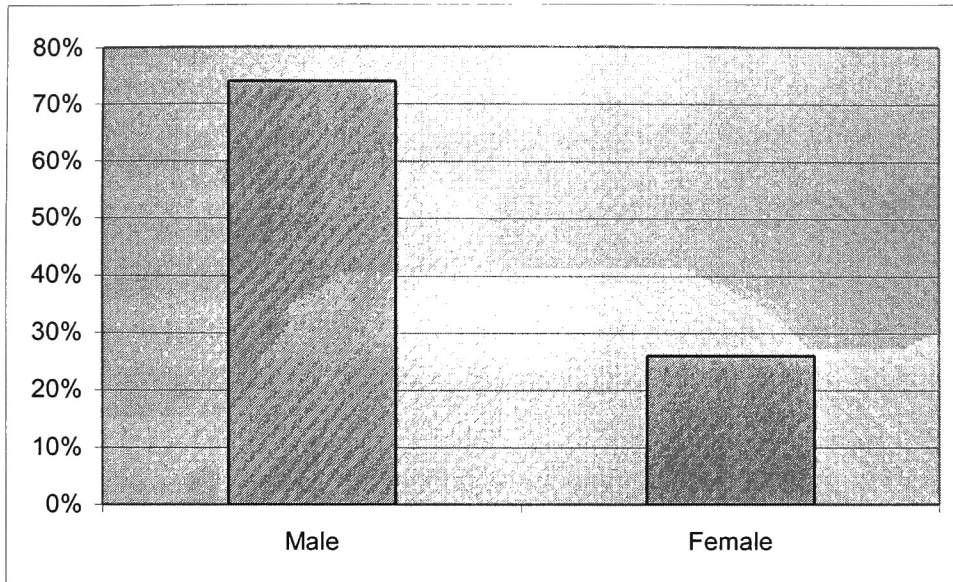
Religions



Hindus	88.7%
Muslims	5.7%
Christians	5.6%
Others	0.2%

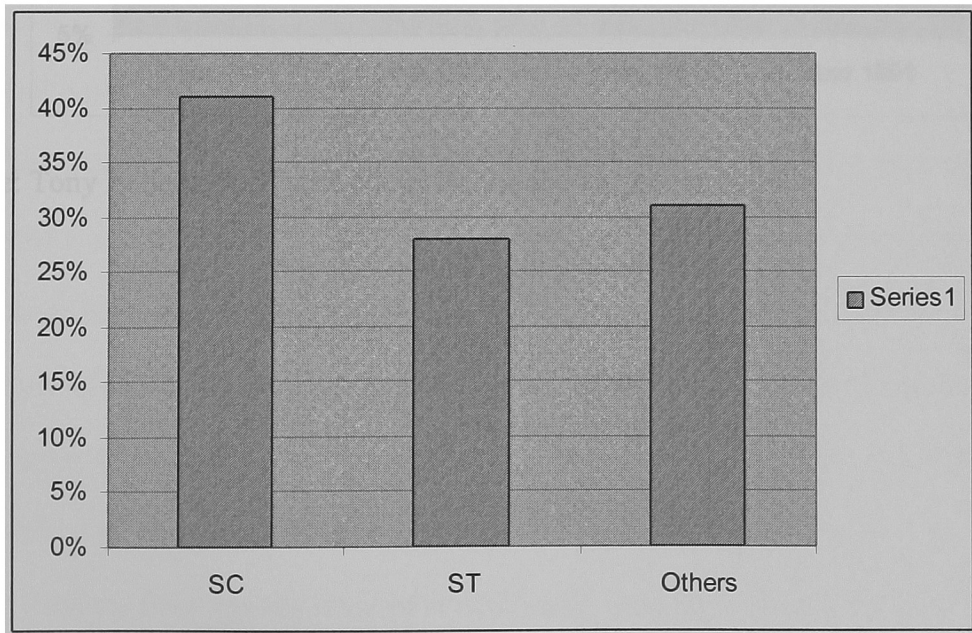
(Jainism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and primitive religions)

Literacy



Male 74%
 Female 26%

People Groups

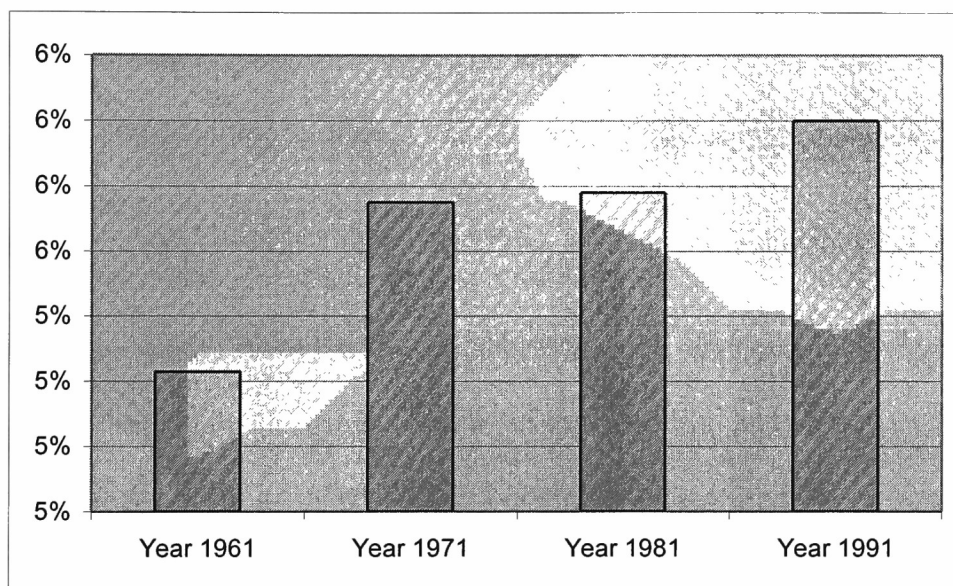


Scheduled Castes 41%
 Scheduled Tribes 28%
 Others 31%

Status of Churches

Churches	6000
Mission Organizations	200
Christian Development Agencies	20
Christian Hospitals	40
Christian Schools	9,600

Percentage of Christians (1961-1991)



Source: Tony E. Samuel, "Tamil Nadu: Before the Throne of God"

APPENDIX B**Self-Directed Study Lesson #1**

1. **Name of the Lesson:** The Church—Part I
2. **Scripture:** 1 Peter 2:9, 10
3. **Introduction:** In a Sunday school class, the children were asked to draw a picture of a church. Some drew a picture of a building with a cross at the top, some drew a building with a steeple, and some even tried to draw a picture of the local church pastor. It is important for the church members to know the concept and the biblical understanding of the church. It is not a building neither an organization nor a community of priests. An article has suggested three levels in the church. At the top are the clergy. Lower down are professional lay workers, who give full time for the church. At the bottom are laymen. This is the true picture of an institutional church. The Bible Church is the priesthood of all believers because every believer is entrusted with ministry responsibility.
4. **Information:** In this text, St. Peter explains (a) who is a believer? and (2) who are the believers? Peter wrote to the believers who were scattered because of persecution for their faith. A believer is the one whom God has called out of darkness into His wonderful light. Believers are the instruments whom God has chosen to declare the praises of Him, that is to say that they are “to do His work and speak out for Him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference” as Eugene Peterson puts.
 - a. What does Peter say about the believers’ past?

They were in the dark; they were not God’s people; they did not receive mercy;
 - b. What does Peter say about the believers’ present?

They are in the light; they are God’s people; they have received mercy;

c. What does Peter say about the believers' future?

The purpose of the believers, having been brought from the past lives to the present, is to declare the praises of God to others.

d. What are the several names given to the believers by Peter?

They are the chosen generation (God's choice), royal priesthood (God's appointment), holy nation (God's will), a people belonging to God (God's property). They are the "church" and you are the "church."

The Priesthood of All Believers:-

A Cardinal told a story about an inquirer who asked a priest what was the position of the lay person in the Church. The priest answered that the laity had two positions. They kneel before the altar. And they sit below the pulpit. The Cardinal adds that there is a third position that the priest has forgotten. They also put their hands in their purse. Most of the lay people view the church this way. The concept of the church being 'the priesthood of all believers' influenced the lives and work of Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, the Swiss reformers, and the major divisions of Christendom. The biblically understanding is that the whole worshipping congregation is priesthood, and the true priesthood is active participation in worship and service. Methodist history says that an ideal church does not consist of an active few but 'all' are called to serve in the church of Christ. United Methodism has always recognized states the Book of Discipline, that "lay persons as well as ordained persons" are called to lead the church. I believe that priesthood is a privilege of every believer but coupled with responsibilities in the context of the mission of God, which is the mission of the church. Someone said, "If the gospel is to reach all mankind, every person who

has received it must tell it, preach it, proclaim it.” Tamil tradition has a proverb: “A vegetable, beautifully drawn and painted on a piece of paper cannot be cooked on a stove.” The concept of church has remained a “paper doctrine” since reformation. Now it must become a reality. The reality must begin with you and me.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

Share briefly the following with your group:

- a. Your faith Journey
- b. The difference between life in darkness and life in light
- c. What are your thoughts about God’s purpose for you being in your Church?

