

## **ABSTRACT**

### **A PROJECT FOR EVANGELISM BY THE CHURCHES IN THE POST-COMMUNIST REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**By Kitan Petreski**

After spending twenty years in ministry under communist regime in Macedonia as a republic in former Yugoslavia, a decision came to undertake this project as an initiative to the evangelistic program. This project comes as a result of a great disappointment in the lack of evangelism in the churches in Macedonia. In developing this project new ways and possibilities of evangelism were found that would draw the attention of people to Christianity and press on to deeper commitment to the church. This project aimed to help in finding new and better ways of communicating with unchurched people and opening the possibilities to preach them the gospel and make them disciples of Jesus. This research material will help many pastors and evangelists in reaching people, making them disciples of Jesus and active Christians in the life of the church.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled  
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POST-COMMUNIST REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

presented by  
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A PROJECT FOR EVANGELISM BY THE CHURCHES IN THE  
POST-COMMUNIST REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of  
Asbury Theological Seminary

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

by  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>LIST OF TABLES.....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 PROBLEM .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Understanding of the Problem.....	1
Purpose of the Project .....	7
Research Questions .....	7
Research Question #1.....	7
Research Question #2.....	7
Definition of Evangelism.....	8
Ministry Intervention.....	9
Context of the Study.....	10
Methodology.....	12
Participants.....	13
Instrumentation.....	14
Variable.....	14
Data Collection.....	16
Delimitations and Generalizability.....	17
Theological Foundation.....	17
Overview of the Dissertation.....	19

<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE.....</b>	<b>20</b>
Precedents in the Literature.....	20
Biblical Review.....	20
Old Testament Foundations.....	23
New Testament Evangelism.....	28
Description of Evangelism.....	33
Evangelism as a Spiritual Gift.....	36
Evangelism as a Common Duty.....	41
Evangelism as a Fruit of Love.....	43
Motives for Evangelism.....	46
Conclusion.....	50
Historical Overview.....	51
Cultural Differences.....	63
Evangelistic Strategy of the Church in Macedonia.....	77
Mobilizing Laity.....	79
Ways of Evangelism.....	84
Biblical Evangelism.....	85
Persuasive Evangelism.....	85
Life Application Evangelism.....	87
Conclusion.....	88
Research Methods.....	90

<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	92
Description of the Project.....	92
Research Questions.....	98
Research Question # 1.....	98
Research Question # 2.....	98
Population and Sample.....	99
Instrumentation.....	99
Design of the Study.....	100
Data Collection.....	103
Methodology.....	104
Reliability and Validity.....	109
Data Analysis.....	110
Generalizability.....	111
<b>CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS</b> .....	112
Profile of Participants.....	112
Research Question # 1.....	115
Research Question # 2.....	129
Summary of Significant Findings.....	139
<b>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION</b> .....	140
Major findings.....	140
Understanding of Evangelism.....	140
The Role of Preaching and Music.....	142
Training for Effective Evangelism.....	143

The Attitude of Laypeople Toward Cross-Denominational Evangelism.....	143
Effective Approach to Unchurched People.....	145
Freedom as a Great Opportunity for Evangelism.....	148
Catching the Interest of all Generations through Both Traditional and Contemporary Styles.....	149
Implications of Findings and Practical Application.....	150
Weaknesses of the Study.....	152
Recommendations for Further Study.....	152
Conclusion.....	153
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	
A. Evangelism Activity Survey Letter and Survey.....	156
B. Mid-Project Survey.....	159
C. Post-Project Survey.....	161
D. Letter of Invitation to All Denominations in the Republic of Macedonia.....	164
E. Book of Minutes.....	166
F. Training Material for the Laity Seminar.....	180
G. Letters to Advertisement Companies.....	181
H. Chronology of the Project.....	183
<b>WORKS CITED.....</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>WORKS CONSULTED.....</b>	<b>195</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

4.1.	Age of Survey Participants.....	114
4.2.	Gender of Survey Participants.....	114
4.3.	Pre-Project Survey Question 1.....	116
4.4.	Pre-Project Survey Question 2.....	116
4.5.	Pre-Project Survey Question 3.....	117
4.6.	Pre-Project Survey Question 4.....	117
4.7.	Pre-Project Survey Question 5.....	118
4.8.	Pre-Project Survey Question 6.....	119
4.9.	Pre-Project Survey Question 7.....	120
4.10.	Pre-Project Survey Question 8.....	120
4.11	Pre-Project Survey Question 9.....	121
4.12.	Pre-Project Survey Question 9.....	121
4.13.	Pre-Project Survey Question 10.....	122
4.14.	Pre-project Survey Question 11.....	123
4.15.	Mid-Project Survey Question 1.....	124
4.16.	Mid-Project Survey Question 2.....	124
4.17.	Mid-Project Survey Question 3.....	125
4.18.	Mid-Project Survey Question 4.....	125
4.19.	Mid-Project Survey Question 5.....	126
4.20.	Mid-Project Survey Question 6.....	127
4.21.	Mid-Project Survey Question 7.....	127
4.22.	Mid-Project Survey Question 8.....	128

4.23.	Mid-Project Survey Question 9.....	128
4.24.	Mid-Project Survey Question 10.....	129
4.25.	Post-Project Survey Question 1.....	130
4.26.	Post-Project Survey Question 2.....	130
4.27.	Post-Project Survey Question 3.....	131
4.28.	Post-Project Survey Question 4.....	132
4.29.	Post-Project Survey Question 5.....	133
4.30.	Post-Project Survey Question 6.....	133
4.31.	Post-Project Survey Question 7.....	134
4.32.	Post-Project Survey Question 8.....	135
4.33.	Post-Project Survey Question 9.....	136
4.34.	Post-Project Survey Question 10.....	136
4.35.	Post-Project Survey Question 11.....	137
4.36.	Participant Age in the Surveys.....	139

## LIST OF FIGURES

4.1. Activity in Completing the Project Surveys.....	113
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## CHAPTER 1

### PROBLEM

#### Understanding the Problem

Wherever the Church spreads its message, Christians ask questions for clarification and better understanding regarding the development of Christianity. My ministry experience working under an atheistic regime developed in me a greater desire to focus on spreading the good news among the people of my nation. Under the Communist regime, evangelism was not easily achievable. Together with other pastors, I tried to keep the congregation alive. Evangelism was not allowed outside the specially registered church building and membership of the existing church. As a result, every action of the church was controlled by the secret police and restricted by the authorities in a scrupulous way.

During Communism's atheistic rule in Macedonia, limited worship services were the only way to express the Christian faith. Calling for repentance from the pulpit was insufficient since sharing the joy of repentance with others was impossible. Consequently, repentance and the evidence of joy were not manifested due to fear of secret agents acting as tools of the regime for persecution.

These limitations happened in most countries experiencing communist rule. Rachel Sing-Kiat Ting and Terry Watson describe the life of Chinese Christians under communist persecution. Ting and Watson say, "When Chinese Christians chose to stand firm for their faith, they risked losing everything dear to them" (206). Richard J. Nyberg describes the results of communist rule in Former East Germany. He says, "The people were dechristianized atheistically and also materially influenced, and their faith was

systematically attacked and suppressed” (1). Nyberg claims that the churches do not have the same strength and love as those in the Western side in Germany. The churches are not only irrecoverable in their physical look, but the believers in those churches are mainly adults. Few or no young people attend the churches; therefore, evangelism in and out of the church is necessary (1).

Peter Moreé describes how the Romanian Orthodox Church claims it is a national church and no other church or Christian denomination should exist:

Romanian law calls the Romanian Orthodox Church the national church, without making it explicit what this exactly means, but suggesting that it has certain privileges. Other churches are foreign to the nation and as such are secondary to the state, or so it seems to be the message. Accordingly, new religious groups, often Protestants, are depicted as sects, potentially dangerous to public spiritual health. (292)

Because of this treatment, Protestant churches could not develop evangelistic activities that would bring the local people to know Christ. The Orthodox Church in most Communist countries was used by the authorities or respected presidents for political reasons, forbidding any other action of the church.

President Tito manipulated the Serbian and Macedonian Orthodox churches in order to fulfill his communist political ideas:

This step was supported by the communist regime under the leadership of Tito, who had several reasons to be interested in the independence of the MOC [Macedonian Orthodox Church]. It would weaken the power and influence of the SOC [Serbian Orthodox Church] in communist

Yugoslavia and it would also weaken the position of the Serbs within the framework of the country. An autocephalous Macedonian church would support the existence of the republic of Macedonia in the federal Yugoslavia of Tito. (Moreé 291)

Being engaged in political and nationalistic tendencies, the Orthodox Church did not undertake any spiritual evangelistic activities among people.

The Orthodox Church, using its political authority, did not allow any other Christian denomination to develop its work in evangelism. Its authority was used to the point of persecuting the Protestant church and declared it as a sect or antinational organization. The Orthodox Church used the police to stop the development of other churches in the country in collaboration with the state authorities.

In addition, Moreé describes the real situation of the nation after the fall of Communism:

Religious communities lived behind the walls of a ghetto that kept them away from the sight of the people, especially of the younger generation.

One or two generations grew up with hardly any knowledge of the content of religion, about Christianity or any other religion. (294)

The problem caused by these communities was the reduced awareness of Christianity and increased ignorance of any spiritual quality. This problem led me to develop this project for evangelism in Macedonia.

Keith Clements describes the situation in post-Communist countries as discouraging because of the damage Communism left behind its cruel atheistic rule. As a result, most churches in Eastern Europe are struggling to recover and develop their work.

Evangelism is very important and probably the only way for revival and spread of the gospel to the young generation:

It is impossible to build partnerships between congregations without also entering into the social and cultural milieus in which they live. We can witness to what being European today requires by setting example of mutual learning about each other's religious, national, political and cultural contexts. (318)

Although Macedonia is multiethnic country, people can come together and do evangelism by sharing similarities and differences. In spite of the difficulty of evangelism in post-Communist region, Christian approach is to come together, share the similarities and differences, and invite all churches in the country to come together and make plans for evangelism. Both similarities and differences are important ties through which Christians learn to understand those who come in contact with them through evangelism. Clement classifies the twentieth century as a "century of martyrdom," and shows that "religions and churches had also failed during this time" (316). The church in general was under pressure in different ways and suffering circumstances from communist regime, from aggression of other religions, and from secularism.

Hans Maier also describes the post-Communist situation as a return from an exile for the Christian churches in Europe. He describes that the Communist regime left ruins behind in the religious society, although church leaders tended to collaborate among themselves. Maier says, "The fall of the totalitarian regime had left behind a scene of devastation. Destruction, guilt, and entanglements, a loss of confidence in all human relationships, had become apparent" (9). Maier signifies that the churches in Europe have

a great duty and privilege to develop a new society in a united Europe, not only politically but also spiritually, dependent only on how much the churches would use the granted political freedom to develop their message and present Christian qualities to all people.

Billy Graham in his article “Recovering the Primacy of Evangelism” shows the challenges for evangelism in the new century by describing that urbanization and rapid growth of the population in the world hinders Christian development. The appearance of secularism brought even greater destruction to the world. Secularism has become so aggressive that it distances people from getting closer to knowing the truth about Christ:

One of the most discouraging historical trends over the last century has been the “de-Christianization” of many former Christian strongholds (particularly in Europe) because of the massive onslaught of secularism. Likewise, we can’t assume that most people living in former communist nations of Eastern Europe will necessarily abandon their secular outlook, even if they have jettisoned its Marxist trappings. (28)

Communists used secularism as a weapon to turn the attention of young people from Christianity to atheism. If evangelism would not bring Christian denominations closer in an effort to spread the word of Christ, secularism will continue to destroy nations. The church is also encouraged to undertake evangelism as its primary duty especially in the post-Communist world. Graham says, “A church that has lost sight of the priority of evangelism has lost its primary calling under God” (30). Churches in Macedonia face challenges because of the lack of passion for God and the lack of evangelism. The church in all its existence will only prosper when it undertakes evangelistic efforts. These efforts

are contrary to the expectation of the world outside the Church. The world is concerned with materialism only and expects the Church to fulfill its duty in being socially and economically engaged in society.

During its rule, Communism instigated a war among religious groups and hatred toward each other. Tito wanted to keep Yugoslavia as a unique country in Socialist-Communism only by physical force and educational Communist ideology. His motto (as in most Eastern countries) was “separate and rule.” Vjekoslav Perica describes this war among the religious groups in Yugoslavia as “an excuse of Tito and the Communists that religious groups cannot live together and they are not prepared to build the nations together and keep the federation united, but to separate” (175). Therefore, any evangelistic activities of the churches or Christian religious groups were indirectly prohibited and impossible.

Perica describes that “traditional religious institutions found it hard to legitimize such regimes, so the term ‘civil religion’ actually refers to more benign systems tolerant of all faiths as well as of nonbelief” (x). The so-called “civil religion” is an expression Perica uses to describe the excuse Tito used for freedom of belief and the separation of church and state. The church in this case could work freely but not in public. Religious expression was a private act of individual groups of people. The state authorities were responsible to control and moderate their actions.

Judith Smart describes the need for evangelism after seeing the crowds gathered during the evangelistic crusades in Australia in 1950s (165). She especially notes the presence and involvement of the mass media in the evangelistic process. Smart says, “In the twentieth century, the mass media, too, has been seen as complicit in the process of

constructing, reconstructing and manipulating images, individuals and audiences” (169). Smart, especially in mass evangelism, sees a great possibility of revival given the right time and place. Smart recognizes Graham as a star in this situation, positively impacting the society at an important moment in the period of its transformation in the 1950s. The experience with Graham’s crusades around the world gives the impression that mass evangelism can have a great impact when done at the right time, place, and culture, making Christianity known and important to the prospective generation.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this research project was to determine the most effective forms of evangelism as a result of evangelistic training with four evangelical churches in post-Communist Macedonia.

### **Research Questions**

The research sought to answer the following questions.

#### **Research Question #1**

What was the level of understanding of Christian evangelism among the pastors and lay participants in the four Macedonian churches and regions prior to, during, and after the evangelistic training and interventions?

#### **Research Question #2**

In light of the findings identified by question one, what were the most effective methods for engendering practical evangelism in the former Yugoslavia, in general, and in Macedonia, in particular?

### **Definition of Evangelism**

For a long time after Communism's fall, Christians in Macedonia asked what evangelism was. Defining *evangelism* in a culturally appropriate manner leads pastors to divide the world according to different societies and cultures. William Abraham limits his definition of evangelism according to American society. Abraham writes, "Evangelism is that set of intentional activities which is governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time" (95). Robert W. Yarbrough defines evangelism as the following: "It is God's act of working through believers empowered by the Holy Spirit to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to every person and people group with the purpose to persuade the lost to come to salvation." These definitions provide the key for understanding evangelism in post-Communist society. In this society I found that people count themselves as Christians even when they have not grown fully to understand their faith.

For this project I included as part of evangelization effort Balkan societies and cultures acquainted with Christianity as well as societies and cultures belonging to other religions. Under Communism, Balkan nations were forced to declare atheism although they still maintained belief in religious qualities. The former Yugoslavia consisted of the following Balkan countries: Macedonia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia. John T. S. Madeley describes the secularization as destructive phenomena that appeared from European liberal democracy. Madeley says, "However, at no time has secularization become so comprehensive as to obliterate the Christian stripe in European culture, as this has been carried around the world and implanted in other continents" (8).

Madeley describes the situation of Christianity in Europe that reflects in its entire region and in post-Communist countries in particular; thus, the evangelism in such situations brought nominal Christians back to the base of Christian belief. Christians renewed their unity with Christ and stood firm in faith as members of the kingdom of God. For the purposes of this study, I accepted Western scholars' consideration that evangelism is convincing people of their sin and bringing them into God's kingdom through repentance.

As a definition for this project, I determined that evangelism is the Holy Spirit's act for pastors and laypeople in the church to provide easier understanding of Christian qualities, for nonbelievers to accept Christianity as a living and dynamic religion that gives answer to all spiritual questions of every individual and every society.