6. Application Questions:

- a. Do you fully believe that the church is the priesthood of all believers? Why?
- b. Do you believe that you are part of the priesthood of all believers?
- c. If yes, to whom do you plan to declare the praises of God this week?
- d. What is your commitment to continue to receive God’s mercy?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #2

1. **Name of the Lesson:** The Church—Part II
2. **Scripture:** Matthew 22:37-40; 28:17-20
3. **Introduction:** In the first lesson, we learned that the church is people, priesthood of all believers. In this lesson we will learn that church is also a context for doing ministry. Someone has described ‘church’ as an instrument. It is an instrument to change people to believers and from believers to priests.

A church can grow only by ministries. Today people do not join a denomination but a congregation where they are looking for opportunities to serve people internally as well as externally. Therefore church is “people to people”. Jesus Christ is the founder of the church and He is the model for doing church ministries. The gospel is the primary constitution for a congregation. At this juncture, it is appropriate to define the word ‘gospel’. To me, ‘gospel’ means the life, the ministry, the death, the resurrection, and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as prophesied, fulfilled, and recorded in the Scripture. Therefore the church is called to minister among the unchurched and the unreached before Christ returns.

4. **Information:** Jesus Christ is the author of these verses. These teachings are commonly known as “the Great Commandment” and “the Great Commission.” Christ taught the emerging church, the 12 disciples and the general crowd, in the first century. He continues to teach the same to the 21st century full-grown church.

The Great Commandment:

There are two reasons for the teaching to love thy neighbor. (1) God has first loved us. He continues to lavish His love upon us. (2) God loves everyone and His love is freely available to all. “God so loved the world” John 3:16. A Bible commentator

says, “the world is the theater of history.” Not only people of different times, but also people of different age, race, color, caste, creed and character need God’s love. St. Augustine said, “God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us to love”. For a disciple of Christ, to love means to love God and one’s neighbor. They are inseparable theoretically and practically. These have been both law and prophesy throughout the history of Israel and continued down through the centuries. Bishop James R. King challenged the Methodist congregations in the Kentucky Annual conference of the United Methodist Church, to become “stations of love,” reaching into the communities and around the world with God’s message of love and grace. Paul in his letter to Ephesians gives the secret of building the church, by saying, “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built” (4:12).

The Great Commission

The Great Commission has four distinct actions of “going,” “making,” “baptizing” and “teaching.” This is the mission of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and therefore this ought to be the mission of the church for all ages. This is the way loving God and one’s neighbor must be acted out. The triune God expects the people in the church to go to the people outside the church compound, to make them disciples by word and deed, to baptize them, and to teach them for becoming the priests to continue the cycle of process. This is the way you and I can grow and build the local church. The church can have two birds in one stone. (1) The local church grows leaps and bounds internally. Faith of the believers becomes matured to face personal and family challenges. (2) The local church grows leaps and bounds externally. The community around is affected and impacted. In the Great

Commission, Christ promised “I will be with you as you **do** this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age” (The Message 76). He is willing to be with us but are we willing to **do**.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

Share briefly the following with your group.

- a. Define the word ‘neighbor’ from your perspective.
- b. Discuss the word “all nations” and “all peoples.”
- c. Describe “God’s love” in your life.

6. Application:

- a. How would you act out God’s love to your neighbor this week?
- b. Do you have a neighbor whom you can disciple on a regular basis?
- c. Does the promise of Christ that “I am with you always” make you feel confident to do ministry effectively and consistently?
- d. What can you do specifically to grow and build your local church?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #3

1. **Name of the Lesson:** The Ministry—Part 1
2. **Scripture:** Mark 10:45 & Matthew 20:26-27
3. **Introduction:** In many countries, the Federal Government is divided into various ministries such as the ministry of External Affairs, the ministry of Railways, the ministry of Commerce, the ministry of Finance etc. Those who head these ministries are called as ministers. The reason is that the government is elected ‘to serve’ the people. Of course, it is hard to believe that way, as the ministers prefer to be served than to serve. In the international politics, corruption is one of the catchy words, because ‘service’ has been replaced by ‘self’ and selfish motives. It is well commented that authentic Servanthood is one of the marks of Christianity precisely because it was the mark of Christ, the founder-Master. The church is the servant body and every believer is a servant member.

Christian ministry cannot be juxtaposed to such a secular understanding. There is an ocean of difference between service by secular organizations and the Christian service. Someone asked Mother Theresa the difference between the service by the government and the service by her and/or the church. She sharply answered, “I do service in the name of Jesus,” the church as well. She is right in every sense. When Christ is the head of the church, He is the supreme model of the church ministry. He had love for people. He had great concern for the unreached. Finally He sacrificed His life. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives life for His sheep” (John 10:11). Servanthood and sacrifice were synonymous to Jesus. He could not think of one without the other. John Wesley described the servant leadership as “watching over one another in love.”

4. **Information:** (Read together the Scripture verses from Mark and Matthew)

The one primary Greek word *diakonia* is used for ministry in the New Testament, which means, “to serve.” The New Testament emphasizes service or ministry rather than ministers. John R. Stott shares an understanding that all the people of God are called to serve and the service of the pastor is to train the people for their service. He proves from Acts 6 that the word *diakonia* is applied to all kinds of service in the name of Jesus Christ. He adds that though there are many, they are all alluded to as forms of *diakonia*. What you perform in the name of Jesus is more significant than who you are in the church. Therefore, Jesus in Matthew 20:26, 27 challenges His disciples not to fight over your position like who is first? Who is last? Who is great? Who is small? Who is a laity? Who is a minister? but to become a servant in the kingdom business.

The New Dictionary of Theology defines “ministry” as “the contemporary rediscovery of the word ministry highlights the sharp etymological challenge of service, while the dynamic of a diversified ministry includes the theological reappraisal of every church office as an activity serving grace, serving people and serving the spirit in people.” Thus service is rendered unto the Lord and to the people here and there, everywhere, meeting their spiritual, physical, emotional and practical needs.

In Mark 10:45, we understand the service of Christ in the form of “giving.” He gave His life to serve people. Redemption was possible on the cross because of life giving. We may call it “sacrifice.” Service and sacrifice are two sides of the coin called “ministry.” As we follow or copy Christ, he makes and moulds us to be sacrificial servants. The four gospels help us trace the footsteps of the Master-

Servant. Let us give ourselves to non-stop service until the last person is reached, churched, and served. We should not end our service until we serve to the ends of the earth or our life ended whichever comes first. His hands and feet were nailed, but He was still serving from the cross. He saved a thief. He committed his mother to a disciple. He forgave His enemies. He passed on His work to the disciples.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

Share briefly the following with the group.

- a. Your ministry/service
- b. What one new thing have you learned today about ministry?
- c. Is your service or ministry redemptive?

6. Application:

- a. What do you want to do for Jesus this week, following His example?
- b. Do you believe that God in Christ can save a person through you? Why?
- c. How can you encourage and motivate a church member to become a servant for Christ?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #4

1. **Name of the Lesson:** The Ministry—Part II
2. **Scripture:** Acts 1:8 & John 1:8
3. **Introduction:** We understand the word “witness” in the context of a trial in a criminal case. People are asked, sometimes forced or influenced, to witness “for” or “against.” The 1996 General Conference of the United Methodist Church enacted extensive legislation giving more flexibility to the local churches. But one of the mandatory is that the Church Council put matters of nurture, outreach, and witness first on its agenda. Let me quote the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church. “The witnessing ministries of the church shall give attention to developing and strengthening evangelistic efforts of sharing of personal and congregational stories of Christian experience, faith, and service; communications; lay speaking ministries; and other means that give expressions of witness for Jesus Christ” (153).
What we do for Jesus is a “witness.”
4. **Information:** [Read together Acts 1:8]. We live between the ascension and the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Acts 1:8 is a promising prophecy because the church is expected to fulfill it before the Second Coming. Acts 1:8 is also a commandment because the church is expected to obey it before the Second Coming. The *modus operandi* to fulfill and to obey is “witnessing.”
 - a. For effective witnessing, the church needs to be empowered by the Holy Spirit. In John 14:16, 26, the Holy Spirit is an encourager and a teacher. People in the church need encouragement and right teachings to do the ministry. Luke is telling the Christians in verse 8 that they will have to learn how to work within the world as “witnesses.” Some commentators have suggested that verse 8 is an outline for

the entire Book of Acts. I call the Book of Acts as “the Book of witness.” The apostles and the evangelists were witnessing for their Lord and Master Jesus Christ by proclaiming the gospel to every nation, race, tribe, language, and territory.

- b. For effective witnessing, the church needs to go beyond their ‘comfort zone.’

God is a missionary God and therefore He had sent His only Son into the mission field, the world. In the great Christology text in Philippians, we read about how the Son left His comfort zone in order to redeem the world. “He did not consider equality with God. He made himself nothing. He took the very nature of a servant. He was made in human likeness. He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:6-8). The apostles were called, commissioned, and challenged to go to the ends of the world, beginning from Jerusalem. They did it. Saint Thomas came to India from Jerusalem. William Carey went to India from England. Mary Slessor and David Livingstone went to Africa from Scotland. Hudson Taylor went to China from England. David Brainerd went among the Native American Indians from the USA. They all left their “Jerusalem,” “the comfort zone,” for the sake of witnessing for Christ.

- c. In 1885 Grace and Robert Wilder, who had grown up as missionary children in India, were praying for a new wave of missionary enthusiasm in the United States. They prayed to God that God would raise up a thousand missionaries in USA. Other members joined them in prayer for missions. The following summer, Robert attended a Bible conference at Mt. Hermon, Massachusetts, where D. L. Moody was the featured speaker. Robert asked Moody to focus on missions during the conference. Many students committed their lives to missions,

including John R. Mott, who later became one of the nation's leading missionary statesman. He wrote to his parents, "The Holy Spirit is working here with mighty power. He has brought about the greatest revival the world has ever known. Up to this noon, over eighty of the students have consecrated themselves to foreign missionary work. It will grow to one hundred tomorrow." Thus the Student Volunteer Movement was born. This is what must happen when the Holy Spirit comes upon the church. Let me re-phrase 1 John 4:20. If anyone says, "I have the Holy Spirit" yet does not witness, he/she is a liar. Whoever has the Spirit must witness and be involved in evangelism.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

- a. What one new thing have you learned today about witnessing?
- b. Summarize Acts 1:8 in your words.
- c. How often, do you think, does the 21 century church depend upon the "power from above?"
- d. Do you have the Holy Spirit? If yes, how often do you witness for Christ?

6. Application:

- a. Are you willing to pray for empowering the church by the Holy Spirit on a regular basis?
- b. How can the church collectively witness for Christ?
- c. How would you witness for Christ to an unchurched person? What would you say about Jesus Christ?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #5

1. **Name of the Lesson:** The Spiritual Gifts—Part I
2. **Scripture:** Romans 12:6-8
3. **Introduction:** In the book, Minister's Little Instruction Book, Mike Duduit said, “At age 20, we worry about what others think of us. At 40, we don’t care what they think of us. At 60, we discover they haven’t been thinking about us at all” (34).

Regardless of age, we all must worry and care about what God thinks about you and me because He is our creator, our redeemer, our sustainer, and our help in need. God is thinking about us every moment according to Psalm 121. What a promise to know that God is leading us every step of our ways.

In the “Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry” document of the World Council of Churches, the role of the Holy Spirit is described as “builder of the church.” “The Spirit calls people to faith, sanctifies them through many gifts, gives them strength to witness to the Gospel, and empowers them to serve in hope and love...” God has gifted to us tools, equipment, and instruments so that He could build the church.

4. **Information:** According to a survey conducted among 1,600 active Christians in German-speaking Europe by the Institute of Natural Church Development, 80 percent could not identify their gifts. Another survey of 1,200 active church members, conducted in India by the Church Growth Research Center, has shown the same percentage of Christians who do not know what their spiritual gifts are. How can God build the church when people in the church do not even recognize their God-given gifting and calling? This appears to be one of the primary reasons why the “priesthood of all believers” has not been achieved in the fullest sense.

Paul wrote the letter to Romans during his third missionary journey. One of his purposes was to explain the relationship between Jew and Gentile in God's overall plan of redemption. In other words, he was encouraging people in the church at Rome to move out of their comfort zone in their ministry, and to deplore their gifts for ministering to one another. The rationale is mentioned in verse 6. The grace of God is the reason for our gifts. One of the favorite slogans of John Wesley was "grace for all and grace in all." God's grace converted Saul into Paul on his way to Damascus. God's grace made Paul as an apostle, a pastor, a missionary, a church planter, a trainer, and a great leader. God's grace bestowed different gifts upon him. Pauline usage of the word *charis* for grace means that all believers have gifts without exception. The early church began to grow so rapidly because when anyone became a convert, that person was immediately taught that the Holy Spirit imparted to him or her not only salvation experience but also equipped him or her with a spiritual gift. The person was responsible to discover, develop, and deploy the gift in the ministry. The apostle Peter writes to Christians "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" (I Peter 4:10).

Every culture has something to teach. I have learned many things from American culture. Two of them are (1) How to wrap a gift? (2) When to open it? After buying a gift, I need to buy gift bags and wrapping papers. I wrap the gift and put it in the gift bag, then I give it to the designated person. After receiving a gift, I am expected to open it in the presence of everyone. We all have received the gifts, beautifully wrapped. But many of us have not opened it yet. If we do not open, we will never know what are our gifts? God purchased the gift in the shop called 'cross' by shedding the blood of His only Son Jesus Christ. God wrapped the gift with the gift

paper called ‘the Holy Spirit.’ God designated the gift for his beloved people called “the church.” What are we waiting for? God is willing to help unfold the gift one by one beginning from the gift of eternal life.

The discovery of the spiritual gift is the first step towards growing the church. Christian A. Schwarz says, “Thus ordinary people can accomplish the extraordinary” (Natural 24). Let me make five observations about the spiritual gifts:

- a. A spiritual gift is a special ability, given by the Holy Spirit.
- b. Every believer in the church has received a gift from God.
- c. Every gift is given for use to extend the Kingdom of God (the growth of the church) and to bring glory to God (the glory of God).
- d. Every believer must discover, develop, and deploy his/her gift.
- e. Obedience, humility, and commitment are the keys to discover a gift.

5. **Reflection/Interaction:**

- a. What is the difference between natural ability and spiritual gifts?
- b. What are some distinctions between the ‘fruit of the Spirit’ and the ‘gifts of the Spirit?’
- c. What is your spiritual gift, if you have already discovered?
- d. How and where do you use your spiritual gift?
- e. Do you get satisfaction of using your spiritual gift?

6. **Application:**

- a. What one new thing have you learned today about spiritual gift?
- b. What do you plan to share ‘God’s grace’ this week?
- c. Are you prepared to pray for God’s help to discover your gift if you have not?

- d. Are you prepared to serve within a ministry in the local church or in the community?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #6

1. **Name of the lesson:** The Spiritual Gifts—Part II
2. **Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:1 & Ephesians 4:11-13
3. **Introduction:** In the book, Eighth Day of Creation, there is an apocryphal story.

Michelangelo was pushing a large hunk of a stone down the street toward his sculpting studio when a neighbor cried out, “Hey, Michel, what are you going to do with that old piece of stone?” Michelangelo replied, “There is an angel in there that wants to come out.” I have studied, researched, and learned about the spiritual gifts. I must admit I have hardly preached about it. How many of you have heard a series of sermons on “the spiritual gifts?” How many of you have taken a Bible study on “the spiritual gifts?” If the local church desires to see an angel in every believer, the pastors must preach and teach on this and related subjects. Being people of prayer, we need to pray consistently that the Holy Spirit will create a hunger in people to discover their gifts. Once discovered, no one will remain silent.

4. **Information:** Our son, Shobi, is 6 years old. One of his favorite sentences is “I know everything.” Twenty-first century world is known as “over knowledge age.” This generation of children and youth know, if not try to know, everything and anything in the world. Someone said, “The unique characteristics of the Millennial are exceptionally curious, smart, focused, able to adapt, driven to innovate and have a mind-set of immediacy, requiring fast results.”

In today’s lesson, we have two significant Pauline teachings related to our subject, the spiritual gifts. Paul wrote to the Corinthian church not to be ignorant about the spiritual gifts. Eugene Peterson puts it, “I want you to be informed and knowledgeable” about the spiritual gifts. If conversion begins with the knowledge of

God, ministry must begin with the knowledge of spiritual gifts. In many fast-growing churches, two questions are asked at the time of joining the church. (1) “What gifts do you have?” (2) “How can you use them in ministry either inside or outside the local church?” During my study year at Asbury Theological seminary, I visited the Saddleback Valley Community Church in USA where the church has a structured program called “Discovering My Ministry- Class 301” for the new members. There is no reason for anyone in the church to be ignorant of gifts, because God has shaped each one of us for ministry, with a gift or gifts. It is good to remind ourselves once again that ministry is using what God has given us to serve Him and His people in different situations in and around the church.

The second teaching of Paul comes from his letter to the church in Ephesus. The word “equip” in verse 12 is translated as “perfect”, “prepare”, or “improve.” In the recent years, Greg Ogden’s book, “the New Reformation,” has been very useful for me to understand this important word. He has thoroughly examined the Greek word and its related family words, and come up with a three-fold meaning. (1) It means “fixing what is broken.” The Greek word has both medical and civil connotations. Doctors are equippers because they have been trained to fix fractured bones. Nehemiah found the broken walls of Jerusalem. He fixed or repaired or rebuilt the walls. When Jesus saw the first three prospective disciples, Simon, John, and James, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, they were equipping or mending or fixing their nets. Jesus told them that they had been fixing objects like “fishing nets” for years and now the time had come for them to follow Jesus so that they could become “fixers of men and women” in the first church. It did happen. (2) It means “bringing back into proper alignment.” For four hundred years, the people of Israel were in a

wrong place, under the Egyptian oppressors. They felt cut off and off the track. Moses was chosen as a great “equipping” leader. He led them through the wilderness, and finally to the Promised Land. There they had entirely a different feeling that they were realigned with their God and their heritage. They were realigned for a purpose and that was to serve. “Let my people go so that they may worship the true God.” The people of Israel built the tabernacle. They discovered their skills, gifts, and talents. The leaders equipped them, and they became competent and effective. They were all lay persons, called and inspired by God (Exodus 35-36).

(3) It means “supply what is lacking.” The meaning of the word “supply” is to complete what is incomplete, make up for what is deficient, and add what is missing. Eugene Peterson translates Psalm 23:1 “God, my shepherd! I don’t need a thing.” The Head Equipper, Jesus Christ, is calling the church not to lack anything for doing ministry because the Holy Spirit has supplied the spiritual gifts. You and I are responsible to discover, develop, and deploy in the ministry what has already been supplied with. We are called to fix, to realign, and to supply. We are all equipped to serve and build one another so as to build the body of Christ.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

- a. What have you recently fixed at home or work or other places?
- b. Have you ever helped others fix something? If yes, how did you feel about it?
- c. Which of the following titles do you prefer? Mr. Fixer or Mr. Supplier or Mr. Re-aligner or Mr. Equipper.