### **Ministry Intervention**

After the committee on evangelism agreed to approve my project on evangelism, the letter to the churches and clergy was sent. Their response to the letter was a sign for making the first selection of the clergy who responded. The committee selected four clergy to be the *core team* for helping me in overseeing and organizing the project. I worked hard with the core team on organizing the training seminar for laypeople who would participate in the project. The core team and I organized groups of laypeople to visit homes by going and making door-to-door contacts, inviting people to the evangelistic meetings.

This project studied a series of evangelistic interventions with four churches using pre-project, mid-project, and post-project questionnaires in order to determine the best way of evangelism in the churches and their responses the message presented to them.

The first evangelistic intervention occurred in the beginning of the year 2005 when pastors and volunteering members of four churches in Macedonia undertook the project activities I organized with the core team. The members of the four churches were ready to cooperate and attended the pre-project seminar.

At the end of the seminar, the members of the four churches took evangelistic materials for distribution and accepted full cooperation with the core team of four pastors as their group leaders. These activities took place mostly in the cities and towns where no congregations of the Christian denominations included in the project existed. The four churches led by their pastors as a core team supplemented their best contribution to the project with their voluntary activities. These churches contributed to the project by visiting and witnessing to nonbelievers, distributing evangelistic literature, contributing to evangelistic services, and supporting the needs of the whole evangelistic project.

I encouraged the core team to participate and oversee the project's progress. Four surveys in this project were the measure of the project's success. The surveys' results indicated the best implication of new conditions for determining the best methods of evangelism in post-Communist Yugoslavia and Macedonia in particular.

### **Context of the Study**

Determining the evangelistic work in Macedonia was rather difficult considering the multiethnic background of the country. Even after the end of the 550-year rule of the Ottoman Empire in Macedonia, a larger group of Muslim Turks still remains. The feudalistic Ottoman Empire moved different ethnicities in the region in order to work the land of the feudalists. As a result Egyptians, Romanians, Albanians, and other ethnic

groups live in the country. These different ethnicities speak mostly their native languages, which makes evangelism harder.

Communism in Yugoslavia undertook a special action to increase literacy in all of its republics. As a result, the literacy of the population in Macedonia, according to the census in 2002, is 96 percent. Even after the fall of Communism the literacy was the biggest concern of the government. During the Communist rule, Russian was taught in schools as an obligatory foreign language. After the fall of Communism, the government organized the teaching of German, English, and French. As a result the younger generation is more connected to the Western countries and is more familiar with the experiences of Christianity. Looking at the educational status of the Macedonian nation, the percentage of well educated people is still small. According to the census of 2002, only 10 percent of the population has a college degree. Due to a high unemployment rate, most of those educated people immigrated to the Western countries, searching for a better life.

One of the greatest problems that hinders evangelism is the poverty among people. The economic transition brought many to the poverty line. Since over 45 percent of the country's working population is unemployed, the average family income is very low. Pavel Hanes describes poverty as a possibility for presenting the gospel:

The poor receiving alms may still remain poor, but they know of God's care in the present, and they look to the Kingdom of God that is coming. The purpose of giving material aid is kerugmatik, to convey a message. (2, 58).

Hanes describes that poverty opens the door for presenting the gospel although it would not solve the existing material problem of the poor.

As a start, the only possible way to develop evangelism in such situation is to create a humanitarian organization that helps people in their material needs. The core team and I registered at the government of Macedonia a humanitarian organization, rented the storage facilities and invited voluntaries for distribution of the materials to churches and individuals. This humanitarian organization was connected to the Croatian evangelical Church and it worked as a nonprofit organization, helping people and connecting them with the church through evangelism.

During the project people came to evangelistic meetings from far distances on foot. Very few motor vehicles were available. In this project the seminar participants and four pastors had to reach people in their places and homes in order to invite them for evangelism. These demographics show that people in Macedonia have a great potential of receiving the evangelistic message and responding positively. Compared to some Western countries, however, Macedonia is still far behind in its demographics. These circumstances hinder people from searching for possibilities to overcome their everyday difficulties and become more receptive to the evangelistic message.

### **Methodology**

To accomplish the intended work of evangelism in Macedonia, this project encompassed several methods in its approach. I have chosen to work on the method of organizing more people and organizations to work collectively in the project including, in an effort for evangelism, different denominations and people within the respective churches. In this project I included participants, instruments, and teams who would work

on data collection and data analysis. I used three surveys through the project. The surveys were the method for development of the project that gave clear results. I used personal interviews, individual, and group observations, and team reports as methods for development of this project. They helped me in many ways in the progress and conclusions of the project.

### **Participants**

The core team consisted of four pastors who volunteered to lead their respective church members to participate in the project. The core team invited volunteers of various ages from their responsive churches. The core team accepted those volunteers after receiving good standing approval from the pastors or other members of their churches. The voluntary participants to the project came from different ethnic backgrounds. Some participants were converts from other religions (mostly Muslims) to Christianity. This background of the members allowed easier understanding of the gospel to people from other religions.

The laypeople as participants to the project contributed a great part in development of the communication, distribution and collection of the evangelistic materials. The people were from different ethnic backgrounds, mostly Macedonians, Albanians, and Gypsies. The core team invited volunteers from the four churches according to members' personal abilities to go and reach people from a wide variety of ethnicities and life stages, including retired or handicapped persons, children and youth, workers and leaders in factories, and homeless people.

In order to evangelize children, young people, and adults, the core team prepared a variety of evangelistic outreaches with persons adequate for these special tasks. Some

of the volunteers served as lay workers in their respective churches. Each church's number of participants varied according to the membership of the churches, but the overall sample size included ninety-four participants.

### **Instrumentation**

During this project's research, I used some instruments that helped to explain the project more clearly and better analyze the collected data for this research. Those instruments were the pre-project, mid-project, and post-project questionnaires. I also used the interviews with individuals in order to help the development of the project.

### **Variables**

This project consisted of eight variables. The first variable measured the participating churches' willingness to cooperate in evangelism in their cities during this project's time frame as represented by their pastors who agreed to work together in the project. These churches advertised the project in their respective areas. The second variable featured literature prepared for the evangelistic outreaches throughout the project. The literature served as an important and practical tool in reaching people, introducing the gospel, and assisting in their conversion.

The third variable consisted of the churches from abroad supporting the project. The churches from overseas supported the project through prayers as well as with materials (sending food and clothing through the Samaritan's Purse, Agape, Light in the East (LIO), and with financial help as well to support the printing of books and Bibles. The cooperation of the Western churches greatly supported the project of evangelism in the Macedonian churches. The participation of overseas churches and organizations made the project an international event.

The fourth variable consisted of people who attended the evangelistic meetings. This interest resulted from prayers, witnessing, counseling, and humanitarian support from Western Christians and churches. These people exhibited interest and desire to know more about Christianity. The conversion of these people was the main reason for the evangelistic project. They provided the best material for project evaluation and inspired me to accomplish the project. The fifth variable in this project consisted of freedom. Christians specially stressed freedom, openly acknowledging that society lost nearly five generations during atheism and now enjoyed new opportunities open to all people.

All of these variables developed the core team's responsibility to organize and employ available laypeople throughout duration of the project. The members of the core team employed laypeople in their respective churches to distribute literature, prepare choirs, and make invitations. The laypeople's availability in each of the four churches and their contributions formed presented another variable. Without such involvement this evangelism project would not have been effective. As participants in the evangelistic meetings, laypeople played an important role in the project's sharing the joy of making friends with others and presenting them the gospel. These participants responded voluntarily to their pastors' call and joyfully undertook the whole responsibility in all parts of the project.

Throughout the entire project, the leadership welcomed security whose service contributed to the project. The security work did not spy on people but instead protected them to use their free choice to believe in the Lord Jesus. Some people believed and gave

testimonies of the great freedom they experienced in comparison to their lack of freedom during Communism when they had to claim atheism.

### **Data Collection**

For the purposes of this project, I collected data using four different instruments. I designed the first, second, and third instruments consisting of the pre-, mid-, and post-project questionnaires (see Appendixes A, B, and C) that I developed in collaboration with the committee. The pre-project questionnaire, sent to the four participating pastors and their laity, consisted of two sections: the pastors' and laity's experience from the past and their expectations and plans for evangelism's future development in their churches (see Appendix A).

I sent the mid-project questionnaire to the core team and participating laypeople in order to determine the relevance of programs and techniques of the situation in Macedonia (see Appendix B). Further, I distributed the post-project questionnaires to project participants as well as new converts in order to determine the project's best methods of evangelism. These methods were identified as important for further development of similar future project activities (see Appendix C).

To evaluate the returned questionnaires, I collaborated with the committee and selected five people to serve as a Research Reflection Team and evaluate questionnaire responses. I selected these five persons according to their activity in the church. Accordingly, the Research Reflection Team consisted of lay leaders and lay speakers in the four aforementioned churches. Research Reflection Team participants attended courses on stewardship and evangelism and then participated in evangelistic outreach in

their respective churches. Further, these participants attended the seminar at the beginning of the project and showed a special interest in evangelism.

### **Delimitations and Generalizability**

The motivation for this project emerged from the need for evangelism development in post-Communist Macedonia. A small yet diverse country, the situation in Macedonia required Christian denominations to come together for effective work in evangelism. The project intended to develop evangelism among all Christian denominations; however, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches presented as the main opposition to the project.

This project developed its work for the particular Macedonian culture. Although other post-Communist former Yugoslavian states can use this project, Macedonia possesses a unique history, culture, and language. As a result the project might be adapted to other former Yugoslavian states and some countries in Eastern Europe according to historical and cultural differences in other regions. Chapter 5 features a detailed generalization of the project. This project can be used for any situation with some modifications regarding age, gender, educational background, and ethnicity. However this project might not fit in the Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic understanding of evangelism because their theology of evangelism differs from Protestant views in many ways. Implementation of the project findings in developing Balkan countries can be enhanced with wider literature review on evangelism for use in other countries.

### **Theological Foundation**

This research project came as a result of my deep desire for evangelism. It is not

a call of a human desire but a call of the will of God. The existence of the Church is the will of God. Describing the nature of the Church Karl Barth says:

Put in simple terms, one might say that the Church is necessary because God wills it so, but otherwise there is no deeper intelligibility to be gained. This would involve a voluntaristic conception of the divine will while some might take this as the meaning of “divinely instituted,” the notion of linking salvation to such an extrinsic determination has an element of arbitrariness which jars (Ecclesiology 42).

Barth claims that evangelism comes as a result of God’s intervention. The living God established the Church. Jesus Christ called his disciples and prepared them to serve one another. He shaped the frame and institution of the Church by teaching them the attitude of serving one another and sent them into the world to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:20). By sending his disciples, Jesus established evangelism to the world. It became the duty of the disciples and later of all believers.

By making disciples of Jesus, the Church fulfills the duty of evangelism in the world. In order to proclaim the gospel, teach people to follow Jesus, and accept the promise of his salvation Paul says:

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 up until all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4: 11–13)

Paul urges the believers to remain faithful and warns them to honor the gifts God has given them in Christ and to build the body of Christ—the Church. This establishment of the Church by Christ and the duty given by the apostles led me to develop the work of evangelism in post-Communist Macedonia.

The Church practiced evangelism in the early period of its development: “Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went” (Acts 8:4); and (11:19–20). These texts identify slightly different way of evangelism in comparison to the time when Jesus sent his disciples among Israel’s nation only (Luke 10: 3). Among Israel the evangelism was with power and authority over the demons, while in the later time evangelism was a result of persecution that arose after the death of Stephen (Acts 11:19–20).

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

Chapter 2 reviews relevant literature utilized for the purposes of this project. This literature includes origins of evangelism from the Christian Scripture and presents the development of theological and practical understandings of evangelism.

Chapter 3 presents an explanation of the project’s design and implementation.

Chapter 4 presents the study findings. Chapter 5 presents an evaluation of project findings and the project’s practical implications regarding discovery of new ideas for further development of evangelism. The evaluation of project findings follows, for the specific purpose of exploring implications for Balkan countries enhanced with wider literature review.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE

#### Precedents in the Literature

The purpose of this research project was to determine the most effective forms of evangelism as a result of evangelistic training with four evangelical churches in post-Communist Macedonia.

This review sought to establish the theoretical framework for the project by researching relevant theological and biblical foundations. A study of the life of the church strengthened this review's development. This aspect of the review focused on church growth through prepared, constructive, and evangelistic preaching. In order to provide an accurate understanding of evangelism and to identify the best forms of evangelism to be implemented by pastors and churches in Macedonia, this research would serve as a guideline for their future work. The study also examined modern ways of evangelism characterized by mobilized laity as a special resource to be organized and used in the church.

#### Biblical Review

Evangelism means proclaiming the gospel to all people. The word *gospel* in English comes from the combination of two words, *good spell* meaning *good news*. The word *evangelism* comes from the Greek word *euaggelion*, meaning *good news*. Accordingly, evangelism involves spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to all people. The spread of the good news, including use of all means of action the Church develops in order to reach out all people in today's society, is the great obligation of the Church.

People have to come in contact with the gospel in order to be transformed and

make others disciples of Christ.

The Apostle Paul writes, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13, NIV) and makes *the call* of main importance. By quoting Joel 2:32 in Rom 1:12, Paul makes connection between the Old and New Testaments. This statement in Joel stresses the great day of the Lord (2:31) in which whoever turns to the Lord would be saved. Building upon this statement from Joel, Paul describes the importance of evangelism,

How, then, can they call on the one in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news” (Rom. 10:14-15)

With these words Paul makes an order of evangelism, its connection to God who sends the messengers and evangelism’s results by describing the action of the evangelist.

Paul stresses the question of sin and separation from God when he writes: “As it is written: ‘There is no one righteous, not even one, there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God’” (Rom. 3:10-18). Repentance is necessary for freedom from sin. Freedom from sin brings righteousness: “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference” (Rom. 3:22). God conditions the righteousness. Believing and calling on the name of Jesus is a loving response to God’s sacrificial love. In our repentance God meets our sinfulness and offers restoration to wholeness in the image of Christ. As such, repentance is the first step in regenerating human nature into a Christ-like nature.

Paul accepted the duty to proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ. Further, by saying, “How, then, can they call on the one in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?”(Rom 10:14c) Paul stresses the continuation of actions that are result of preaching. People who accept the good news should call upon Jesus. As a result everyone who calls upon his name will be saved.

In the phrase, “call on the one”. (Rom.10:14a), Paul indicates the person of Jesus Christ. By so doing, Paul connects the actions of proclaiming the good news, hearing the good news, and calling on the name of Jesus Christ. Salvation is based on believing, and believing depends on hearing the message of Jesus Christ. Finally, someone who preaches the good news addresses the proclamation. Paul emphasizes the importance of spreading the good news (evangelism) about Jesus Christ. The Church is responsible to meet people in their fallen situation and to meet their needs and minister to them. Evangelism is not the action of an individual but of God who sends.

The initial practice of Christian evangelism took place during the ministry of Jesus. A great transition occurred between the understandings of evangelism by the disciples of Jesus when they heard him saying, “Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves” (Luke. 10:3), and the development of evangelism the disciples experienced, when they reported, “Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name”. (Luke 10:17). The transition was between the idea that Jesus stressed the hardships of proclaiming the kingdom of God (Luke 10:3) and the practice the disciples experienced. Jesus warned the disciples that people would oppose them and persecute them for his sake (Math. 10:17–20). On the other hand the experience of the disciples was that even

the demons were their subject (Luke 10:17). They thought that evangelizing would be very easy. Therefore, they returned to Jesus happy of the success but still lacking in experience of persecution, which would come later in their work (Acts 11:19).

### **Old Testament Foundations**

Evangelism has its foundations in the Old Testament with God's call to and covenant with Abraham to be a blessing to all nations (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). In this way God began preparing Israel to evangelize the world. God offers no explicit description of the way in which Abraham would be a blessing to all nations. God promised to use Abraham's descendants for evangelism to the world. God declared the important future for Abraham:

Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him (Gen. 18:18-19).

God explains the evangelism for which Abraham was chosen by saying: "and all nations on earth will be blessed through him" (Gen. 18:18). God sets an order that Abraham and his descendants should teach their children what was good and just. They should continue following the way of the Lord (Gen. 18:18).

God said to Abraham about coming of Messiah and his rule over the nations indirectly with the words: "...and all nations on earth will be blessed through him" (Gen. 18: 18). After Abraham died, God continued to keep and develop the same promise to his son Isaac making him a blessing to all nations of the world (Gen. 26:4). Obedience

to God was the condition for fulfilling the promises and using Israel as the agent for God's great and worldwide blessing (Gen. 26:4–5).

During the time of the kings of Israel, the writer of Psalm 72 announces the fulfillment of the promises given to Abraham. In his prayer for a righteous king, the psalmist describes a king whose rule of peace and justice included all people on the earth. That king's rule included all nations under his blessings. The psalmist explains that the king would deliver the nations, fulfill all their needs, and bless all the people. Thus, the psalmist praises the king by saying: "His name shall endure forever; his name shall continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed" (Ps. 72:17).

The previous passage is an indirect connection to the Old Testament's proclamation of the Messiah as the perfect king who would deliver all the nations of the world (Ps. 22:27; Ps. 67:2, 4; Ps. 96:3). Later, during the time of the prophets of Israel, the messianic idea becomes more evident. Israel did not recognize the messianic proclamation as direct answer for their expectation. Isaiah proclaims the Messiah with the following words:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this. (Isa. 9:6-7)

Isaiah also prophesied regarding the evangelization of the world through his “servant songs” (Isa. 42:6-9; 49:6; 52:13-53:12). The servant whom Isaiah announces is fully reflected in Jesus and his evangelistic action to Israel and the Gentiles (42:6-9). In Isaiah 49:6-8, Isaiah recognizes the servant of the Lord as one who brings salvation to the entire world. These messages prophesy regarding the role Jesus would fulfill among the nations.

Isaiah expressed the prophecy about the servant Messiah and hastened Israel to prepare for the spread of his message and rule (Isa. 52:13-15). Israel recognized these prophecies as God’s promise. Surprisingly, Israel did not accept these prophecies as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Through its history Israel expected the Messiah to bring deliverance and justice among them.

Joel announces the message when he says, “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be deliverance, as the Lord has said, among the survivors whom the Lord calls” (Joel 2:32). The prophet Joel also announced a time when the remnants of Israel would call upon the name of the Lord and receive a blessing from the Lord. Joel announced the great day of the Lord in which the darkness would appear and the people of Israel would experience confusion. The fulfillment of Joel’s prophecy, “whoever calls on the name of the Lord would be saved,” expressed by Peter in his sermon at Pentecost, when three thousand people believed in Jesus, supports the idea presented in the Joel text (Acts 2:47).

Later the church in Jerusalem experienced great persecution. The believers were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1). The Christians who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went (Acts 8:4). The success of the gospel is a connection between Joel’s prophecy and New Testament evangelism. The claim,

“Whoever called on the name of the Lord would be saved,” finds its fulfillment in the time of the early Church. The apostles and the scattered believers from Jerusalem preached the gospel first to the Jews. That preaching offered the opportunity for everyone who would call upon the name of the Lord to be saved.

The prophet Zachariah announces salvation to Israel and evangelism to the world by the words, “As you have been an object of cursing among the nations, O Judah and Israel, so will I save you, and you will be a blessing” (Zech. 8:13). Zechariah identifies Israel as a blessing among the nations, together with Judah, from which Jesus (the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” in Rev.5:5), would come. The “Lion of the tribe of Judah” would bless the nations in a way that Israel did not expect. In contrast, Old Testament passages show the close connection of the idea of evangelism as the proclamation of God’s kingly rule and inclusion of the Gentiles into God’s plan of salvation.

The Old Testament does not mention the term, *evangelism* in a literal sense, but most cases it appears as “righteousness” (Ps. 40:9-10), “peace” and “salvation” (Isa. 52:7-10). Nevertheless, the call to repent and follow the ordinances of God through the Old Testament is the meaning of evangelism. The good news in New Testament evangelism is proclaiming the saving character of God and calling to all people to reconcile with God. This call was especially needed for Israel to return to God for which the prophets were always calling the nation. God’s goodness was revealed to Israel, and evangelism was the prophet’s call to repent and return to God.

Chris and Kristy Sarris claim that most of the communications of Israel to the neighboring nations about the living God, his power, and his goodness was evangelism to the nations (2). They say that the story of the exodus of Israel from Egypt was

evangelism to the pharaoh and the nation of Egypt. They also reflect that communication and witness of the Israelite girl to Naaman the Syrian was evangelism about the living God and his healing power for all people.

William Biederwolf claims also that God intervened evangelistically to the other nations in the Old Testament (17). Biederwolf gives an example through the story of Jonah's intervention to Nineveh. Jonah did not preach about the character of the living God but about the consequences of the bad attitude of the people of Nineveh, which led to repentance and gaining God's favor toward the people of Nineveh (28). Through the book of Psalms, Biederwolf recognizes *shalom* peace as a message from God to his people and as blessing from one generation to the other (Ps. 85:8). Biederwolf makes a difference between the message of *shalom* in Old Testament Israel as different from the gospel to the Gentile world in the New Testament, although the context is similar. The main difference here is made that the Old Testament message of peace is directed toward Israel, and the New Testament message of the gospel is turned toward the entire world.

The New Testament evangelism was a continuation of the Old Testament proclamation of righteousness, peace, and salvation given to the world (Matt. 28:20). New Testament evangelism produces conversion by accepting the good news of Jesus Christ.

New Testament evangelism does not support the expression of evangelization in the Old Testament. The promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 22:18), Isaac (Gen. 26:4), and Jacob (Gen. 28:14) offers strong support for the idea of spreading the good news. Isaiah 19:24 describes Israel as a blessing to all nations in the world.

Jeremiah 4:2 prophesies a condition: If Israel returns to the Lord, Israel will serve as a blessing to the nations. Finally, Zechariah 8:13, offers an indirect message that Israel would bless the nations. These passages seem to conclude that the Old Testament community did not fully understand God's promise to Abraham. As such, this promise was a focal issue in Israel's history.

The idea for evangelism in the New Testament does not correspond directly to the Old Testament except for the passages I referenced. Matt. 1:1 corresponds to Gen. 22:18 as the only connection between God's promises to Abraham and their fulfillment in Jesus. Mathew's genealogy presents Jesus as the "son of Abraham." Acts 3:25, citing Genesis 12:3, asserts that God's promise given to Abraham is fulfilled in the New Testament. Also, apostle Paul (Gal. 3:8) refers to the same promise of God given to Abraham (Gen. 12:3).

Although no direct New Testament reference refers to the promises and prophecies given in Jeremiah 4:2 or Zechariah 8:13, an indirect connection shows that the nations of the world would receive God's blessing through the nation of Israel.

### **New Testament Evangelism**

In the New Testament, Jesus proclaimed that the establishment of God's kingdom was very close (Mark 1:15). Jesus sent his disciples to the cities and towns of Israel (Luke 10:1, 9), announcing the closeness of the kingdom of God. Jesus' disciples however, understood that the kingdom of God would involve restoring the kingdom to Israel (Acts 1:6), for which Israel had to be specially prepared.

Restoration's basic idea asserted that Roman rule would be overthrown (Acts 5:36-37) and David's throne would be restored forever (Luke 1:32-33).

After God's presence was acknowledged in the temple (Matt. 12:6; 23:21), the righteous dead would be resurrected and participate in the restored kingdom (Matt. 27:52-53) and the special light of the Messiah would bring revelation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). The disciples, together with the whole nation of Israel, expected the restoration of God's kingdom in Israel through the coming Messiah (Acts 1:6). In most cases the "kingdom of God" concept was familiar given the expectations of Jesus' hearers. The kingdom of God meant the "restoration of the kingdom to Israel" (i.e. the overthrow of Rome. Acts 5:36-37), the restoration of the Promised Land to the Jewish people, the restoration of a Davidic kingdom (Luke 1:32-33), and the return of God's presence to the Holy of Holies in the temple.

Jesus spoke about the kingdom of God in a completely different way. Jesus began preparing for the kingdom in the inner lives of the disciples. The disciples could not understand this work of preparation, but later they faithfully fulfilled the work according to the Scriptures and the leadership of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16). Jesus was preparing the disciples for a new understanding of the kingdom in which Gentiles could participate (Matt. 8:11-12).

After Jesus prepared his disciples and showed them the great need among the people of Israel, he sent them in pairs to spread his message (Matt. 9:37-38; 10:5-10). Jesus instructed his disciples regarding where and how to preach. He sent his disciples only to the people of Israel—God's chosen people for the evangelization of the world. For this preaching among the people of Israel, Jesus equipped his disciples with a word of proclamation: "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach this message, 'The kingdom of heaven is near'" (Matt. 10:6-7).

After the resurrection the disciples received a clear sign that the restoration had begun. Jesus informed his disciples that he had all authority in heaven and on earth, and with that authority he sent them into the world to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20). With this command Jesus transformed the understanding about the restoration of the kingdom by including the Gentiles and set the foundations for evangelism to the world. Implicitly, by sending his disciples, Jesus sent the entire Church to evangelize all nations, when he said, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20). With this action Jesus fulfilled the mission promised to Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed.

After receiving the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), the disciples were slow to disperse among all nations and to spread Jesus’ message. In fact, for the first seven chapters of Acts, the Christian movement did not spread beyond the walls of Jerusalem. The disciples slowly began to learn that God was widening his kingdom and opening the kingdom’s doors to Samaritans (Acts 8:5-25), proselytes (Acts 8:26–39), God-fearers (10:1-48), and, finally, to the Gentiles (Acts 13:46). The Holy Spirit worked with perseverance and consistence in order to persuade the apostles to preach about Jesus to Gentiles and Jews alike. The Apostles and other Christians evangelized Israel and later the rest of the world by expressing God’s great actions and by witnessing to people about Jesus (Acts 8:4).

Peter received specific instructions regarding evangelism in Caesarea while in the house of Simon in Joppa (Acts 10:19-20). Charles H. Kraft says that Peter had to acknowledge God’s authority although Peter made a distinction between Jews and

Gentiles. God encouraged him to follow the Holy Spirit's instructions. After receiving the Holy Spirit's instructions, Peter recognized that God did not make distinction between people (Acts 10:34) and that evangelism should be the same for all nations. Cornelius the Godfearer was a Gentile who participated in the life of the Jewish community. God sent Peter to Cornelius, a Roman centurion who wanted to understand how to fulfill God's will and to receive the joy of God's favor (Kraft 140-41).

In the early days of Christianity the apostles preached the kingdom of God according to the teaching of Jesus (Acts 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). All of these references in Acts relate to the believers outside Judaism (Acts 8:12, Samaritans; Acts 20:25, Gentiles in Ephesus along with Jews; Acts 28:23, 31 in context with Acts 28:28 to the Gentiles). After some evangelistic experience the apostles understood that Jesus would fulfill Israel's messianic expectations. Jesus was a very different Messiah since he was rejected by the Jews and crucified.

Jesus was the focus of evangelism for Peter and all of the apostles. Wherever the apostles went to evangelize, they claimed that Jesus was anointed by God to judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42), and the Jews and Gentiles (Acts 14:27). In the person of Jesus, God offered forgiveness of sins to all people who repent, even Gentiles, and incorporated them into the kingdom he was restoring. This work was the start of evangelism, and the message about Jesus went wider than Jerusalem and Judea. The Holy Spirit led the apostles to evangelize all people without distinction of origin or culture.

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15), began his evangelism in Damascus after his conversion. "At once he began to preach in the synagogues, that Jesus is the Son of God." (Acts 9:20-22). The Holy Spirit also transformed Paul's understanding of the

Old Testament Messiah that had come from his previous training at the feet of the great teacher Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Paul already knew about the Messiah who would come among the Jews and restore the kingdom to Israel. From his experience on the road to Damascus, Paul understood that the long expected Messiah was none other than Jesus (Acts 9:5).

The believers who scattered because of the persecution following Stephen's martyrdom arrived in different places and evangelized the Jews (Acts 8:1, 4-6; 11:19). The church at Syrian Antioch emerged from such evangelism. Barnabas invited Paul to do more evangelism there until the church in Antioch was strong enough to be a witness for the gospel in the world (Acts 13:1). After the selection of Paul and Barnabas by the Holy Spirit for a special mission, they went first to Cyprus and then to cities in Galatia. Paul's first outreach to Gentiles outside the Jewish context took place in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14-48).

The Apostle Paul made three missionary journeys and covered the eastern part of the Roman Empire. On his first missionary journey, Paul followed the Holy Spirit's leading and widened his understanding of evangelism to include Gentiles (Acts 13: 46-51). On his second missionary journey, Paul crossed over to European soil and preached the gospel in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16-18). Paul's central theme was always Jesus Christ. He preached the gospel for repentance and entrance into the kingdom of God, but he did not preach that Jews would be the only nation in that kingdom. Instead, the kingdom of Jesus Christ would contain all nations.

Paul's third journey expanded the outreach with a three-year stay in Ephesus. He also recruited people who were willing and gifted to evangelize (Acts 19:9-11). While

Paul was imprisoned, these people continued to evangelize and do the mission among the people around them (1 Tim. 1:1-7).

Paul evangelized not only ordinary people but also rulers and kings (Acts 23-27). His evangelism was brave and fearless (Acts 17:22). He knew that God protected his evangelism, and all he was doing was beneficial for people of all classes and nations. Thus, God fulfilled his promise to Abraham that through Abraham's seed the world's nations would be blessed. Paul clearly understood this truth (Gal. 3:8-14).

### **Description of Evangelism**

Evangelism can be described by exploring the nature of Jesus. For Christians, evangelism involves proclaiming Jesus Christ to the world. This proclamation is primarily concerned with the divine-human person of Jesus Christ coming into the world to restore the humanity's relationship with God through the Holy Spirit's indwelling. Thus, evangelism calls humans to come back to God and renew their communion with God, which was broken by humankind's fall (Gen. 3). Through evangelism the Church is called to proclaim Jesus Christ as the only mediator between fallen humans and the divine and eternal God (1 John 2:1). The Church's relationship with the world is identified as a servant helping the world to be liberated from any bondage that makes the world ignorant of God's saving love.

Evangelism is not only informational, although it has profound informational content, nor is it only motivational, although its affective domain is wide. This message of the gospel regards the triune God's cruciform love for humanity and humanity's response to God's love. The Church communicates this message incarnationally in order to make the message contextually relevant to the people and culture in which it is

proclaimed. Padre Pio cited the words of Saint Francis of Assisi and described the deeper truth of evangelism when he said: “Preach the Gospel at all times and, if necessary, use words.” (Pio 1).

The gospel the Church preaches shares God’s salvation with all nations and by all possible ways. Evangelism involves taking the gospel to the nations, starting from home. Further, evangelism offers a means for fulfilling the Church’s mission; namely, evangelism seeks to make disciples of all nations. Evangelism brings people into a loving, responsive relationship with God. Discipleship nurtures Christians toward wholeness in Christ’s image.

The Church has tried to find appropriate ways to communicate the gospel to the world. The apostles took the gospel they received from Jesus and spread it as far as they could in the world. Proclaiming the gospel was Jesus’ command. Accordingly, the disciples followed Jesus’ sequence: first in Jerusalem and then in Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the world (Acts 1:8). This command of Jesus was empowered by the action of the Holy Spirit in practice. The Holy Spirit was calling (Acts 13:2); leading (Acts 13:4); forbidding, directing (Acts 16:6-8), and encouraging (Acts 23:11) people whom the Lord had prepared for evangelism. As such, evangelism served as fulfillment of promises that Jesus said to the apostles regarding the Holy Spirit:

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him, nor knows him; But you know him for he lives with you and will be in you (John 14:16- 17).