6. Application:

- a. What did you find most helpful about today’s lesson?
- b. How much time will you be able to use your gift in ministry per week?

- c. How would you motivate another believer in the church to discover his or her spiritual gift?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #7

1. **Name of the Lesson:** The Spiritual Gifts—Part III
2. **Scripture:** Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28 & Ephesians 4:11
3. **Introduction:** An Orthodox priest, a Catholic priest and a Rabbi were talking about how much of the collections they were giving to God, and how much they were keeping for themselves. The Orthodox priest said, “I divide all money coming into the church into a big pile and a small pile, the big one is for God and the small one for me.” The Catholic priest said, “Well, I divide the money into two even piles, one for God and one for me.” Finally the Rabbi said, “I put all the money on a tray and throw it up into the air, praying to God to keep for himself what He wants.”

God keeps nothing for himself whether they are the collections or the spiritual gifts. The propensity of mankind is to be calculative, but God is not. He is a giver of numerous gifts to the church as listed in today’s texts. They are all meant for God’s people to discover, develop, and deploy in the ministry. In today’s lesson, we will survey in depth the number of spiritual gifts and their meanings or definitions.

4. **Information:** Kenneth Kinghorn, a Professor of Theology at Asbury Theological Seminary, has listed the spiritual gifts in the following manner in reference to the major passages of the Scripture:

<u>Romans 12:6-8</u>	<u>1 Corin. 12:4-11</u>	<u>1 Corin.12: 28</u>	<u>Ephesians 4:11</u>
Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophecy	Prophecy
Teaching		Teaching	Teaching
Serving			
Exhortation			
Giving			
Giving Aid			
Compassion			
	Healing	Healing	
	Working Miracles	Working Miracle	
	Tongues	Tongues	
	Interpretation	Interpretation	
	Wisdom		
	Knowledge		
	Faith		
	Discernment		
		Apostleship	Apostleship
		Helps	
		Administration	
			Evangelism
			Shepherding

Ministry in the church happens only with the use of one of these spiritual gifts. I believe, God has given one of them according to his own discretion for the purpose of ministry and service, so that the ministry of the church would be accomplished. They

are “grace-gifts” and those are treasures from God. They are the blessings beyond measure because they cause people-growth and ministries-growth. Someone said, “They are the ‘job descriptions’ for every member in the church.” There is no reason for God’s people either to be ignorant or to neglect them or to throw them up in the air.

The list comes to us from the early church according to the then needs. In the last twenty decades, the needs have grown and the gifts as well. The Saddleback Valley Community Church has categorized the gifts in a different way, expanding some gifts and adding new gifts too.

- I. The gifts that communicate God’s word are **preaching, evangelism, missions, apostle, miracles, and praying with spirit.**
 - II. The gifts that educate God’s people are **teaching, encouragement, wisdom, and discernment.**
 - III. The gifts that demonstrate God’s love are **service, mercy, hospitality, pastoring, giving, and charity.**
 - IV. The gifts that celebrate God’s presence are **worship, music, arts & crafts, intercession, and healing.**
 - V. The gifts that support all four purposes are **leadership, administration and faith.**
5. **Reflection/Interaction:**
- a. Share your thoughts on the following sentence: “Love is the connecting gift of all the gifts that are listed in the lesson.”
 - b. Can you name a gift that is not listed in the lesson and its corresponding need?
 - c. Do you see any one of these gifts in you? If yes, will you explain it to the group in detail?
 - d. Which gift (s) does your church need the most?

6. Application:

- a. If you have discovered a new gift, how would you use it to ‘love your neighbor’ this week?
- b. Do you believe that the church must be operated on the basis of spiritual gifts? Why?
- c. What are your suggestions to the Committee on Nominations or the church leadership?
- d. Would you like to converse with a member of your church about his or her spiritual gift next Sunday?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #8

1. **Name of the Lesson:** The Power of Healing
2. **Scripture:** Acts 3:1-10
3. **Introduction:** The word “healing” is always limited to biological sense whereas the Bible promotes the concept of healing related to the body, the soul, the mind, the family, the church, and the community. People of prayer all over the world are praying for healing among diverse ethnic and religious groups such as Hindus and Muslims, Hindus and Christians, Jews and Muslims, Jews and Palestinians, Tamils and Sinhalese, and so on. The ministry of Jesus speaks volumes about “whole healing.” It must also be understood in the light of eternity. The Book of Revelation chapter 22 is commonly titled “the healing stream.” The nations in the world would receive an eternal healing to see God face to face and to live with Him forever and ever. Part of the healing must await the final cure in the resurrection when we get a resurrection body. Not all diseases are cured in this life, neither all sick people are healed. E. Stanley Jones said, “God will do one of two things; Either He will cure the disease now, or He will give us power to use the infirmity till the final cure in the resurrection-not bear it but use it.”

The modern world is described as a “broken world.” The church is pictured as a “healing community.” The people in the church are the ‘priesthood of all believers’ gifted with the power of healing meant for the broken world. We have learned in lesson # 6 that an equipper is the one who fixes what is broken. God has called us, given us a name, blessed and equipped us with gifts. Now it is our exhilarating responsibility to be faithful to him by “healing the people” and bringing them into His kingdom.

4. **Information:** In today's lesson, we read about the first healing miracle after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Peter and John were the instruments used in the mighty hand of God. In lesson # 4, we saw that Peter and John were given the promise that they would become witnesses first in Jerusalem and then to other regions. The earliest Christian development occurred within the structures of Judaism. In Acts chapter 2, there were three supernatural events. (1) The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples who were waiting and praying. (2) An unlikely preacher like Peter, the fisherman gave the most powerful sermon. (3) The first church was born of the Spirit and the Word with three thousand converts. Therefore, when Peter and John showed up in the temple, they represented the first church. It was the hour of prayer at 3 p.m., I assume they went to pray in the temple. The remarkable power of the Spirit began to work through Peter and John.
- a. They saw a crippled man from birth lying at the beautiful gate of the temple. The man was begging for years from the people entering the temple for charity.
 - b. They had nothing to offer but had something far greater. Peter spoke the name of Jesus Christ. Once he had denied the name, but was now proclaiming the same name boldly and effectively because of the remarkable power of the Spirit who had equipped him. His spoken word was followed by his touch. He helped him to receive the healing.
 - c. The paralyzed man stood on his feet, jumped, and went into the temple praising God for the new life. He held on to the apostles. He demonstrated the extent of the healing by entering into the temple, "walking and jumping and praising God" (Acts 3:8). He was healed physically because his lame feet and ankles became

normal and strong. He was healed emotionally because there was no need for him to beg at the temple gate. He was healed spiritually because he was praising God.

- d. Peter, with the healed man clinging to him, began his second powerful sermon to the assembled crowd of worshippers. He used the opportunity for preaching about the power of healing that came from God, the author of life. This God revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Therefore, the name of Jesus and the faith of the lame man were responsible for the healing. In one of the Vacation Bible Schools, the following chorus was taught which later became so popular in many churches in South India:

Silver and gold have I none
 But such as I have given I thee
 In the name of Jesus Christ
 Of Nazareth rise up and walk
 He went walking and leaping, and praising God (2)
 In the Name of Jesus Christ
 Of Nazareth rise up and walk.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

- a. Share your personal experience of “having been healed.”
- b. How do people perceive the concept of “healing” and “being healed?”
- c. Explain in your words the phrases like healing from sin, healing from sickness, healing from broken relationships, healing from war, healing from conflicts (family, work place, and church), and healing of nations.
- d. What are the connections among the concepts as well as experiences such as healing, reconciliation, and salvation?

6. Application:

- a. What one new thing have you learned today about “healing?”
- b. What is your plan to use the name of Jesus Christ this week?
- c. Will you visit a sick person in a hospital or home this week and share the power of healing?
- d. How can your church become a healing community to the broken world?

Self-Directed Study Lesson #9

1. **Name of the Lesson:** Unity in Diversity
2. **Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 12:12-31
3. **Introduction:** In the United States, when geese head south for the winter, they fly in 'V' formation. We might wonder what science has discovered as to why they fly that way. The goose theology goes like this. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in "V" formation, they add at least seventy-one percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. It is told that when a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go alone but quickly gets back into the formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the birds in the front. It is further told that when the head goose gets tired, it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies at the center. I also understand that they make noise from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. We have several things to learn from the goose story or theology. (1) If the priesthood of all believers, I mean the church, have a sense of a goose, they will stand by each other. (2) They can get the results more quickly and easily because they are travelling together depending on one another. (3) They encourage one another when they are discouraged in ministry because they all share the common vision, direction, and purpose.
4. **Information:** We have already looked into chapter 12 in First Corinthians in a couple of previous lessons. Paul brings out the image of the church being the body of Christ which refers primarily to the common dependence of all believers upon Christ and their joint sharing in His Spirit who is the source of their unity for doing service to one another and to the world according to their gifts. The analogy of human body

helps us to understand the different functions of the spiritual gifts. For example, the bodily parts can not function on their own. They can function only in response to the commands from the head. There is also harmony among the different functions. The body concept highlights three aspects of the church. (1) The body is one, bound together by its relationship to the Head through the power of the Holy Spirit. (2) The body has different parts and each one has a different function to perform. (3) The different parts and organs of the body are interdependent and they need one another for the effective working of the body, which results in growth.