The Holy Spirit as counselor continued the work of evangelism through the lives of the apostles. They mostly depended on the instructions of the Holy Spirit.

Through the Holy Spirit's guidance, the Church works as a community in which God's presence resides and through whom God touches the world with cleansing, healing, liberating, and transforming grace. In other words, the Church incarnates God's actions of love and grace. The Church proclaims Jesus as the bridge between fallen humanity and the eternal sovereign God. As a result evangelism involves reaching people and entering closer into their daily lives. Evangelism involves making disciples of Jesus by teaching and instructing them in the Spirit and leading them in the way of Christian life. Christians, prepared as disciples of Jesus, are ready to follow Jesus in all their lives and to reach others actively with the gospel.

The Holy Spirit, not people, set the Church to work in this world (Acts 1:8). That work represents life in its fullness and care for lost people in the world (Col. 2: 10; 1Pet. 5:2). The Church's desire and action to reach people in the world and share in their joys and sufferings is actualized through evangelism. The Church's primary mission is to communicate with people outside the community of faith. The Church represents the body of Christ in the world by offering spiritual nurture, making disciples of Christ, and providing physical help by caring and supporting people in their needs. Existing in this world, the Church is identified as the body of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit expressing deep changes in the life of humanity.

Rick Warren emphasizes that the church must emulate Jesus' actions in order to attract people and bring them together to receive the gospel. Further, Warren presents three major findings through which the church can develop evangelism in the world: (1)

loving people as Jesus did (Matt. 9: 36-38), (2) meeting people's needs as Jesus did (Matt. 15:30; Luke 6:17-18; John 6:2-10), and (3) teaching people about the love of God and the way of salvation (Matt 13:34; Mark 10:1; 12:37). In these findings Warren clarifies the church's evangelistic purpose to bring people to Christ and his salvation. The Church manifests the power, love, care, and help of Christ (Warren 208).

The Ethiopian eunuch requested someone to explain the Scripture to him (Acts 8:26-41). Philip followed the Spirit's instruction, met the spiritual need of the eunuch, and taught him the fulfillment of the prophecy in Jesus Christ. The conversion of the eunuch and many other evangelistic actions of the early Church help Christians grasp the nature of evangelism in spreading the gospel.

### **Evangelism as a Spiritual Gift**

The New Testament describes evangelism as "spreading [telling] the good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:12, 35; 10:36; 11:20). The good news about the Messiah and his kingdom was fulfillment of the prophecies repeated through the history of Israel. As such the New Testament evangelism was a result of God's promises to the patriarchs and prophets (Acts 5:42). The apostles evangelized all people in the temple and in private houses that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah. In Acts 10:36 the biblical author describes the fulfillment of promised peace that only the Messiah would establish among the people of Israel. The apostles spread the good news of the fulfillment of God's promises to their Fathers:

We tell you the good news: What God promised our fathers he has fulfilled for us, their children, by rising up Jesus. As it is written in the

second psalm: “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.”

(Acts 13:32-33)

Paul evangelizes in Pisidian Antioch using the promises from the Old Testament.

The word *evangelist* occurs only three times in the New Testament. (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim 4:5) While the apostle Paul did not use this term to describe himself, he proclaimed the good news about Jesus and made disciples. As such, Paul appears to have functioned in the role of evangelist.

The Old Testament messianic prophecies (Isa. 32:1, “See, a king will rule in righteousness”), and the New Testament words of Jesus are synonymous (John 1:49, “you are the king of Israel”). Paul and other apostles believed that spreading the good news about God’s kingdom should be understood as announced in the Old Testament (Isa 32:1-4). The Messiah’s reign of peace and justice should be spread in the Jewish nation and the entire world (Matt. 13:31-32; Rev. 1:17-18). The parable Jesus gave in Matt. 13:31-32 represents the kingdom of God as hardly visible and then growing into such a large plant that birds nest in its branches. Revelation 1:17-18 explains that the Jesus’ kingship effects all ages and all generations.

In Ephesians 4:11 Paul describes how Christ gave different gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors/teachers. In 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Paul mentions that not all gifts were given to the same person; rather, Jesus decided which gift each Christian should receive. Different gifts were given to different people according to the will and finding of the Spirit of God. Each gift serves to build the Church of Jesus Christ and reveal the kingdom of God to all people.

Although the gift of evangelism is not mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12, this gift remains under the power and will of the Holy Spirit. The gift of evangelism is given to some believers in the Church according to the power and finding of the Spirit. As such is the work and decision of the Spirit in the church of Syrian Antioch, setting aside Saul and Barnabas for the work of evangelism (Acts 13:2).

Jesus gave these gifts “to prepare God’s people for the work of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until all reach unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph. 4:12-13). The four phrases (to prepare for work of service, the body of Christ, the unity of faith, and fullness of Christ) mentioned in this passage are parallel to each other supporting the meaning of evangelism. Jesus prays for the unity in his Church in John 17:20 so that the Church might have the same relationship of loving union with God as Jesus has.

The relationship between God and the Church would then have the same experiential knowledge of God as of the Son. This kind of relationship with God characterizes maturity of human life, and this maturity manifests the stature of the fullness of Christ. Through this formulation Paul frames evangelism in a powerful way. The work of evangelism is less about *getting people saved, and into a church*, than about *discipling them and bringing them into a specific kind of unity with God*.

Believers received different gifts under the Holy Spirit’s guidance. These believers developed the gift of witnessing by the support of the same Spirit, and used the gift according to the Spirit’s instructions (Rom. 12:6-8). As a result developing the gift

involved learning how best to communicate the gospel in an understandable manner relevant within particular cultural contexts and daily ways of life (1 Cor. 9:20-22).

The apostle Peter indicates that the gift of evangelism as witnessing of the good news is given to all Christians who are “a chosen generation” in order that they might “proclaim the mighty acts of Him who called” them [Christians] “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). According to Peter the Church is called to proclaim God’s mighty acts. Further, Peter says that God chose the Church to evangelize. God gave evangelism to the Church as a task for proclaiming God’s praises. Paul’s clarification of the gift of evangelism in the Church is different than that of Peter. Paul indicates that the gift of evangelism is given to individuals by the same Spirit and serves for building and sustaining the Church toward spiritual maturity (i.e. in making disciples).

The Church reveals God’s grace by inviting everyone to believe and be saved from sin. The Church’s message about Jesus represents the first stage of evangelism. The Church goes on and develops this responsibility discipling those who come to Christ and building them into mature Christians. The gift of evangelism that God gave to the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit aims to spread the good news to the whole world. As a result the gift of evangelism represents a duty given to the whole Church. Telling others means evangelizing and persuading people to accept and call on Jesus Christ and experience the joy of salvation through Christ.

After this first action, the Church nurtures Christians toward spiritual growth and personal experience of the wholeness in unity with God. God chooses to give salvation following repentance to every individual (Acts 2:38-40), and God gives the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ as a free gift to everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ, the

only savior and mediator between God and humanity. The Holy Spirit is a free gift building the certainty of salvation. Redeeming grace in the Spirit's presence and work as God's gift begins even before a person responds. Further, saving grace builds a life in loving relationship with God. The gift of the Holy Spirit does not depend upon believing a certain set of propositions; rather, this gift depends upon loving obedience to God's grace (Acts 5: 32). As a result believing represents a response to God's grace (Eph. 2:8-10).

The Church enjoys the great privilege of taking part in evangelism with God by spreading the good news to the world through preaching. The Church acts as being God's representative on earth for transforming the world. The Christian life expresses the gift of evangelism by manifestation of loving union with Christ and revealing Christ's presence through love and in the lives of others. The gift of evangelism does not limit to speaking and witnessing only by verbal means. The gift of evangelism is God's means for changing people's attitudes toward God in Christ. The Church in the world is a living organism manifested not by words only but by living in unity with God. The Church reflects its unity and love in Christ to the world inviting all people in that unity. Many loving actions of the Church in the world express unity in Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ is one living body; thus, every Christian in the Church is a part of that body (1 Cor 12:12-14).

Although different in their respective roles in the body of Christ, all Christians manifest Christ's likeness. Nevertheless, all parts of the body of Christ activated by the Spirit share at least one common characteristic. As the body has different organs and remains one body, so does the same Spirit lead the Church through various methods of

evangelism in the world. Generally, the Church develops unity in Christ in different ways: growing strong in unity and holiness among its members, experiencing closer relationship with God in Christ, developing its witness at all levels of the world's society. The first two represent discipleship, and the latter three are evangelism.

Until recently, Macedonian culture possessed a narrow understanding of the gift of evangelism. The evangelist was understood as a person gifted in preaching a good sermon or giving a good testimony in church. This understanding has a long tradition based on Paul's claim that Jesus gave different gifts such as apostleship, prophecy, and evangelism. During the transition period in cultural, economic, and community life, Macedonian people have begun understanding the wider meaning of the gift of evangelism. This gift allows every Christian to serve as an evangelist through different types of witness.

### **Evangelism as a Common Duty**

In Matthew 10, Luke 9, and Luke 10, Jesus sent his disciples to proclaim the kingdom of God only among the children of Israel. After his resurrection Jesus commanded his followers to go and make disciples among all nations (Matt. 28:19). The apostles took this responsibility and faithfully attempted to fulfill Jesus' command until the end of their lives. Jesus gave his followers evangelism as a primary duty. Evangelism was accompanied with miracles and signs performed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:43).

Jesus strengthened the duty of evangelism when he said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). The disciples fulfilled the commandment and evangelized through all their lives wherever they went in order to prove their love for

Jesus. Following the apostles' actions, evangelism became the practice of the whole Church.

Gaining Christ was Paul's main focus in preparation for teaching about reconciliation of the world to God (2 Cor. 5:18-20). God gave this ministry to Paul as a duty. As an "ambassador for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20), Paul brought God's message to all people and offered them reconciliation accomplished through Jesus Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection. Certain of his calling, Paul knew that the gospel he preached came not from humans or earthly teaching but instead came directly from the revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:11-12). As a result he viewed his responsibility as an obligation to evangelize all people and reconcile them to God.

Alan Anderson describes the Church with its duty to do evangelism in the community from which it comes. Anderson says, "The church is seen as a community of God's people, called out from the world around it, and with a distinct mission" (280).

In 2 Cor. 5:20, apostle Paul writes: "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." Through the practice of evangelism Paul fulfilled the duty Jesus gave to his Church. Paul understood evangelism as the work of an ambassador who not only represents the kingdom of God, but also one who persuades people to accept the kingdom, receives power to continue the duty of evangelism, and spreads the good news about the kingdom of God to other people and generations.

To the Romans Paul explained his duty to evangelize the Gentiles so God could accept them and they can receive salvation equally with the Jews. Paul reminds the believers of the grace of God and of spreading the gospel among the Gentiles and says:

I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. (Rom. 15:15-16)

Paul was concerned about the Gentiles. Knowing that God had opened the door to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews, Paul encouraged the Gentiles to enter the kingdom of God. As a result, all nations could take part in God's offer of his kingdom, and all nations and generations could experience unity in Christ.

### **Evangelism as a Fruit of Love**

The heart of the gospel is the love of God (John 3:16). In this verse Jesus revealed to Nicodemus God's love toward all people and God's desire for people to believe and receive the gift of everlasting life. Accordingly, God wants people to be restored to wholeness in his son's image and to live in loving union with him. God wants his Church to manifest his presence in the world. Through the Church God meets the world healing, cleansing, forgiveness, liberation, life, and transformation. Jesus instructed his disciples to live and express God's love through their daily lives (Matt. 5:44). Jesus also prayed that God's love would bring his disciples together. Jesus prayed to the Father for the disciples and those who would believe in their witness saying: "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you (John 17:20-23). Further, Jesus knew that proper world evangelism could happen only if the disciples lived in mutual loving unity as Jesus lived in loving unity with the Father. Evangelism supported

by love would offer the greatest witness to the world. Through such unity among Jesus' followers, the world would see the perfect love coming from God.

The Church evangelizes the world by practical example as an answer to Christ's prayer to the Father. God wants to send messengers filled with love and compassion to evangelize the world (John 13:35). Jesus sets the foundation for future activities of his disciples by making a condition: "If you love me, you will keep my word. You will receive the Holy Spirit" (John 14:15-17), "I will come to you" (John 14:21); "the Father and I will dwell in you" (John 14:23). The Trinity's indwelling presence forms evangelism's foundation.

Jesus said, "I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen; I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd" (John 10:16). Through these words John points to Jesus' love and care for all people. As a result of his love, Jesus sent his followers out to evangelize and gather his lost sheep. Accordingly, evangelism with love was Jesus' main desire. In light of this loving evangelism to the world, Jesus expresses his love to all people. Today, Jesus sends his Church as he sent his disciples to spread God's love by practicing that love in the Church's daily life and witness to the world.

The love God showed to Jesus' disciples was reflected to the world through evangelism and discipleship. As a result evangelism's main motivation is love toward all people and the desire to proclaim the good news about Jesus. The Church is obliged to love all people and manifest that love among believers and the entire world.

Jesus instructed his disciples to love their enemies and pray for those who persecuted them (Matt. 5:43-48). In many cases love is expressed naturally and does not

need to be explained. People are moved by the power of that love and show interest to follow the example of Christians in their teaching and discipling. Jesus' commandment for His disciples to love each other following His love to them (John 13:34) kept the disciples united. In such unity Jesus gave them the commandment for action by saying, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19-20).

When Jesus answered the Pharisee's question regarding the greatest commandment in the Old Testament, Jesus' answer emphasized love:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matt 22:37-40)

The love Jesus announced became the basic force for evangelizing the world, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15). This condition kept the disciples attentive to Jesus' command. "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). As a result, evangelism and discipleship both exhibit the fruit of Christians' love for Jesus.

All the Gospels' content emerges from the love of God (John 3:16), the love for God (John 14:15), and the love for neighbor (John 13:34). The New Testament Church received the commandment and its corollary obligation to spread that same love by helping others. Paul revealed evangelism's main motivation. If Christian's actions are not grounded in love toward others (1 Cor. 13:4-7), such actions have no meaning or relevance. As a result, evangelism's actions hinge upon the idea of how much Christians love God and the people in the world.

## **Motives for Evangelism**

God desires salvation for the world (John 3:16, 2 Pet 3:9). Salvation is actualized through God's divine love for all people on earth. Although the word *salvation* is mentioned over one hundred times in the Bible, this term does not always have the same meaning. In the Old Testament, *Salvation* has a different connotation than the word expression in the New Testament.

Old Testament interpretations of evangelism primarily assert Israel's independence in relation to other nations. Often conquered and ruled by other nations, Israel expected salvation from oppression and domination by other nations. In that context, *salvation* involved the aforementioned freedoms. In such situations the people Israel depended upon God to liberate them.

*Salvation* also involved returning to God and renewing the covenant God made with the patriarchs. As a result, John the Baptist emerged to prepare Israel for its great reunion with God. John proclaimed baptism as a sign of preparation to meet with God in God's restored kingdom.

In the New Testament, salvation comes out of God's love for all nations and generations on the earth. While speaking to his followers, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). In this verse Jesus emphasizes the fallen situation of humankind, slavery to sin, and the need of liberation from sin. From the New Testament onward, salvation no longer involved primarily the national or political liberation of Israel; instead, salvation involved all humanity's participation in God's restored kingdom. The New Testament presents Jesus as the only person who could free

all people from sin. As such Jesus said: “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). This expression is the base for evangelism.

Jesus’ disciples preached that Jesus was the only redeemer from sin. Jesus motivated his disciples by promising them the Holy Spirit’s power and sending them to the ends of the world: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus’ message motivated the disciples to spread the good news to the rest of the world. The Holy Spirit always stimulated this motivation in the life and work of the apostles and in the whole Church. Jesus encouraged the disciples and said, “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you” (John 14:26). The Church’s present-day motivation for evangelism comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit. Further, the Church is called to bring people to God who through Christ releases them from the bondage of sin.

In the earliest history of the Church, evangelism’s main subject concerned the Messiah Jesus and the kingdom of God. The disciples were concerned about the kingdom of God, and said, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). As Jesus prepared his disciples, he sent them into Israel to spread the good news about God’s kingdom (Matt. 10:7). Jesus’ teachings on repentance emphasized special preparation for the coming kingdom of God (Mark 6:12). The Jews believed that God had not restored the kingdom because of sin in the covenant people. As a result repentance was the only necessary requisite for forgiveness and cleansing. Later this call to repentance was the main subject of evangelism not only among people of Israel but

also among the Gentiles. Jesus motivated the disciples to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations in his name, beginning in Jerusalem (Luke 24:47). Peter preached to people present in Jerusalem at Pentecost. Later the call for repentance spread from Jerusalem to the entire world as an invitation for a relationship with God.

John the Baptist proclaimed the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy that "all flesh should see God's salvation" only through repentance and preparing "the way for the Lord" (Luke 3:4-6). When two of John the Baptist's disciples heard John announce Christ as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, they were motivated to follow Jesus (John 1:37-41). At the end of his record of Paul's ministry, Luke described the manner in which "God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles and they would listen" (Acts 28:28). The church sustained evangelism in a later period following the example of the apostles.

The development of evangelism to the world during the first century widened the circle of salvation to the Gentiles. This new understanding of evangelism no longer emphasized the restoration of God's kingdom as the political power of the Jewish nation. Instead, world evangelism extended God's Kingdom to the Gentiles through repentance from sin and believing in Christ (Rom. 1:16; 3:9-25). Paul's motive for preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles and to the Jews was the fact that both Jews and Gentiles are under the bondage of sin (Rom. 3:10-20).

Paul and other New Testament writers continued to focus on the kingdom of God (Acts 28:31; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:24, 50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; Col. 1:13; 4:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 12:28; 2 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 1:6, 9, 5:10). By including the Gentiles in the process of salvation, a new understanding of God's Kingdom

emerged. That new understanding motivated Paul to announce the possibility of including every person in the kingdom of God. Motivated by the possibility that both Gentiles and Jews could enter God's kingdom, Paul indicated that repentance leads to salvation (2 Cor. 7:10). Also encouraged by the possibility to include all people, Paul continued to teach Gentile churches to "work out their salvation in fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

New Testament teaching gives evidence of God's message for the salvation of the nations. A great encouragement came to the disciples of Jesus and to the Church to go into the world and spread the gospel of salvation to all generations (Matt. 28:19-20; Luke 24:46-48; Acts 1:7-8). The Holy Spirit's motivation and power initiated in Christians a new awareness of God's kingdom (Rom. 14:17). As such, the Holy Spirit brings new life to born-again Christians. Paul told the church at Corinth that they have been changed (1 Cor. 6:19). Paul also said to the Christians in Ephesus, "Having believed in him [Jesus] you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1:13). People are saved when they yield themselves to Jesus as Lord. The Holy Spirit then regenerated the believers (Tit. 3:4-5), and motivated them to affirm and teach them to others (Tit. 3:8).

The gospel motivated people to evangelize claiming that salvation is not the work of humans but a gift through God's grace proclaimed to all people (Tit. 2:11). God sent the Church into the world to evangelize all nations and generations and urge them to recognize God's grace.

Peter's first letter motivated the early Church to preach salvation to all people who were still in spiritual darkness. Peter said, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pet. 2:9). Evangelism

gave the new believers a great privilege and responsibility in the world.

Jesus sent his disciples and urged them to witness about him to the entire world (Acts 1:8). Accordingly the disciples proclaimed that Jesus was sacrificed to take away the sins of the world. When Jesus returns, he will come in glory as a sign of victory to the believers waiting for him (Heb. 9:28). The importance of the apostles' message linked on their intention to evangelize the world. The apostle Peter also described a crown believers would receive due to their salvation and as the goal of their faith in Jesus Christ. As such Peter said, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away" (1 Pet. 5:4).

Today's society has departed from the biblical principles, and secularism has grown rapidly, bringing its own normative that does not apply to the benefits of every person. Carl F. H. Henry states, "The social and political practices of our time derive less and less inspiration from biblical ideas, and our civilization will not long survive this bankrupting loss" (57). This claim implies that the situation motivates the Church to evangelize and bring back the biblical inspiration in the life of the Church and society.

### **Conclusion**

The Bible is the main source that gives the motivation for evangelism. Both the Old and the New Testaments contain evidences of God's plan to reveal his love and offer salvation to humankind. God revealed this plan of salvation to his chosen nation of Israel through Jesus Christ (Luke 3:2b-6). Jesus motivated his disciples to go into the entire world and serve as his witnesses (Acts 1:8). The evangelism they spread to all nations contains the message of salvation. Both the Old and New Testaments reveal God's established reasons and conditions for evangelism in all times and among all nations.

From its early age, the Church sought to go into the entire world and proclaim salvation in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

The subject and motive for evangelism has not changed through all periods of human history. At this time as in all times, evangelism must adapt to various cultures and languages (1 Cor. 9:19-23), but the evangelism's motive has not changed. Evangelism uses the appropriate manner of approaching people of different cultural backgrounds. As a result Christians must adapt and thereby capture their attention and interest in the gospel. In this time of technology, people seem busy and have lost their initiative to evangelize. The Church must recapture the motivation for evangelism and find postmodern means of communicating with people in order to fulfill its call. The Bible gives the foundation for evangelism, but Christians must look at the current situation from theological perspectives.

### **Historical Overview**

While the pre-Reformation church neglected evangelism, the Reformation turned back the church to evangelistic renewal. The Reformation took place in general, changing the theological and organizational levels. The reformers were mainly concerned about evangelistic outreach to people with return to the biblical truths; therefore, most of the later scholars turned to the early Church evangelism and the ways of evangelistic spread of the gospel. Evangelism as historical event of the church is seen in the comments of following overview. Evangelism is a command given to the Church. Some scholars exhibit interest regarding early Church evangelism methods. Accordingly Michael Green says: "But the historicity of Jesus, the continuity between the Jesus of History and the Christ of faith, the reality of the atonement, and assurance about the physical resurrection,

these constituted the bedrock on which they built their evangelism” (14-15). Here Green reflects on evangelism as historical continuation of the relevance of the evangelism today as in all times, starting from the time of the early Church.

The reformers and important people of the church were concerned about evangelism as a spiritual awakening. John Wesley wanted to bring renewal in the Anglican Church, escaping any excuse that the leadership of the church would make:

I design plain truth for plain people. Therefore of set purpose I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations, from all perplexed and intricate reasoning, and as far as possible from even to show learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures” (1:25).

Wesley wanted to bring together the hierarchy of the Anglican Church and the common people on the same level and help the nation accept the truth of the Gospel.

Some people consider postmodern evangelism methods’ effectiveness in contemporary society. Warren describes the situation and the perspective for evangelism: “With every new generation, the rules change a little. If we always do what we’ve always done, we’ll always be where we’ve always been. The past is behind us. We can only live in today and prepare for tomorrow” (396). Through the development of communications in the world, greater need emerges for thinking and planning evangelism in different nations, cultures, and communities.

Although Communism has disappeared still, a lot of differences remain in post-Communist societies, limiting their effectiveness. Adam Szostkiewicz says, “After ten years of democratic experience in post-Communist nations one feels that our societies are still in transition. There is still a great deal of confusion, fear, and ignorance as to the

direction we will take” (18). Szostkiewicz recognizes that even while Communism historically has ceased to exist, signs of it still remain deep in the conscience of many individuals.

The need for developing evangelism appears according to the local political and economic situation in the country and the stage of spiritual life of people. Bishop Earl G. Hunt, Jr. asserts, “The world we know best, made up of nations comprising Western civilization, has changed within the last three to four decades in a manner so sweeping, so total as to defy the mind’s assimilation”(5). Hunt claims that some countries have influenced the new nations with their civilizations. He adds, “In the last twenty years atheism has added 75 million adherents and the movement denying the very existence of God may now number its followers in the billions” (6). In this context, he calls the contemporary Church to greater evangelism in this so-called “dissolute chaotic world in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” referred to as *post-Christian* and *postmodern*. “The Gospel waits its presentation in the present generation” (7). Stressing the urgency of presenting the gospel, Hunt states, “The question arises whether evangelism will be relevant to a society absorbed by neo-paganism, and uncompromisingly denying the reality of Christian ideals” (12). Hunt is concerned about future development of evangelism in the world.

Richard Stall Armstrong defines evangelism as “the way of reaching out to other people in Christian love” (53). *To evangelize* means to share Christian faith with unbelievers while listening to people in order to identify with their culture and care for people in need. This evangelism develops in such a way that people respond and commit themselves in trust, love, and obedience to God. These people know the joy of being

disciples of Jesus Christ, remembering what Jesus has done for them and becoming part of the body of Christ, the Church.

Further, Armstrong says, “The word ‘service’ is intended to employ a style of evangelism that is caring, supportive, unselfish, sensitive and responsive to the human need” (53). The aspiration of Christians today is renewing evangelism, as in the early period of Christianity by approaching society in different ways. Salvation’s message and the Christians’ new life are both rooted in the gospel, which needs to be spread. Further, faith stays constant in different periods of church history. The church’s promulgation of the gospel follows the same instructions Jesus gave to his disciples to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:20).

Some alternative interpretations of evangelism come from traditional church settings such as the Eastern Orthodox Church. Some clergy persons claim that evangelism should be initiated by only liturgical music. Most worship services, liturgies, and other activities contain liturgical music only. Those clergy persons state that the musical liturgy is the best evangelistic expression and people feel happy from it. Furthermore, other spiritual discipling is unnecessary because people come to spiritual awakening through liturgical singing. Holding the traditions of the church (e.g., worshiping icons, saints, relics) is sufficient, and people will repent if they follow the lives of the saints. This claim does not mean that some of the teachings and practices of Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches should not take place in the life of the church at all. Instead, a great need for evangelism and discipleship grows among many nominal Christians in all Christian denominations. (Personal interview Pastor Krum Kalajliev).

Some clergy persons of the traditional Eastern Church exhibit a lack of respect by attendees if they preach the gospel. This lack of respect hinders the Church from producing positive and long-lasting evangelistic effects. Bishop Hunt stresses that humanity is lost and requires a divine action: “Our heavenly Father’s response to the powers of evil at work in individuals, society, and history, was Calvary” (17). The biblical review showed that God is searching for his prodigal children. People often misunderstand evangelism, expressing how they have found the Lord, but God initiates the search.

Wesley’s doctrine on redeeming grace offers a potential answer and helps explain how God works to prepare people both to hear and to receive the message of salvation.

The United Methodist Church defines redeeming grace:

The divine love that surrounds all humanity and proceeds any and all of people’s conscious impulses. This grace prompts our first wish to please God, our first glimmer of understanding concerning God’s will, and our “first slight transient conviction” of having sinned against God. God’s grace also awakens in us an earnest longing for deliverance from sin and death and moves us toward repentance and faith. (46).

God brings the gospel to people and provides opportunity for them to receive the gospel in variety of different ways. Every human is created with free will. Nevertheless, through the Fall humans became ruined in their moral and spiritual being. Humans have lost the capability to use their free will and turn to God again (Rom. 3:11-18). Conversely, God’s redeeming grace gives people the opportunity to decide whether or not to believe in the evangelistic message. In this condition persons are able again to embrace salvation’s

evangelistic message through their free will to believe and receive eternal life. Today church evangelism goes to find people in the world, giving them a chance to hear the good news. As a result people believe, accept the gospel, and embrace salvation.

Concerning the development of our salvation and God's action in it Wesley says:

If God worketh in you, then work out your own salvation. The original word rendered *work out*, implies the doing the thing thoroughly. *Your own*; for you yourself must do this or it will be left undone forever. *Your own salvation*: Salvation begins with what is usually termed (and very properly) *preventing grace*; including the first wish to please God, the first dawn of light concerning his will, and the first slight transient conviction of having sinned against him. (*Works* 509).

Wesley explains the tendency of putting redeeming grace in action, and convincing the individual to repentance. Further Wesley states that the convincing grace is the act of God in the life of the human and says:

All these (*grace, repentance and forgiveness*) imply some tendency toward life, some degree of salvation; the beginning of deliverance from a blind unfeeling heart, quite insensible to God and things of God. Salvation is carried on by *convincing grace*, usually in Scripture termed *repentance*; which brings a larger measure of self-knowledge, and further deliverance from the heart of stone. (*Works* 509)

Without God's redeeming grace, the church's evangelism could not succeed. Wesley accepted the Armenian teaching of redeeming grace and thus developed a biblical model of evangelism. According to Wesley's observation, first people receive the ability

(engendered by redeeming grace) to decide whether or not to accept the good news of the gospel and to believe in the offer God gives them through Jesus Christ (Acts 16: 14).

People still maintain God-given free will to accept or reject God's plan of salvation. The first preparation for accepting evangelism's message comes from God through his redeeming grace, and then God uses convincing grace offered through the Church.

Mortimer Arias offers an essential insight and establishes God's reign as the central theme in understanding the gospel. By proclaiming the kingdom of God as the aim in evangelism, Arias places God's reign at the center of the church's evangelistic ministry (3). Arias claims that the kingdom's message exists as a continual presence in the Church and remains as a central truth of evangelism (12). Arias asserts that the Church must continue evangelism under God's guidance because he sees a crisis in preaching the gospel and a lack of fruitful methods for evangelism. According to Arias, the Church must emerge from this crisis and make evangelism understandable. For Arias evangelism will become understandable when it becomes biblical, evangelical, contextual, and incarnational (xiii).

Arias' concept of biblical evangelism understands the proclamation of the good news as based on the truths of the gospel. By "biblical evangelism" Arias presents the gospel's message to be spoken through a language consisting of expressions and meanings unlike the language of the world. By "contextual" evangelism Arias tries to connect the gospel's message with the spiritual, evangelical, incarnational, political, social, economic, and cultural situation in which the community exists.

Arias describes the gospel as a living word of God. Through evangelism this word becomes alive and makes the listener spiritually alive through his or her receptive

response to the word. Arias remarks that Jesus proclaimed clearly the reign of God at hand, but he also spoke of the coming of the kingdom of God with power in the future. For Arias evangelism entails recruiting of disciples and inviting them to participate in the kingdom's blessings, to celebrate its hopes, and to engage in the responsibilities of the kingdom (105-06).

According to Arias evangelism relates to poor, marginalized, and powerless persons in their struggle for liberation from this world's demonic powers. This type of evangelism invites people to respond with "costly discipleship" (106), by condemning and refusing everything that opposes God's purpose for humanity. Discipleship costs followers because of a turning point in their lives. Believers turn from their previous lives to new Christian lives.

Arias describes the kingdom's message as a costly discipleship because of its high spiritual investment in evangelism for making disciples of Jesus Christ. Arias claims that besides the blessings and benefits, the message presents challenges, demands, and tasks in the kingdom of God understood as costly discipleship (89).

Abraham understands evangelism as a message inviting people to participate in God's present-but-still-coming reign. Abraham directs his readers back to Jesus' ministry focused on the kingdom of God. As a result, Abraham says, "Any considered attempt to develop a coherent concept of discipleship that will be serviceable in the present, must begin with evangelism" (17). Abraham believes that the entire concept of evangelism always relates to the gospel. Evangelism requires support through discipleship. Any kind of evangelism that fails to present the kingdom of God with truthfulness and clarity destined to fail.

Walter Klaiber understands the task of evangelism as bringing a recognizable center of the gospel in contact with humans who live in different contexts than Christians addressed by New Testament authors. Further, Klaiber says, “The basis and power of the message lies in the certainty that ‘God is for us’ which is guaranteed by Jesus’ message and his offering of his life for us” (77). He stresses that the mission of Jesus Christ’s Church is fulfilled and brought to life for humanity by God’s existence, power, and love. This message represents the basic element of evangelism, and the church bears witness to this message to humankind.