In today's text, Paul clearly refutes the feeling in the church that some gifts are superior to others. Such feelings certainly cause divisions and disunity in the church and they hinder the growth. Further, the purpose of the spiritual gifts is defeated too. Every gift is important. Human nature is naturally inclined towards feelings of inferiority and superiority. When one person has a particular gift and another person does not have the same gift, it creates jealousy, and leads to conflicts. No gift is superior or inferior to another. All gifts are for the common good. They are functionally different. There is no reason for competition in the church. Every Christian must do his or her part as a body member to witness and to serve. Every Christian must celebrate the creative diversity, found in the ministries of others. Mathematically speaking, unity + diversity = mutuality. God keeps asking His church, "How can I save the world if you don't stick together?"

Greg Ogden has summarized Paul's description of the relationships of interdependence in just three powerful sentences. (1) We belong to each other. (2) We need each other. (3) We affect each other.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

- a. What is the purpose of the Spiritual gifts according to Ephesians 4:11-13?
- b. What are the reasons for church conflicts?
- c. How do you resolve a conflict between two gifted persons?

6. Application:

- a. Would you commit to pray for the ministries of others?
- b. How do you prefer to celebrate the 'unity in diversity'?
- c. What will be your message to a person with a spirit of competition?
- d. Fill in the picture of Jesus (below) by writing down the different ministries of your local church.

Self-Directed Study Lesson #10

1. **Name of the Lesson:** Evangelism and Church Growth

2. **Scripture:** Acts 2: 42-47

3. **Introduction:** There are many reasons why the church was founded. The primary reason for the church being on earth is to continue the work, which Christ began.

This is the exciting thing about the Book of Acts. Someone said, “If you live by the same values and priorities Jesus had, you will find evangelism happening naturally.

It becomes a life-style and not a project.” It is true that tremendous church growth is going on in several countries in Asia. Growth of the church in China is phenomenal.

According to the reports, the Protestant church there has increased from seven thousand to twelve thousand between 1992 and 1996. David Yonggi Cho, the senior pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in South Korea said, “To have church growth, you need a burning desire for church growth. When you have this heart, you

will apply yourself diligently toward the work of the ministry” (Cho, “Church Growth” 4). God gave him a dream of one million members in the local church and

5000 new churches in Korea. He is moving towards the dream. The Kwang Lim Methodist Church has a membership of 85,000 and this is the largest Methodist

church in the world. Bishop Sundo Kim has said, “As we look forward the 21 century, it is our goal to win one million persons to Jesus. We hope that you will join us in praying for this great undertaking” (Kim, “Kwanglim” 4).

The church growth researchers have identified four ways of growing local churches. (1) The church must grow in maturity and internal strength (internal growth). (2) The church must continue to add new believers from the immediate neighborhood (expansion growth). (3) The church must multiply itself, producing

daughter churches (extension growth). (4) The church must plant churches beyond its own culture, among other people or ethnic groups (bridging growth). Think of your local church for a moment. Does your local church fit in here, in all categories or at least one?

4. **Information:** Today's text explains the speed of the first century church. It was growing at high speed, without modern facilities like electricity, public audio system, television, computers, cassette digital players, telephones, e-mail, postal services, printing press, banks, tracts, magazines, news papers, no transport like scooters, motor bikes, vans, trains, buses not even bicycles. How did they grow at an astonishing speed of addition and multiplication? They were not financially sound. The literacy rate also was low. The apostles were ordinary fishermen and they were branded as 'unlearned.' They did not have well-bound leather-covered Bible, not even paperback copy.

2:41 Three thousand souls were added to the first church in one day.

2:47 The Lord added souls to the first church every day since then.

If the Bible is the Word of God, I am forced to believe that the first church members concentrated only on bringing the unchurched and the unreached into the kingdom of God by using their spiritual gifts in every way possible. Evangelism became the heartbeat of the church. The growth gained momentum from addition to multiplication. "The number of disciples was multiplied" (6:1, 7). "The churches were multiplied" (9:31). "The churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers" (16:5). Churches are run at a very high cost, but are not growing at a corresponding speed. The impact on the community is very less.

I like to list the qualities of the first century Christians.

- (1) They were devoted to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and the prayer.
- (2) The apostles performed wonders and miracles.
- (3) They had a strong sense of unity in diversity.
- (4) They met the needs of others by sharing their resources.
- (5) They continued to meet together in the temple courts.
- (6) They visited homes and encouraged one another.
- (7) They praised God all the time.
- (8) They enjoyed the favor of all the people.

I also like to list what the Lord did to the first century Christians.

- (1) He saved people.
- (2) He added them to the church daily.
- (3) He raised leaders in the church.
- (4) He helped them grow the church.

5. Reflection/Interaction:

- a. List both primary and secondary reasons for the 21 century churches not growing the same way and the same speed like the first century church.
- b. Summarize the Book of Acts chapter 2 highlighting the major events and share your understanding of them.
- c. What is the difference between addition and multiplication according to the basic arithmetic?

6. Application:

- a. When the Lord takes the responsibility of saving and adding people into your church, what must be your responsibility?
- b. When the Lord takes the responsibility of helping the church grow, what must be the responsibility of the church?
- c. What is your commitment to bring people into God's kingdom, daily/weekly/monthly/annually/periodically?
- d. Being the final lesson, what one thing do you want to remember from the lessons all through your life?

APPENDIX C

Sample Questionnaires

Pre-Test Questionnaire

Introductory remarks:

1. Read and answer all questions carefully to the best of your knowledge, experience and ability.
2. If you need to clarify any part of the question, you may please contact the liaison person or me, as early as possible.
3. Confidentiality will be maintained about all the information, as I have already explained in my personal letter addressed to you, dated...
4. Return the filled-in questionnaire, within 7 days from the date of receipt or on or before...
5. Your co-operation is highly appreciated and valued.

(a) Name (with initials):

(b) Date of Birth: Date... Month... Year...

(c) Sex: Male or female

(d) Educational Qualification:

(e) Place of Employment:

(f) Address for Communication:

(g) Church Affiliation:

(h) Pastor's name (with address):

(i) Period of church membership:

(j) Describe your personal testimony:

(k) Describe your faith journey (success, failure, joyful and sorrowful moments):

- (l) What are your spiritual disciplines such as prayer, devotion, fasting, witnessing and any other? How much time do you set apart for this spiritual exercise?
- (m) Are you involved in your church ministry? Yes or No.
- (n) If yes, describe about it (nature of ministry, weekly or monthly or conveniently or occasionally or annually, time limit, individually or as a family, results if any, draw backs, and other experiences and feelings):
- (o) If no, give reasons (specify):
- (p) Are you involved in ministry outside your church? Yes or No.
- (q) If yes, describe about it (nature of ministry, place of ministry, name of the organization, weekly or monthly or annually or occasionally, time limit, individually or as a family, results if any, draw backs, and other experiences and feelings).
- (r) Do you know your spiritual gift? Yes or No.
- (s) If yes, what is it? When did you discover? Can you describe about the gift? How do you use it?
- (t) If no, do you want to know or discover your gift? Yes or No
- (u) If yes, do you want to use it?
- (v) If no, (why not) give reasons (specify):
- (w) Do you want to covenant to do a self-study group for ten weeks, as I have explained in my personal letter dated...? Yes or No.
- (x) If yes, do you commit to do ministry in and/or outside the church in the future?
- (y) If no, (why not) give reasons (specify)

Mid-Test Questionnaire

Introductory Remarks:

1. Read and answer all questions carefully to the best of your knowledge, experience and ability.
2. If you need to clarify any part of the question, you may please contact the liaison person or me, as quickly as possible.
3. Be open and honest as much as possible.
4. Express your feelings and thoughts as open as possible.
5. Confidentiality will be maintained about all the information that you provide.
6. Return filled-in questionnaire to the liaison person, before the fifth group meeting.
7. Your cooperation is highly appreciated and valued.

? ? What have you learned in the last four weeks from the self-study material?

? ? What specific knowledge have you gained?

? ? What difficulty have you faced?

? ? Did you find the study guide or lesson clear, engaging, motivating, and helpful?

? ? Which group meeting was the most helpful? Why?

? ? Which group meeting was the least helpful? Why?

? ? What has been the motivating or influencing factor during the four weeks?

? ? What are your feelings about this group self-study meeting?

? ? How have you applied and used any of the principles of the first four weeks?

Post-Test Questionnaire

- ? ? Has the self-study material affected you? If yes, in what ways?
- ? ? What specific knowledge have you gained?
- ? ? What attitude has been changed?
- ? ? Did you see the change the way you have thought about ministry?
- ? ? What difficulty have you faced?
- ? ? Did you find the study guide or lesson clear, engaging, motivating, and helpful?
- ? ? Which group meeting was the most helpful? Give reasons.
- ? ? Which group meeting was the least helpful? Give reasons.
- ? ? What has been the motivating or influencing factor during the ten weeks?
- ? ? How would you rate spiritual maturity or growth in a scale of one to five?
- ? ? How has ten weeks study influenced your spiritual life?
- ? ? Have you discovered your spiritual gift? If so, what is it? Have you been to apply or exercise it? Do you see the scope of developing it?
- ? ? Has your passion for ministry increased during the ten weeks?
- ? ? Has your ministry developed and expanded?
- ? ? Was the guide or lesson adequate to meet your spiritual and ministry needs?
- ? ? Did you find the standard of material understandable or too low or too high?
- ? ? What are your suggestions and recommendations about the study guide?
- ? ? Did you share about this study group with anyone during the ten weeks? If so, what have you shared? What was his or her response?
- ? ? Do you recommend this system to someone who has passion for ministry?
- ? ? What specific change in ministry involvement in the church, do you see now since the beginning of the self-study program?