David Bosch discusses first century Christianity’s main problem relating the Gentile mission to the original mission for the Jewish people. Bosch asks the question, “How can everything that was said by parables and stories directed to the nation of Israel be applicable to the other nations of the world?” (30). Further, Bosch says, “In my view there can be no doubt: the primary inspiration for all these stories could only have been the provocative, boundary-breaking nature of Jesus’ own ministry” (30). Therefore, Jesus’ stories and miracles drew attention both of Jews and Gentiles.

Two completely opposite but the same time inseparable functions concerning the church approve evangelism and discipleship in the New Testament era: evangelism as a fruit of the church and the church as a fruit of evangelism. As a fruit of the church, evangelism represent the church’s responsibility to include itself in the cultural, social, and political life of society. The church cannot fulfill its duty without reaching the world through evangelism and discipleship. Evangelism cannot be successful in reaching the world without the church’s presence. The church exists as a fruit of evangelism, and

evangelism exists as the action of the church. As a result, God brought the Church into existence so it could fulfill the duty of evangelism in the world.

Dana Lee Robert, Steven W Gunter, and Mercy Amba Oduyoye state that the relationship between evangelism and mission resembles the relationship of the heart to the body. They compare the mission with the human body. The body moves and acts in different contexts. Sometimes one part of the body is busy while at other times another part of the body is busy. In the same way an interaction between mission and evangelism exists. For example, the eyes are not always used because the night is so dark and nothing can be seen. In that case other organs such as the hands are needed to find the way. Whether or not evangelism and mission fail to be represented, the church continues to exist and wait for the right time to act. In all cases the heartbeats, sending the blood through the body, nourishing the other organs and keeping the body living (3). Robert, Gunter, and Oduyoye want to say that even in persecution the Church lived waiting for better time for evangelism.

In making this connection between the heart and the body, Robert, Gunter, and Oduyoye emphasize the importance of unity and interdependence between the heart and the body. They do not classify directly all qualities of the heart to represent the qualities of evangelism nor the qualities of the body to represent exactly the qualities of mission. The main point in their illustration revolves around the connectivity and cooperation between the heart and the body much like the connectivity and cooperation between evangelism and mission (5–6). Robert, Gunter, and Oduyoye liken the role of evangelism to the role of the heart in the body. As such, evangelism can play two roles: the pump that circulates blood and the seat of human emotions. As a result, they say, “Without the

emotional fervor of the heart, the love affair with the gospel mission dies. To separate the heart from the body is to kill the body. To take evangelism out of mission is to cut the heart out of it,” (4). Robert, Gunter, and Oduyoye compare the church to be living as an organism even restricted to evangelize to the world. The church in restricted situations turns evangelism inside among the church families instead outside into the world.

Robert, Gunter, and Oduyoye emphasize the connection between the Church’s mission and hospitality. This connection first surfaced with Christians in apostolic times. Some examples include the situations in which many people gathered in Cornelius’ house to wait for Peter (Acts 10:27); Lydia offered hospitality for Paul and others in her house (Acts 16:15); the keeper of the prison in Philippi accepted Paul and Silas in his home (Acts 16: 34); and Paul commended Phoebe to the Rome church’s hospitality (Rom. 16:1–2). By this claim Robert, Gunter, and Oduyoye mean that people who evangelize exhibit readiness to invite new believers into their homes, offer them kindness and acceptance, and make them disciples.

Scott J. Jones emphasizes Hebrew 13:1-2 in which the writer instructs, “Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.” Hospitality is a direct action of the Church’s mission because by entertaining others the Church spreads love toward them and helps them recognize the fruits of love that manifest the Holy Spirit’s presence. Jones states that the Church is called to declare praises to God, calling from God, and the light of God. Evangelism is best understood as an aspect of the Church’s mission that seeks to help persons enter into Christian discipleship (61).

Jones says, “The church’s missionary nature holds both holiness and hospitality in tension” (61). Jones presents hospitality as one of the conditions for communication. He notes that holiness “opens the door to the stranger” and that hospitality engages the stranger with the gospel’s message (61). Holiness opens the person to others for personal evangelism and discipleship. This friendship opens better communications with new people and increased readiness for sharing the gospel.

According to Bosch, evangelism practically expresses love from God. He emphasizes love for God as a measure for spreading the gospel and fulfilling Jesus’ words to Peter. Jesus said, “If you love me, feed my sheep, Feed my lambs” (John 21:14-17). Bosch emphasizes the love of God expressed in practice by mission and evangelism in the world. Bosch says, “The entire Christian existence is characterized as evangelistic existence” (338). He claims that Christianity is a fruit of evangelism.

As a conclusion evangelism does not come out of liturgical music only, but by returning to deep interpretation of the Scripture to people as Wesley calls it “Plain Truth for plain people” (*Works* Outler 1:25). The renewal of evangelism brought a transition of the Church and it still goes on in present time. The world is still in “desolate chaotic” situation as Hunt describes it (15). The evangelism has to be identified with the culture of evangelized people. The message of salvation and Christian’s new life are rooted in the gospel. Therefore, Wesley expresses that humanity requires divine action that would strengthen the truthfulness of the gospel. The ministry of evangelism has to be centered in God’s reign because God initiates the evangelism and invites people to his reign. Finally, evangelism is closely connected to the Church as the Church can only count its

existence through evangelism. In his concept of evangelism Bosch says, “Evangelism is the fruit of the Church and the Church is a fruit of evangelism” (332).

Evangelism’s message contains the truth in which Christians can base their confidence. Christians can make evangelism contemporary and yet not compromise the truth of the gospel. The truth of the gospel remains unchangeable in every situation and society. Post-Communist society experienced many changes, but the truth of the gospel proclaimed by evangelism remained the same. The good news about Jesus remains the basic subject of evangelism. Evangelism involves sharing faith in Jesus with others, identifying with them, and caring for them.

According to Wesley, God makes evangelism a duty of the Church because through evangelism God reveals his redeeming grace and gives the right to every individual to accept or to reject the gospel’s message. Through the redeeming grace, God opens possibilities for spreading the gospel through evangelism. The message of God’s kingdom is presented by the Church as a central truth of evangelism for making disciples of all people in all times.

### **Cultural Differences**

With this project I wanted to initiate a mass evangelism project in Macedonia. The people of Macedonia needed this type of evangelism because during Communist times, mass evangelism was not possible. The individual evangelism was very limited, restricted, localized, and very slow in its development. The audience was very limited to the members of the local church families. The limitation to one Christian denomination became even greater hindrance to interdenominational cooperation.

Throughout the past, evangelism has been one of many subjects of misunderstanding between the church and the state. The lack of communication between the two institutions only added to the problems; therefore, in most cases Communists did not allow any forms of evangelism. Martin Paul describes the attitude of the state towards Christianity and says,

History shows that states have played a range of roles that have been anything but neutral toward faith traditions within their borders. Indeed, in terms of extent and impact, persecution and other violations of religious rights by states have always been a much greater problem than the violation of rights by religious authorities and activists (2).

Paul remarks absence of complete tolerance of religion in the eyes of the state. Many of the rulers throughout history have used the Church to look after their own interests, while undermining the existence and well being of any evangelistic undertakings. Yugoslavia was a prime example of such a communist regime in which the leaders feared evangelism as a form of public resistance that would overrule the Communist regime.

As a pastor in Macedonia, my great desire was to motivate and prepare other pastors and laypeople for evangelism. In the past most Christians were taught only how to enjoy their personal Christianity. As a result, this project seeks to challenge Christians toward greater understanding of the need to share the Christian relationship with God and the loving union of God with other people. Reaching people in the community for Christ was my lifelong call from God. As such, I have a great desire to see the nation of Macedonia become a Christian nation rather than fall into the darkness of atheism and spiritual ignorance. Accordingly, I was disheartened to see people identify themselves as

“Christians,” yet they do not possess the joy of salvation. For the purposes of this project, I call this Christianity a formal religion. I desire Christians to have the joy of salvation, to share their faith with others, and to share the truth of the gospel with younger generations by making disciples.

Ten years after the fall of Communism, I was expecting to see Christianity flourish and take a leading role in society. Unfortunately, I have seen the appearance of “secular humanism” as Cliff Yudell cites Dr. James Kennedy saying about American society. Secularism is a teaching that supports human values without specific mention to religious doctrines. Secular humanism appears as a fruit of atheism, regardless of whether atheism developed from Communism or from Western democratic society (38).

Dr. Kennedy asks the question of whether the government is a religion in itself.

In post-Communist time, the government wanted to include the National Orthodox Church as a governing body, allowing them to call the country Christian. In my vision to promote cooperation between all Christian denominations, I have come to the conclusion that the Macedonian Orthodox Church resists this cooperation more than other denominations because they do not see the need of the people of Macedonia for spiritual renewal through evangelism. In general, religious presence, apparent at Communism’s appearance, remained either at the same level, decreased, or was destroyed wherever and whenever possible. Some pastors were imprisoned and killed, while others feared they would disappear overnight. In that situation the church depended upon church members and their families to transfer Christian faith to those families’ next generations. This transferring of Christian faith provided the only means for the church to continue existing until the Communist regime fell. Even after the fall of Communism, the

churches needed time to recover and forget the experience of the past. For the recovery from the communist pressure, the church needed a period of at least one generation.

According to 2002 statistics Macedonia's population is 64 percent Eastern Orthodox, 33.3 percent Muslim, 0.64 percent Roman Catholic, 0.37 percent other (Protestants and other religious groups) and 1.63 percent unspecified (State statistical report, vol.11-13, Skopje, RM 2002). In light of such statistics, evangelism methods for developing and strengthening Christianity must be considered. This research concentrated on the issue of evangelism and overcoming misunderstandings about evangelism among Christian denominations.

Macedonian clergy agree when I claim that under Communism evangelism was used as a part of regular worship service. Such an idea encouraged me to develop this project. People in Macedonia did not take evangelism seriously. During Communism the Macedonian church excused its lack of evangelism due to governmental restraints. Nevertheless, in the years since the fall of Communism, pastors and church members have not actively pursued evangelism.

Many clergy persons understood evangelism as the job of Western missionaries, many of whom entered the country a century ago and helped people in many ways. These clergy persons thought that pastors should only preach the gospel within church buildings; this belief was imposed by the former Communist regime.

The fall of Communism in 1990 brought about a complete change in the whole society, but the majority of Macedonian Christians cannot imagine the manifestations of Communism's fall. As a result, the people understood freedom more as a theory than a

reality. Looking at the country's economical and political instability, some clergy still wait for better times to evangelize.

Part of the problem and failure was that people called themselves "Christians," but they exhibited little or no knowledge of the practices of the Christian faith or the Spirit-filled life. At the family life level, people did not become totally atheistic during the Communist period; still because of the lack of the Bible and other Christian literature for spiritual help, they were not able to experience the need for spiritual growth and teach their children about the spiritual life. As a result, at this time Macedonians needed a new way of evangelism more than ever before in the county's history.

Focusing on the Macedonian church's evangelistic purpose showed that the Communist regime had darkened the awareness of the church to be evangelistic, made people afraid of fulfilling the purpose of the church, and led them to wait for the next generation to undertake the responsibility. Unfortunately, the new generation in Macedonia seems to have very little idea of the evangelistic purpose of the church.

Emily Will describes the Communist regime in Yugoslavia by saying, "Under Communism, Christians in former Yugoslavia were strictly forbidden from engaging in social work or humanitarian efforts" (1). By describing the conditions in the Communist rule in Yugoslavia Emily reveals the conditions under which Christians lived.

Due to the lack of evangelism among the Christian population in Macedonia, this project sought to engender evangelism as a vision of Christian churches in Macedonia. This task has been primary since the resurrection, after which Jesus commanded the apostles to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:20). Accordingly, the duty of making disciples continues through every generation of the Church.

Christians in Macedonia had forgotten the command Jesus gave: “Go, and make disciples of all nations.” Christianity became a passive religion characterized by performing religious rituals but not evangelizing. Building upon the evangelistic purpose of the Church, this research project could serve to remind church leaders of the vital importance of evangelism fulfilled by pastors and laypeople in the churches of Macedonia.

Louis Evans discusses evangelism from different aspect. He makes evangelism a “Zeal of Witnessing” (606). He calls American society to give right witness of the gospel and leave the idea of “passing on of propaganda,” which can be copied by any society. He says, “Evangelism must stop being just a pious, hollow phrase. The best definition of evangelism I ever heard was ‘a happy, enthusiastic, dynamic passing on of propaganda’”(609). The interpretation Evans gives is a claim that the Western society has lost the right idea of evangelism. He discusses that evangelism is not a phenomena that can be interpreted as propaganda by any society or regime, even by Communism, but to be compared with propaganda as of a different content. Evangelism is a basic duty of the Church and the reason of Church’s existence and says: “The Church exists for two reasons: First of all to comfort irritated, but also to irritate the comfortable and get them to work” (607). He invites the Church to turn and look at its society that “burns its freedom”(608). The Church needs to reach the society and present the gospel in full action and responsibility.

Because a great cultural difference appears between the United States and Macedonia, I studied the manner in which evangelism methods in American culture might be used in Macedonia. Kraft’s *Christianity in Culture*, and Darell L. Guder’s

*Missional Church* provide some idea of the North American church's vision for doing evangelism. Kraft indicates a need for communicating in a culture in ways that make the message clearer and more understandable. He says, "The purpose of communication is to bring a receptor to understand a message presented by a communicator in a way that substantially corresponds with the intent of the communicator" (147). Further, Kraft stresses that the message must be communicated using symbols common to the communicator and the receptor. Kraft claims that even similar experiences of any two people interpreting symbols never correspond in exactly the same manner leading to greater or lesser interpretation of those symbols (148). In this way the gospel is presented by the communicator and accepted by the receptor. As a result presentation of the good news to unbelievers exerts a profound effect on potential responses.

For the purposes of this project, I paid special attention to postmodern worship and preaching. Because postmodern worship based on visual aids and symbols, Kraft emphasizes the importance of mutual understanding and interpretation of those symbols (151). Kraft gives an example of missionary evangelistic work in which the evangelist's attitude toward the receptor's culture is ambivalent or negative. The evangelist makes the evangelistic culture an obligation for the receptor as the only way of becoming a Christian. The receptors can become Christians through understanding and expressing their Christianity in ways foreign to their culture. Kraft supports his claims with examples from Jesus' practice among the Jews and Christianity's early development in the Roman world. The apostle Paul used the same approach, embracing his Jewish identity in attempting to communicate with Jews and identifying with Greek ideals when attempting to communicate with Greeks (1 Cor. 9:19-22).

Kraft claims that culture is an inescapable reality for every human being. God uses human culture as a context in which to interact with humans and reveal himself in ways people can understand (170).

Every nation has its history, filled with cultural traditions. Those traditions represent the face and identity of the nation, picturing its existence and historical background. Those traditions are important to note because they may differently determine the perception and acceptance of evangelism.

The Macedonian culture is influenced very much by its Ottoman rule from the fourteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. Svetlana Stamenova gives an indirect answer why the Balkan countries fell under the Ottoman rule for many centuries: The national identity is crucial in building the culture and independence of a nation. According to Stamenova, “ethnicity built around local community ties has become the only identity that could be used as a mobilizational tool for a modern nation-state building” (6). Some of the cultural traditions of Macedonian nation are closely connected to the other neighboring Southeast European nations. When the question of evangelism arises one very important characteristic is that those nations are very community organized.

Macedonia is a multiethnic country like most surrounding countries in the Balkans. In the region, Muslim Turks and Roma, which bring different cultural traditions, represent a large percentage of the populations. For example, Assia Popova describes the traditional celebration of a bloody sacrifice *Courban* (“Le Kourban” 2). The *Courban* signifies replacement of Abraham’s sacrifice of his son Isaac and later as a command of Moses that was a tradition in Jesus’ time (Mark 7:8-13). Even at this time,

Muslim populations all over the Balkan territories practice *Courban*. This celebration contains a large gathering at the mosque where the priest presents a religious ceremony and gives people the meat of the sacrifice to distribute to poor and disabled, so that all should express happiness and gratitude to their deity. Although distribution of *Courban* might seem a great opportunity for personal evangelism, this type of evangelism is not very successful because Muslims hardly accept any other witness.

Elsie Dunin describes the traditions of Roma culture in Macedonia by saying, “Gender has come to be recognized as one of the main factors shaping individual and group identities—thus also the practices that construct and express these identities” (Cocek as a ritual Dance among Gypsy women 2). The woman in Roma tradition plays an important role, where most often she is a head of the family and decisions are made after her approval. Roma women communicate easily with everyone and try to intrude their knowledge and skillfulness. These qualities give an excellent base for evangelism, as they appear to be very interested in learning and knowing something more. As they communicate among their own community they spread the new information very fast in mutual trust and in deep confidence toward each other.

In contrast, Macedonian ethnic population is characterized by a different attitude between male and female. Dunin says, “Since the ‘male’ value was thought to be inextricably linked to the ‘female’ value of shame, the authors of that period had to take in consideration women as well as men, their roles in society and their mutual relationship” (Cocek as a ritual Dance among Gypsy women 13). This difference in gender value does not allow communicating with opposite gender. Therefore, beginning

conversations must be done with the same gender in order to escape any misunderstanding or even conflict.

Macedonian culture expressed strong opposition against other traditions and influences from oriental cultures. Although some segments of those cultures took place in Macedonian culture, an important celebration is the carnival (Prochka). Prochka has a cultural background when people oppressed by the Ottomans tried to escape the reality that they were humans and changed their appearance from humans to animals, beasts or other. The carnival expresses the desire of suffering people to become anything else but not show their suffering. In this escaping situation, evangelism would play a great role in bringing people to the human reality and leading them to find a real place for solutions to their suffering (Stale Popov, *Kales Angja* 65).

A cultural tradition in Macedonia contains special songs and hymns called Calgii used in special occasions to remind people of their Christian religion and Macedonian ethnicity. Singing and listening to Calgii is a great opportunity to learn about the Macedonian religious and cultural background in contrast with the oriental Islamic traditions (Dzimrevski 39). Elizabeth C. Seaman describes the performance of Calgii as greatly influenced by the Ottoman culture where vocal and instrumental music come together in a heterophonic style of *makam* [Turkish melodic modal system]. Another important characteristic is that the female performers are always related to the male musicians. (19)

Other traditions influenced by the Roma are the widespread various types of musical instruments. Carol Silverman describes, “Among Balkan Muslim Roma two *daires* [Hand drums] often accompanied women’s singing. Other female instruments

were violin, *ud* [short-necked plucked fretless lute], *Kanun* [Plucked Zither], and *Tarabuka* [hourglass shaped hand drum]”, (12). Dunin describes that using these instruments Roma women dance gladly in every situation. The most common dance by Roma people is *Chocek*. (Dunin, *Gypsy Wedding* 322). They use *Chocek* in most cases for expressing their ritual dances and celebrations. During these dancing rituals, a big crowd gathers around watching and enjoying the music. These moments give a great opportunity for approaching people and starting a conversation about Christianity and distributing Christian literature.

Many legends, national hymns, and dances speak of Macedonian hard life under Ottoman rule. Ico Najdovski describes the national dance “*Teshkoto*” (the hard one) as a representation of the hard life under Ottoman rule. The dance develops as the rhythm gets faster, representing the Macedonian nation awakening and preparing for a revolution. The end of the dance becomes very fast, representing the revolutionary uprising and the Macedonian struggle for final liberation from the Ottoman Empire. Other national dances represent different sections of Macedonian history and hardships experienced in its past, which are very visible even in the present. The musical expressions that Evlia Celebi described are of crucial importance for description of the cultural remains in the nations of the Ottoman Empire (8).

The hard life under the Ottoman yoke led to leaving the home and going to other land for earning the living for themselves and for the family. Anton Popov describes “*Pechalbari*” (earners), time, and hardship when young people would leave their families and go for a long period overseas or to Western Europe to earn a living. The separation from the family was hard and painful, but they took pride in their Macedonian culture.

For example, their skills in pottery strengthened their identity. This special ancient and distinguished form of cultural expression represents Macedonia. The pots are massive and engraved with different colorful paints and graphic relief motifs and ornaments describing the history and the daily life of the Macedonian people. The artists knew very little about Christianity, but with their skillful carving they became very accepted of the evangelistic message as it gave them inspiration (“Folklore Art”).

The thirteenth century abounds with icon and fresco productions that characterize Macedonian culture. Every icon represents a unique style without any Ottoman influence. Almost a century later, the Ottomans conquered Macedonia and all the future culture was mixed with Islamic elements. Most of the churches dating from that period were decorated with paintings presenting biblical stories or paintings of the saints (The youngest state in Europe 349).

Gjorche Petrov gives a description of different cultural backgrounds of Macedonia, trying to make a distinction between Macedonian Christian practice and similar Muslim cultural practices. Most written materials from Macedonian writers come from the everyday life of the nation especially under the influence of Islam as religion and other oriental cultures brought by Ottomans and other migrants from oriental part of the empire. Petrov points some of the holy days in Macedonia describing in detail the way of celebration and rituals as unique experiences of Macedonian Christians. The imagination of the freedom that many generations have not experienced was a dream for centuries. Some of the writers in Macedonia tried to describe freedom like heaven in order to gain peoples’ understanding. Maleski expresses this type of celebration in his book by connecting to the rituals representing Christ’s ascension.

During this Ottoman rule and the strong influence of Islam, the Macedonian people have kept the Christian traditions to distinguish them from the oppressor. The importance of saints has been deeply developed during the Ottoman rule. Almost each day of the year is celebrated as a day of a particular saint. In some parts of Macedonia people celebrate birthdays in a special way when people come to a special time of the day for a birthday meal and bring different gifts to the celebrant (Cepenkov 93).

Georgevitch T. R claims that many choose to celebrate “Lichen-Imenden” (Personal Name-Day) when the name of a person in the family is connected to the name of a Saint. The day of the saint taken once in a year is celebrated in the family by inviting all relatives and friends for a short visit when they are offered sweets and drinks followed by short discussion about various topics. (68). In addition, “Semejna Slava” (Family celebration) is also celebrated under the patronage of a saint from church history. The celebration of Semejna Slava became very obligatory as T. R. Georgievich describes: The inhabitants of Skoplje Crna Gora believe that “whoever fails to keep ‘slava’ one year will not live to see next year’s” (205). Therefore, the Semejna Slava is transferred from generation to generation in honor of the saint and for the benefit of the family.

Georgievich describes some of these cultural traditions in Macedonia that influenced Serbian traditions. Georgievich mentions that the earliest mention of Serbian “Slava is from Macedonian tradition” (205). Even today, the Slava ritual still involves a series of symbols in the blessing of the wheat and the breaking of the bread. In general, the Slava ritual is meant to be a great time to meet the relatives and friends with preparation of special food, beverages, and cakes (206).

The best way for doing evangelism in Macedonia is the most celebrated day of the year called Panagjur (*Fair*). This Macedonian cultural celebration is the day when all the town or city celebrates the day of a Saint. People who lived in that place come and visit their families and relatives. Also many other friends of the families come to celebrate together. Early in the morning people go to church in honor of the saint and in memory of the deceased beloved ones. They visit the relatives and friends by going from house to house. Special opportunity opens here to distribute Christian literature and to discuss with people in the houses and at any place. Developing evangelism in such situations is a great opportunity. People easily gather and listen to the message. (Popov, *Mariovski Panagjur* 10-20).

Also, the monasteries in Macedonia are named according to saints as patrons of the monasteries. On the day of the saints, people go to the monasteries on pilgrimages. They go to the churches early in the morning in their Sunday clothes to pray. When people leave the monasteries, they go around visiting families and talking about the saints, presenting a great opportunity to distribute Christian literature (Popov, *Tole Pasha* 208).

Macedonia is an agricultural country facing long and dry summer throughout the year. In many areas of the country, people organize special prayer for rain (*Dodole*). People gather at the center of the town, and led by the priest or religious leader, express a prayer for rain. In long procession they go around the town and sprinkle water all over the ground and in the air. Singing special hymns for rain, they surround the town and return home expecting the rain. The practice of *Dodole* is a tradition awaiting the clergy

to pray; however, they lack a personal faith. Therefore, personal evangelism and Christian witness opens opportunity for spreading the gospel (Popov, *Krpen Zivot* 128).

### **Evangelistic Strategy of the Church in Macedonia**

In the process of preparing the church for evangelism, clergy have to agree with Green when he urges establishing an evangelistic strategy. Green says, “If this supreme God had revealed himself uniquely in Jesus of Nazareth, and in him he acted decisively for our redemption, then the news of this greatest of all events must be spread far and wide” (356). Green emphasizes the strategy God set before the Church. That strategy is equally important in Macedonia.

Green continues, “But the question still arose: Where should they begin from? What portion of their enormous task should they tackle first? What plan of advance, if any, should they adopt” (356). Green believes that the apostles adopted no special plan of campaign. The spread of Christianity was spontaneous. The apostles were forced to preach by the Holy Spirit to evangelize (Acts 8:29) Green uses this claim as a possibility of spiritual factors, in order to determine the affinity of the Church to be evangelistic (356). The post-Communist people in Macedonia make the existing church even more responsible to set a strategy for evangelism.

Regarding using the contemporary worship in fulfilling the strategy of evangelism, Donald G. Bloesch says, “My attitude toward contemporary worship is decidedly more reserved than supportive, though I see some redeeming qualities” (136). Bloesch seems to worry when some people in church suggest that all ecclesiastical symbols in the church such as pulpits, altars, icons, candles, statues, and crosses should be removed because they are a hindrance to people who seek God. These symbols draw

the attention of the hearers and interrupt the hearing of the evangelistic message. The church's primary strategy is not drawing people to the sanctuary to honor the symbols but to reach people presenting them the Gospel and to make them disciples of Jesus.

Bloesch also asserts that if cultural relevance takes superiority over biblical commitment then the evangelistic strategy of the church is lost and the possibility of heretical doctrine arises. The desire for visual novelty in worship, in many cases, is accompanied by a disregard for spirituality, losing the evangelistic strategy of the church and leaning towards tradition. Cultural relevance can be accepted in the church where evangelism and spontaneity are present (139). This transition happened to the Eastern Orthodox Church in Macedonia. It has lost the evangelistic strategy and fallen into traditions.

Barth remarks, "The church must cease to ensure its own survival and begin to share the Good News that Christ has come to redeem the whole world" (*Church Dogmatics* 874). Without evangelism the church is either dead or condemned to dying, according to Barth. It stands in ultimate need for renewal by evangelism. After the renewal happens inside the church, the church's strategy in evangelism should spread outside the Church (876).

Daniel Oudshoorn remarks that the church that does evangelism must establish the strategy in order to develop and experience revival. He says: "In the right strategy, if the right *words*, can be found then revival will occur"[original emphasis] (14). The evangelistic strategy gives the church orientation and clear view of what it aims to do. This research project sought to establish evangelistic strategy in existing churches in Macedonia.

Jesus established evangelism and discipleship as strategy of the Church. The churches in Macedonia need a strategy. That strategy contains reaching all people in Macedonia with the Good News. Protestant clergy in Macedonia claim that nothing is more important for the church than to spread the gospel and make disciples of all people in all generations. These clergy suggest removing anything from the church or from the place of evangelism that would hinder acceptance of the gospel.

### **Mobilizing Laity**

One of Christianity's great potentials in the present time is the opportunity for inclusion of laity in the work of evangelism. Many evangelistic actions happened in previous historical periods by including members who served the church as laypersons. In the present time, the church lacks lay workers in Macedonia. As a result some active church leaders in Macedonia enlist members to use their talents for the work of evangelism. Many members wait to be called by the church leadership to work. The evidence for evangelistic initiatives in the country is seen in the large number of responses to this project.

This project emerged with the help of four pastors and four churches in Macedonia with whom I organized a special evangelism seminar for laypeople. The laypeople in the four churches exhibited enthusiasm regarding this project and the church's evangelistic task and responded positively to the project's requests. For the first questionnaire (see Appendix A), eighty respondents appeared, and the attendance of the pre-project seminar on evangelism totaled 120 people.

Jones writes, "Laity are more effective evangelists than pastors. It is the pastor's

job to empower the laity to be evangelists. However, in order to empower them, the pastor must also be a model for evangelism personally” (186). The pastor’s basic responsibility involves engendering a vision for an evangelizing church and through that action engages the church in evangelism. He or she must provide training and systems to enable laypersons for evangelism.

The church takes the responsibility for nurturing laypeople’s conscience and desire to evangelize. The laypeople need to see themselves as active witnesses for Christ through their word and their living. The laypeople make contacts with non-Christians or unchurched people more often than clergy persons. As a result, in many cases laypersons can be more effective witnesses than pastors.

Jones categorizes this witness according to three consecutive levels. The first and simplest level involves talking about faith with others and inviting them to attend church if they do not already have a home church. The second level involves telling the Christian’s own story about her or his experience with God. This witness gives the hearer an idea how a human being can communicate with a God who cares for them. The third level, according to Jones, regards inviting non-Christians to make a commitment to Christ. Following these three levels of witness, Jones says, “Lead them through this process by which their decisions are made” (197).

Melvin J. Steinbron describes the necessity for clergy to believe that laypeople are reliable ministers in their own right and affirm laypeople’s parity with ministers. This reliability presents a paradigm shift for most leaders in traditional churches. Laity’s inclusion in evangelism follows biblical guidelines (38-39).

The apostle Peter reminds believers that they are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, people belonging to God in order that they may proclaim the praises of God who called them from darkness into His wonderful light” (1 Pet. 2:9). Peter includes all believers and encourages them to fulfill their rightful duty of evangelizing the world. He also instructs believers by saying, “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms” (1 Pet. 4:10). The gospel encourages believers to use all gifts received from God.

Developing discipleship as care for new believers in the church (Matt.28: 20), Steinbron claims that “everybody in the church should care for unsaved souls” is a traditional idea (49). Laypersons’ willingness to cooperate and contribute to evangelism should support the responsibilities of the clergy person’s ministry. Most churches believe that if everyone in the church does his or her job, then all people will receive adequate care (53). According to Steinbron, this type of care represents an old and failed system of congregational care for unsaved people (55). Steinbron says, “The results are failure to distinguish between ‘caring in general and caring in particular’” (56). The idea of caring in general failed to fulfill its purpose in the past. Not every one of the new believers receives adequate discipleship and care. Christians doubt that evangelism in the world in the future would be possible (59).

While Steinbron states that every Christian is responsible to care for others, not every Christian is gifted in caring for others. Nevertheless, the responsibility does not necessarily depend upon giftedness. Every Christian should witness for Christ, although not every Christian has a gift of evangelism. The Holy Spirit engenders the ability in

every Christian to fulfill the responsibility for evangelism (62).

Steinbron stresses the distinction every Christian should make, by saying, “*The fruit of the Spirit* is essential for quality of life, but the *gifts of the Spirit* are essential for ministry” (40). In this context, Steinbron distinguishes between God’s part in action of evangelism and the human part in action of evangelism. God provides the gifts that make ministry possible, and humans learn how to use those gifts in evangelism. In this way the ministry of evangelism represents a divine-human partnership. God provides the gifts of the Spirit, empowers their use, directs persons in employing these gifts, and calls persons into relationship with God. The human role involves faithful and loving obedience and willingness to respond to God’s call.

During the Middle Ages, the church accommodated prevailing political structures and allowed itself to be influenced by society. Clergy took the church’s duty into their hands and laity had nothing to do except observe. Laypeople had only to conform to what they were commanded. Even laypeople expressed eagerness to do something more for the Lord and the church, but the clergy would not allow them. Even reading the Bible was not allowed. As a result, Steinbron mentions two reformations within the church. The first reformation happened when people received the Bible in their hands, and the second reformation happened when the church allowed laypeople’s ministry in the church (50).