? ? What specific change in ministry involvement outside the church, do you see now since the beginning of the self-study program?

APPENDIX D

Identification of Participants

P. David (M): He was born again in 1962. Since then, he has been growing in the Lord. He is fully involved in ministry inside and outside the local church. He is a High School teacher by profession. He is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. He is chairperson of the Committee on Peace, Discipline, and Reconciliation in the local church.

A. Lettisal David (F): She was born again in 1965. Since then, she has been growing in the Lord. She is involved in prayer ministry. She is an employee of the State Government of Tamil Nadu. She is an active member in the Women's Society of Christian Service in the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras.

D. Esther Jennifer (F): She is a born again Christian. She is involved in youth ministry. She is the President of the Methodist Youth Fellowship in the conference. She is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is a Post-graduate student in a college in Madras.

D. Manickam (M): He was born again in 1972. Since then, he has been growing in the Lord. He was involved in local church ministry. He was the chairperson of the Committee on Stewardship and Finance. He was retired from a private company in May 1999. Since June 2001, he is a full-time evangelist under bishop's appointment in a rural place in the State of Tamil Nadu.

Ebby Manickam (F): She was born again when she was 14 years, in 1958. Since then, she has been growing in the Lord. She is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is involved in the local church ministry through the Women's Society of Christian Service. She is a teacher by profession. She is the Headmistress of a Methodist

School in Madras.

J. Emerald Ruth (F): She is a born Christian. She received Jesus Christ into her heart in Sunday school. She is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is married to a member of the Church of South India. She is working in a private company in Madras. She is involved in local church ministry but not outside the church.

W.V.Henry (M): He is a born again Christian. Since then, he has been growing in the Lord. He is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. He is actively involved in the local church. He is the chairperson of the Committee on Mission and Evangelism. He was retired from a private company in June 1999. Since June 2001, he is doing film ministry in rural areas of Tamil Nadu as an independent evangelist.

R. Esther Rani (F): She is a born again Christian. She is growing in the Lord. She is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is actively involved in the Women's Society of Christian Service in the local church. She is a teacher by profession in a private school.

N. Prabhuraj (M): He was born again when he was 15 years, in 1975. He is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. He is not involved in ministry either inside or outside the local church. He is an employee of the Federal Government, working in Madras.

K. Priscilla Vanazhagi (F): She became a Christian from Hinduism in 1973, and then baptized in 1975. Since then, she has been growing in the Lord. She is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is married to a member of the Church of South India. She is a teacher by profession. She is involved in ministry in the local church, school, and neighborhood.

V. Thomas Gnanasekar (M): He is a born again Christian. He is a member of the Church of South India. He is a lay leader in the local church. He is involved in ministry among the co-workers. He is an employee of the Federal Government, working in Madras.

T. Hannah (F): She is a born again Christian. She is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is a participating member in the Methodist Youth Fellowship in the local church. She is a High School student. She is not involved in ministry.

D. Premkumar (M): He is a born again Christian. He is a member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. He is the treasurer of the local church. He is an employee of the Federal government, working in Madras. He is involved in ministry inside the church.

Malathy Premkumar (F): She is a born again Christian. She is growing in the Lord. She is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is involved in ministry outside the church, and among the non-participating members. She is a teacher by profession, not working.

Jothy Kirubakaran (F): She is a born again Christian. She is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is a missionary, working among non-Christians. She teaches the Sunday school in the local church.

M. Keerthinathan (M): He became a Christian from Hinduism in 1986, and then baptized in 1987. Since then, he has been growing in the Lord. He is an active member of the local church. He is the chairperson of the Committee of Social Concerns. He is involved in ministry inside the church. He is an employee of the State Government of Tamil Nadu.

A. Anna Packiabai (F): She is a born again Christian. She is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church. She is involved in the local church through the Women's Society of Christian Service. She is an employee of the State Government of Tamil Nadu.

Sarojini Immanuel (F): She is a born again Christian. She is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. She is involved in the local church through the Women's Society of Christian Service. She is involved in ministry among the non-Christian children outside the church. She is a teacher by profession, not working.

A. Samuel Smiles (M): He was born again in 1995. Since then, he has been growing in the Lord. He is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. He is the chairperson of the Committee on Music. He is involved in ministry inside the church. He is working for an interdenominational Christian organization in Madras.

Baron Bright Abraham (M): He is a born again Christian. He is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. He is involved in ministry inside the church, occasionally outside the church. He is working for a private company in Madras.

S. Vincent Premkumar (M): He was born again in 1982. Since then, he has been growing in the Lord. He is an active member of the Methodist Tamil Church, Madras. He is involved in the local church ministry. He is working for the church as a full-time accountant.

Amali Vincent (F): She became a Protestant (Methodist) Christian from Roman Catholicism. She is a daughter of a Methodist (retired) Pastor. She is a full-time deaconess in the conference. She is involved in ministry among non-Christian women. She is working as the Headmistress of a Methodist School for differently abled children.

APPENDIX E**A Sample Testimony [Translated from Tamil]****(D. Manickam)**

I was born again in 1972. Since then, I have been growing in the Lord. I am involved in the local church outreach ministry during the weekend since 1982. After retirement from a private company, I made a decision that I must work for the Lord full-time because of many reasons. (1) All my three daughters are married and settled. My wife is working in a Methodist School. (2) God has given me good health and strength even after my retirement. (3) I have the gifts of praying, story telling, and evangelizing.

As I was in dilemma about the time to go for full-time ministry of evangelism, the ten lessons from Pastor Sam Royappa have confirmed my decision to work for the Lord full-time. Further, the lessons have urged me to go immediately because evangelism is the need of the hour every where in India. The lessons have greatly affected me. They have changed my attitude towards my neighbors. They have given me new understanding of church and ministry. They have confirmed my gifts and helped me to discover new gifts of leadership and healing. Finally, the lessons have urged me to do the full-time ministry in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu. I strongly felt the leading of the Spirit to become an evangelist. I have clearly understood who are my neighbors and what are my responsibilities to them.

Lessons 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 touched and inspired me so much. The group discussion and reflection were useful. Though we could not meet together for all the ten lessons, we touch based and communicated with each other regularly. I am thankful to my team members.

APPENDIX F

A Sample Group Report (Translated from Tamil)

We meet once a week for ninety minutes. We meet at different group members' homes. We begin and close with prayer. We share our joy and concerns for prayer. We take turns to lead in prayer. We share our ministry involvement during the weekdays.

We go over the entire lesson point by point. One of us read the Scripture text. We rotate leadership for leading the group. We spend lot of time in reflection and practical questions. It has been a difficult task for all of us to come up with a specific plan for the following week. Yet, we do our best sharing our thoughts and putting some concrete and feasible plan in place for the next week. We always desire to do something for Jesus Christ. Our passion for doing ministry outside the church has increased in the midst of discouragement and challenges.

We have our own failures. We are not able to do ministry as a team. We talk about it but due to unavoidable circumstances, it has not worked out. We feel disappointed. Another failure is that we are not able to motivate other members in our congregation to become part of this study. The lessons have really challenged us to leave our comfort zone and go to the people.

We want to thank our pastor Rev. Samuel Royappa for guiding us in these ten lessons. We recommend that these study materials may be published and made available to all our local churches in the conference. We have not done a lot in response to the lessons but we commit ourselves to do more in the days to come.

APPENDIX G

A Model Curriculum for Training Teachers

An introduction will include a survey of educational institutions in the state of Tamilnadu, in the city of Chennai, with classification of teachers and students on the basis of religions as primary potential targets, and the estimated population of parents as secondary potential target for evangelism.

Lesson 1 will give the summary of the biblical understanding of Church and ministry and the prevailing challenges to do evangelism in a multireligious society.

Lesson 2 will lay the foundations for the lay men and women in the local churches to reach out to the homogeneous groups in the society and the readily available avenues for different professional groups, specifically the teachers.

Lesson 3 will portray Jesus Christ as a great teacher-evangelist from the gospels and his methods of evangelizing the first twelve students and other students by miracles and parables.

Lesson 4 will focus on reaching out to the parents through the lens of students, taking examples from the Bible and history.

Lesson 5 will bring out the principles of human relations, primarily between teacher and student, teacher and teacher, and teacher and parents. The lesson will also address issues like freedom of religion, uniqueness of the Christian gospel, and limitations of teaching.

Lesson 6 will have the dynamics of teachers being the positive influencers in the institution without posing a threat to the management and their position or their employment.

Lesson 7 will provide the various ministry opportunities among the non-Christian students, co-teachers, neighborhood children, and parents and the methods or strategies for organizing such ministries in and outside the school/college premises.

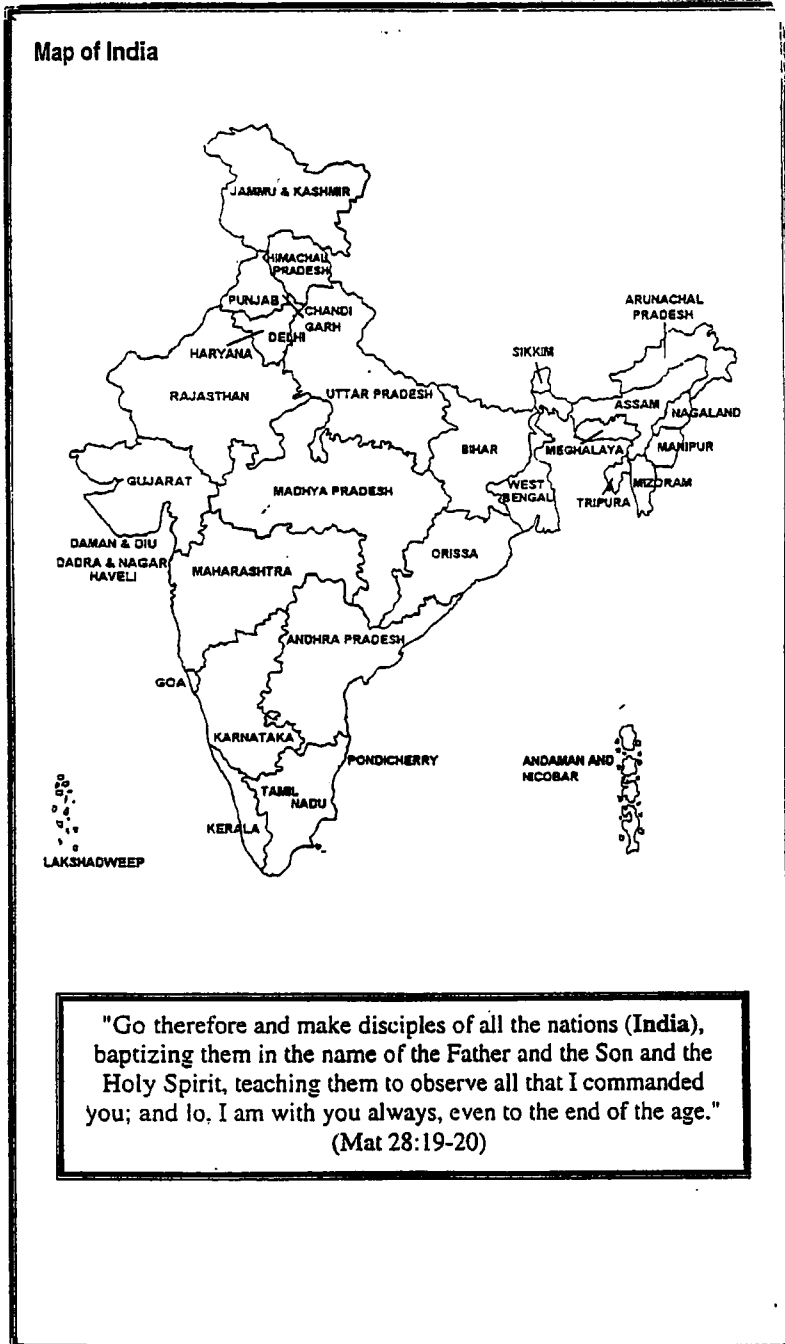
Lesson 8 will have a theological definition of all the spiritual gifts and a detailed inventory of them. The lesson will highlight the specific gifts related to the school or college ministries.

Lesson 9 will have materials for organizing support groups among the Christian teachers who are involved in the ministry of evangelism. The lesson will also have ideas and principles to motivate other Christian teachers to do ministry among the targeted population.

Lesson 10 will bring out the basic follow up elements for the receptive new converts-their growth, their baptism, and their relationship with the local church. The lesson will also address the social and cultural implications in the process of becoming disciples in the local church.

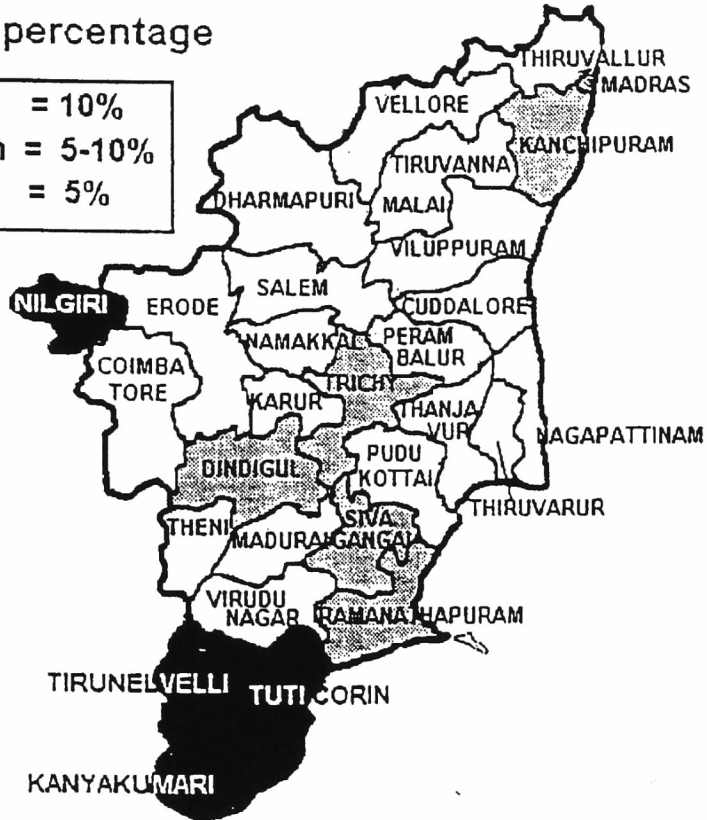
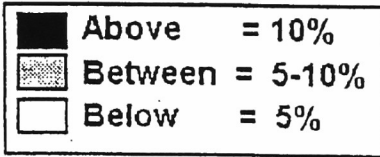
APPENDIX H

Maps of India, Tamil Nadu, and Madras (Chennai)

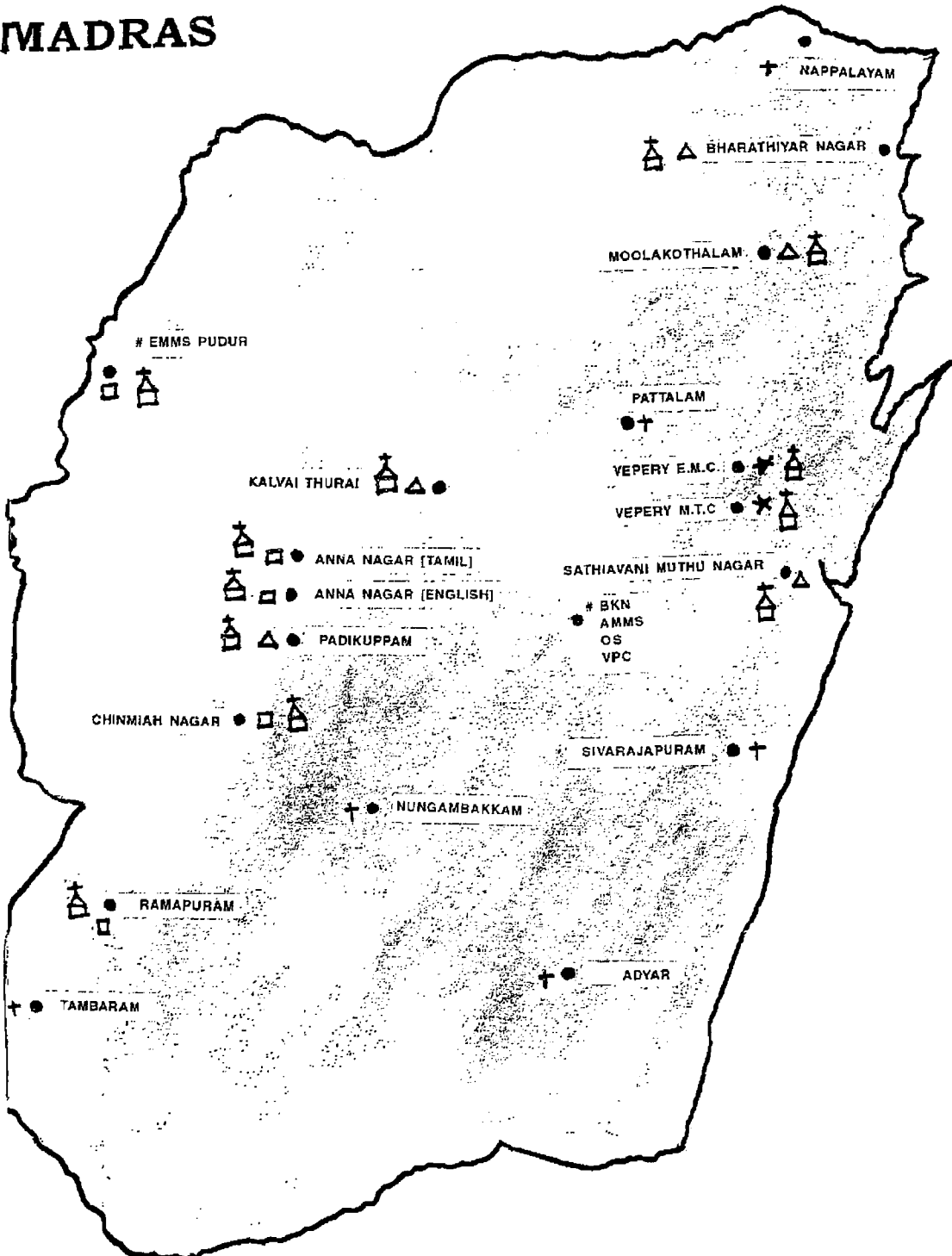


Tamil Nadu

Christians percentage



MADRAS



WORKS CITED

- Albert, Vasantharaj. "The Challenge Before Us." Inside Madras 1.1 (Sept. 1994): 1.
- "Empowering Leaders." Echo of Madras 3.8 (August 1998): 1.
- Aquinas, St. Thomas. Commentary on Ephesians. Albany: Magi Books, 1966.
- Athyal, Saphir. "The Water of Life in an Indian Cup." 272.
- Ayres, Francis O. The Ministry of the Laity. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1962.
- Barker, Kenneth. ed. The NIV Study Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.
- Bow, Russell. The Integrity of Church Membership. Waco: Word, 1968.
- Brown, Collin. The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- Bryant, Charles V. Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts. Nashville: Upper Room, 1991.
- Cho, David Yonggi. "Church Growth for the New Millennium." Church growth. 21.1 (Spring 2000): 4
- Clemmons, Robert S. Education for Churchmanship. Nashville: Abingdon, 1966.
- Congar, Yves M. J. Lay People in the Church. Maryland: Newman, 1963.
- Detwiler-Zapp, Diane, and William Caveness Dixon. Lay Caregiving. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.
- Dunnam, Maxie D. "The Nature of the Church and Christian Discipleship." Asbury Theological Seminary, Chapel Preaching. Wilmore, KY, 9 Nov. 1999.
- Eastwood, Cyril. The Priesthood of All Believers. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1962.
- Edge, Findley B. The Greening of the Church. Waco: Word, 1971.
- Feucht, Oscar E. Everyone Minister. London: Concordia, 1974.
- Firth, Cyril Bruce. An Introduction to Indian Church History. Serampore, India: Christian Literature Service, 1976.
- Galloway, Dale E. 20/20 Vision. Portland, Oregon: Scott Publishing, 1997.
- "Leadership Development." Lecture to Beeson Pastor Program. Asbury Theological Seminary. Wilmore, KY. March 2000.

- Garlow, James L. Partners in Ministry. Kansas: Beacon Hill, 1981.
- Ghurya, Govind S. Caste and Race in India. Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1999.
- Gibbs, Mark. God's Frozen People. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965.
- Green, Michael. I Believe in the Holy Spirit. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975.
- Grimes, Howard. The Rebirth of the Laity. Nashville: Abingdon, 1962.
- Hadden, Jeffrey K. The Gathering Storm in the Churches. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969.
- Hedlund, Roger. "Confronting Caste." 261-62.
- Hinsen, E. Glenn. The Church: Design for Survival. Nashville: Broadman, 1967.
- Hodensee, Donald and Allen Odell. Your Spiritual Gifts. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1992.
- Hodge, Charles. A Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians. London: Banner of Truth and Trust, 1964.
- Hunter, George G. III. Church for the Unchurched. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996.
- Kelley, Alden D. The People of God. Connecticut: Seabury, 1962.
- Kim, Bishop Sundo. Kwanglim Methodist Church.
- Kinghorn, Kenneth Cain. Gifts of the Spirit. Nashville: Abingdon, 1976.
- Kittle, Gerhard, et al. Unabridged Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Oak Harbor: Lagos Research Systems, 2000.
- Koenig, John. Charismata: God's Gifts for God's People. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978.
- Kraemer, Hendrick. A Theology of the Laity. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958.
- Kung, Hans. Why Priests. New York: Doubleday, 1972.
- Lal, James C., ed. The Book of the Discipline of the Methodist Church in India. Lucknow, India: Lucknow Publishing House, 1994.
- Lindsay, Gordan. Gifts of the Spirit. Vol. 1. Dallas: Christ for the Nations, 1977.
- MacGorman, Jack W. The Gifts of the Spirit. Nashville: Broadman, 1974.

- Mains, David R. Full Circle: The Creative Church for Today's Society. Waco: Word Books, 1971.
- Manoharan, J. K. "Strategy for the Church." Echo of Madras 3.9 (September 1998): 2.
- Manuel, Vimala. Inthia Thiruchabai Thondur Part 1 (Indian Church Servant). Tirunelveli, India: Tirunelveli Diocesan Press, 1962.
- Mathew, K. M. ed. Manorama Year Book 1999. Kottayam, India: Malayala Manorama, 1999.
- Matthew, Bishop James. Preaching at the General Conference of the Methodist Church in India. Madras, India. May 1990
- McGavran, Donald. "Discipling without Dismantling the Tribe, Tongue and People." 254-259.
- Understanding Church Growth. Madras, India: Evangelical Literature Service, 1972.
- Menking, Stanley J. Helping Laity Help Others. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.
- Minear, Paul S. Images of the Church in the New Testament. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- Oden, Thomas C. Pastoral Theology. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1983.
- Olson, Harriet Jane. ed. The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2000. Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 2000.
- Ogden, Greg. The New Reformation. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.
- Perspectives on World Missions. Bangalore, India: Good News Printers, 1998.
- Peterson, Eugene H. The Message. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1995.
- Poling, David. The Last Years of the Church. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969.
- Powers, Bruce P. Christian Leadership. Nashville: Broadman, 1979.
- Pytches, David. Spiritual Gifts in the Local Church. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1985.
- Rajan, A. C. "What Has Happened to Our Churches?" Echo of Madras 3.2 (Feb. 1998): 1.
- Ramsay William M. Cycles of Renewal: Trends in Protestant Lay Education. Nashville: Abingdon, 1969.
- Robinson, J. A. T. Layman's Church. London: Lutterworth, 1963.

- Royappa, Samuel. "The Methodist Church in Madras." Echo of Madras 1.4 (Mar. 1996): 3.
- Samuel, Tony E. Tamil Nadu: Before the Throne of God. Madras: Udayam Offset Printers, 1999.
- Sanders, J. O. The Holy Spirit and His Gifts. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982.
- Sargunam, Ezra. "Understanding Dr. MacGavran." India Church Growth Quarterly 5.2 (July-Sept. 1998): 1-2.
- Schaller, Lyle E. "Seven Characteristics of Growing Churches."
- Schwarz, Christian A. Natural Church Development. Carol Stream, IL: Church Smart Resources, 1998.
- Paradigm Shift in the Church. Carol Stream, IL: Church Smart Resources, 1999.
- Smart, James D. The Rebirth of Ministry. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.
- The Teaching Ministry of the Church. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969.
- Snyder, Howard A. Liberating the Church. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983.
- Stedman, Ray C. Body Life: The Church Comes Alive. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1981.
- Steinborn, Melvin J. Can the Pastor Do It Alone. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1987.
- The Lay-Driven Church. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1987.
- Stott, John. The Message of Ephesians. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1979.
- One People. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1968.
- Toler, Stan. ed. Minister's Little Instruction Book. Tulsa, Oklahoma: Honor Books, 1994.
- Trueblood, Elton. Your Other Vocation. New York: Harper and Row, 1952.
- Vijayakumar, David. "The Missiological Principles of John Wesley and Their Relevance to the Methodist Churches in Bangalore City." Diss., Serampore U, 1998.
- Wagner, C. Peter. Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1979.
- Walker, Daniel. Enemy in the Pew? New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Warren, Rick. "Moving Members to Ministers." The Saddleback Valley Community Church Conference. Los Angeles, California, 1999.

--- The Purpose Driven Church. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

Webster, Douglas. Local Church and World Mission. New York: Seabury, 1964.

Williams, Theodore. Servants of the Cross. Bombay, India: GLS Press, 1988.

Worley, Robert. Change in the Church: A Source of Hope. Philadelphia: Westminster.

WORKS CONSULTED

- Bucy, Ralph D. The New Laity. Texas: Word Books, 1978.
- Campbell, Ernest R. A Commentary on Ephesians. Silverton, OR: Canyonview, 1986.
- Criswell, W. A. Ephesians: an Exposition. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974.
- Fernando, Ajith. Leadership Lifestyle. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1985.
- Fischer, Wallace A. From Tradition to Mission. Nashville: Abingdon, 1965.
- George, Carl F. The Coming Church Revolution. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1995.
- Prepare Your Church for the Future. Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 1992.
- Hendrix, Olan. Management for the Christian Leader. Milford, MI: Motto Media, 1982
- Holsinger, James W. Jr., and Evelyn Laycock. Awaken the Giant. Nashville: Abingdon, 1989.
- Lueker, Erwin. Change and the Church. St. Louis: Concordia, 1969.
- Maxwell, John C. Developing the Leaders around You. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995.
- Developing the Leader within You. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1993.
- McKenna, David L. Power to Follow Grace to Lead. Dallas: Word Publishing, 1989.
- Pearman, Roger R. Hard Wired. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black, 1998.
- Rajendren, K., and John Amalraj K., eds. Where Are the Indian Leaders? Delhi: New Life Printers, 2000.
- Richard, Lawrence O., and Clyde Hoeldtke. A Theology of Church Leadership. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1980.
- Schaller, Lyle E., and Charles A. Tidwell. Creative Church Administration. Nashville: Abingdon, 1975.
- Wuest, Kenneth. Ephesians and Colossians in the Greek New Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953.