Dawson Charles Bryan states that clergy often believe laypeople cannot do the work of evangelism as well as theologically educated clergy persons. This excuse for excluding people uncovers an unwillingness to share the duty of evangelism with the laity. Bryan says, “Evangelism through laymen can be used in any size church, in any kind of weather, to reach any kind of people, rich or poor, young or old, attending the

church or not. The approach is the same for all of them. The size and the location of the church may vary, but the results will always come” (21). Some people express their uncertainty to accept God’s call to evangelism as laity. The difference between laity and clergy is an excuse. Also, the age might be another reason for them to become clergy while in the past some Christian denominations would not accept ordaining clergy under a certain age (29).

Doug Banister says, “The ultimate test of truth for a Christian living under the authority of Scripture is ‘What does the Bible say?’ and not ‘What do I feel?’ Feelings are important, but they are not a reliable, final test for truth” (65). Laypeople in the church experience joy in their relationships with God. They claim the truth of the Scripture, but they never put that claim into practice. These laypeople never try to share their experience in witnessing to unbelievers.

Aubrey Malphurs emphasizes using laypeople in the church: “Of course, another good opinion is to train a gifted, capable layperson to serve in this capacity [in evangelism]” (353). Clergy should remember that God has equipped laypeople as “chosen people, a people belonging to God, that [they] may declare the mighty acts of him who called [them] out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Pet. 2:9). They can often accomplish ministry-related tasks much better than clergy who are paid to do so. This type of lay ministry involves mobilizing and equipping laypeople to mobilize other people and continue the chain of evangelism through generations. For the benefits of this research project, I found the best to include laity in supporting and fulfilling the work of evangelism in Macedonia.

In the section mobilizing laity, I found positive evidence of laypeople's interest for evangelistic activities. Furthermore, in some cases laity's effectiveness is greater than clergy's. Therefore, the nurture of laity takes a crucial place in evangelism. The laity's education should instruct laity how to do evangelism or how to support evangelistic activities. Laypersons need to be encouraged and directed as a chosen generation for witnessing to others. Laypeople can give their active contribution and willingness to work in the churches. Some small churches experience lack of interest by laypeople to do evangelism. The great need arises always to remind laypeople that the Bible has greater authority than individual or personal feelings. The Bible as the word of God mobilizes laypeople in the church with the same authority as clergy. The living Word, Jesus, commissions the believers to make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:20). All churches are obliged to evangelize the world.

### **Ways of Evangelism**

Sending his disciples to evangelize the Jews, Jesus instructed them to go two by two (Matt. 10:5-15). Jesus limited them to proclaim the kingdom of God only to the Jewish nationals. Their evangelism concentrated on the kingdom of God. The response to accept messengers was connected to receiving peace. The disciples were asked to proclaim the message and prepare people for the kingdom of God. Jesus equipped the disciples with the power of healing and preaching about the kingdom of God. The refusal of the message was assigned to great judgment in the last days. This experience was an introduction and led the disciples to their evangelistic activities in spreading the good news around the world. Facing new generations, cultures and political orders, the church

sets repeatedly the question of how to evangelize. This question is important because the society is changing as a result of the influence from different segments of life

### **Biblical Evangelism**

Biblical evangelism is the most important element in proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. During my pastoral work, I realized that people want to hear the gospel as a message from God. The evangelistic message is translated into the life experience of the listeners. Biblical evangelism organizes faithful communication of the biblical message to the audience in order to engender a response of acceptance and repentance of the listeners. The message opens listeners' minds and engages them to respond to the message. Evangelists must keep the biblical text in mind while preaching the gospel and making disciples by word and action.

Biblical evangelism establishes awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence so the listener's decision communicates with the Spirit (Rom. 8:14-16). Discussing the definition of biblical evangelism, J. I. Packer says, "According to the New Testament, evangelism is just preaching the Gospel, the evangel. It is a work of communication in which Christians make themselves mouthpieces of God's message of mercy to sinners" (103). Biblical evangelism requires making the gospel of Jesus Christ the message of the church. To make people acceptable to the message, the messenger has a lot of work to do in helping people to be free from any other bondage that hinders them.

### **Persuasive Evangelism**

Bishop Hunt says, "A sermon should exemplify the kind of logic of thought which is immediately clear and discernible" (45). The evangelistic action makes listeners aware of their sinful nature and brings them to repentance. Hunt looks back to apostolic

times and asserts that every witness had basic elements of promises or prophecies in the Old Testament and fulfillment in Jesus Christ. In his evangelistic sermon, Peter tried to persuade the listeners to believe in Christ and warned them to save themselves from the corrupt generation (Acts 2:40).

In this case persuasive evangelism means not only sermon preaching but also practical evangelism through ministering to people in their daily lives and helping them in their daily struggles and needs so they can be persuaded by word and action. In Jesus' parable in Luke 14: 16-24, the master says to his servant, "Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in [persuade them], so that my house may be full." The evangelist persuades people, giving them good reason to respond to the invitation. Hunt observes people in their situation before the message of the gospel reaches them, and says,

Evangelism is seeking out the lonely, defeated, hardened, homeless person, and helping them to know that God and you care and want to become involved in a process that can reconstruct the individual's life and provide new purposes and new hope. (52)

Evangelism requires complete involvement with God because through evangelism God uses the evangelist as the interpreter of divine love, compassion, and eternal desire to save the sinner.

When evangelists deliver the message, they are certain of their own assurance regarding Christian fundamentals. Doubts are often problems to many evangelists. Those doubts are apparent and confuse the listener. The themes of evangelism present the certainty of the presenter and the relevance of the message. Doubts are a hindrance to

persuasiveness of the message. Hunt says, “Faith in the central certainties of the gospel must bubble up effervescently in the preacher’s soul until its expression within its framework of reverent enthusiasm becomes urgently necessary” (50). Hunt claims that the evangelist’s message must contain clarity and persuasiveness in order to make the receptor aware of his or her situation and give the way out to freedom from sin.

### **Life Application Evangelism**

Hunt emphasizes that evangelistic preaching can fulfill its aim only when applied to the listener’s life. The evangelist is aware that a sermon without application is poor. The application makes the message relevant to the time and life of the listener. The heart of the evangelism is the life application. The evangelism of the Church aims to reach all people presenting them Christ. As a result the gospel becomes relevant to the life and needs of all generations (51).

Different approaches appear to the proclamation of the gospel. One of them is telling the stories to the gathered people. That kind of telling the story includes especially the story of Jesus and his love toward all humanity. N. T. Wright stresses that the understanding of the gospel is hidden in the form of a story:

In this regard it is important to understand that all human life is grounded in stories. Stories are not substitutes for facts or abstract truths; rather, they are the framework for understanding the world and cannot be reduced to maxim. People would understand the stories much easier. (135)

Preaching through stories has to be well prepared, so the listeners can connect the story to daily life.

Bloesch observes that in addition to other tensions in the reformation and renewal movements the emphasis remained on the witness of the word of God (180). This type of making disciples returned the Church to its evangelistic duty of introducing the word of God to the people. The church involved itself in society in all respects for the benefit of every human. The Church through evangelism becomes the presence of Christ in the world (181). Bloesch remarks that the truth of the gospel preached during the Reformation led the reformers as a divine revelation to something that was both objective and subjective. The objective nature of the truth in the development of the Reformation was, in reality, God's truth in the Bible. Through the Reformation the church got out of the frames of isolation and separation from the community and became part of the community. The church became evident by losing its subjectivity and presenting the gospel of Christ among the people.

### **Conclusion**

In each of these aspects of evangelism (biblical and theological), theologians in general agree that the church has lost its creativity and vitality. Through this study I concluded that evangelism involves not only preaching the biblical truths but also making disciples and offering spiritual and material support to people in the community. I faced the question of what kind of evangelism can be expected from the church in the present time and what would be the best way to communicate the gospel for Christian renewal to people in post-Communist Macedonia?

Recognizing that most effective way of communication with individuals and families is the door-to-door approach and personal conversation with people in Macedonia is important. Evangelism by the church in the early ages as described in the

Bible differs from evangelism of the church in the present time. Therefore, the door-to-door approach is biblical and the most practical way of evangelism in post-Communist Macedonia.

Progressive churches in different parts of the world have developed evangelism by recruiting clergy and laity, claiming, “every Christian is an evangelist.” Christian denominations encourage their members to be active and take responsibility for evangelizing the world. Churches build Christian faith in the lives of believers who respond to the evangelistic message by going and personal by meeting with nonbelievers.

Some scholars distinguish evangelistic sermons for unchurched people from worship services for church members. In some cases regular worship follows a more liturgical style. Wherever evangelistic style of worship is more present, the awareness of clergy and laity grows toward the need of closer communication with unchurched people. The evangelist is aware of people who are not acquainted with biblical truths. The biblical truths bring the message of Jesus Christ on the level of the listeners.

Facing Macedonian Christianity in the postmodern world is the question of whether the same style of evangelistic approach to the unchurched people as to the active believers is applicable for post-Communist Macedonia. In light of the background of the Macedonian culture, this research project suggests some activities of crucial importance, such as activating all members of the church, clergy, and laity and preparing them to be evangelistic. By such preparation the clergy and laity need to meet in person the unchurched people and unbelievers.

Through careful study of the literature on evangelism, I developed the appropriate evangelistic concepts and practices in order to shape the project and determine the best

evangelistic methods for the culture in post-Communist Macedonia. In this project I invited the participation of pastors and laity from any Christian denomination (including Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches) in Macedonia willing to participate in the project. This participation was scheduled to go door-to-door and meet people in person for witnessing and inviting them to evangelistic meetings.

The evangelizing church is aware of all kinds of responsibilities during and after evangelism. Evangelism is a responsibility for all Christian denominations in the world. With successful development of evangelism, a greater chance of cooperation and care for unchurched people might be raised. By trying to make disciples of Jesus Christ the Church keeps its identity and fulfills its duty in the world (2 Tim. 4:1-2).

### **Research Methods**

During the development of this research project, I used mostly mixed methods research to create a case study of the project. This method approach was most appropriate in the situation of multiethnic and multicultural Macedonia. The sources from which I collected the data were independently different and unique. John W. Creswell suggests that in organizing mixed methods research one has to be aware of the population with which he works (27). In this respect the qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection was most appropriate. The qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection and analysis was designed in order to strengthen the methodology of the project.

The qualitative approach is descriptive, inferential, and numeric in order to give a picture of the population engaged in the project. The approach was organized through

surveys and interviews with open-ended questions. This approach gave freedom and openness to the population to give their opinions freely.

In developing methodology of the research, I used framing research as a result of the personal attitude of the participants integrated into the community context. Ernest T. Stringer suggests that ethnographic type of methodology is closest to the participants' culture and most clearly reveals the development of the project research (25).

Working in a team building activity, the core team, Research Reflection Team, and I developed collaborative and constructive accounts based on dialogues and community organized actions.

Because of the need for use of different questions, I decided to use explanatory Case study research as Robert K. Yin suggests (13). The case study research was useful because in exploratory research designed questions I had multiple cases of evidence. This method led me to develop the research under the questions in Chapter 1. As a result, the core team and I created the survey questions to match the strategy of the project. We collected evidence from documents, observations, and interviews. This collection helped us to create a clearer picture of the project and gain better evidence for the research material.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Description of the Project

The primary purpose of this research project was to determine Communism's impact on evangelism in the former Yugoslavia and to determine the most effective form of evangelism in post-Communist Yugoslavia with a focus on Macedonia. Through careful study of the literature on evangelism, I developed the appropriate evangelistic concepts and practices in order to shape the project and to determine the best evangelistic methods for the culture in post-Communist Macedonia. In this project I enlisted the participation of pastors and laity either from the United Methodist Church or any Christian denomination (including Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches) in Macedonia willing to participate in the project.

I determined the best ways of evangelism through researching evangelism in the Bible and literature on evangelism, homiletics, theology, cultural differences, and the mobilization of laity. Then I introduced the project's vision to the Committee for Inner Evangelism of the United Methodist Church in Macedonia (Committee). The Committee accepted the idea of writing an invitation letter to all Christian churches in Macedonia (Appendix D). With the Committee I developed the project and implemented the research findings to improve evangelism methods in Macedonia.

Only four clergy responded to the invitation to participate in the project and were ready to cooperate and take on the project. The Committee promised their loyalty to work on the project. I decided to staff the project with the four clergy who responded to the letter of invitation. I set no special condition for selecting pastors and churches except

their willingness to cooperate in the project. These four selected pastors encouraged and included their respective churches' laity in the project. I encouraged those pastors by meeting with them, discussing their respective visions, and asking them to implement the project.

I invited the Committee to participate actively in the entire project and to work in coordination with me, with the four pastors, and with the pastors' respective laity willing to participate in the project. As a result the Committee and I encouraged pastors to invite all laity interested in project participation. With input from the Committee, I developed and sent a questionnaire to the four churches whose pastors responded to the invitation letter and their respective laypeople (see Appendix A). The project's core team consisted of two pastors from the United Methodist Church in Macedonia, one from the Evangelical Church in Macedonia, and one from the Pentecostal church in Macedonia. The questionnaire served to determine the spiritual level of believers interested in the project and to collect data for further development of the project.

The Committee elected a group of five persons and named them the Research Reflection Team. An economist, a lawyer, a medical doctor, a building engineer, and a salesmanager made up this group. The Research Reflection Team cooperated with me to prepare the pre-project, mid-project, and post-project questionnaires. As such these participants evaluated the questionnaire responses and cooperated with me and with the core team to direct and implement changes during the project. Thus, this group controlled the project's progress. The Research Reflection Team shared experiences of similar activities dealing with questions of evangelism in their local churches. The Research

Reflection Team presented suggestions to the Committee and core team for better progress of the project.

This project consisted of evangelistic meetings and activities in different parts of the Republic of Macedonia during 2005. Leaders organized the project in different periods of the year: —spring, summer, and fall— according to the engagement of people in agriculture.

The Committee and the core team provided an adequate supply of evangelistic literature either available from churches or specially printed for the project. The United Bible Society supplied New Testaments for free distribution. Evangelistic meetings were advertised in different ways. During regular church meetings church members were asked to invite relatives, friends, and all interested people to attend the evangelistic meetings. Also special advertisements in the local newspapers and radio stations invited all interested people to attend the meetings.

During market days in which many people came to sell or buy various products, church members met them, invited them, and gave them a special tract with information regarding evangelistic meetings close to their respective homes. These evangelistic meetings composed the main part of the project and began with local church members participating in the project and reaching unchurched people in cities, county towns, and villages.

Some people received information about evangelistic meetings during the distribution of humanitarian aid. In places without adequate church buildings, meetings took place in public halls, theaters, or other convenient locations at which people could communicate with the team and meet together for discussion, fellowship, and counseling.

In some cities the project developed its work on playgrounds and other public places for meeting with people, witnessing, singing, and preaching. In most of those places, volunteering music groups provided sound and audio equipment.

Due to this evangelistic project's public nature, the core team sought public security support. Some people exhibited bias against Christianity due to continued communist-atheist influence. I feared that such people would organize attacks on the meetings by throwing stones at windows or attacking individual people. As a result the core team and I required extra police security.

The core team and I shared project information with some Western churches, and the core team asked these churches to pray for the project and provide other important assistance. Such assistance included supplying clothing, medications, hygienic materials, and canned food. The core team included laypersons from the four churches participating in the project when evangelistic meetings took place in their cities and in other places.

Before the project started people desiring to participate in the project were invited to a seminar in which the core team gave instructions to the laity regarding the project and the importance of their participation. The instructors asked the participants to implement what they had learned through this training. As a result of the seminar, the participants improved their activities during the project.

During the first week of the outreach, participants undertook special preparation in prayer and training regarding witnessing. The participants received instructions for distribution in Christian literature and other materials. Attendants were taught to avoid arguing about superstitions, witchcraft experiences, traditions, and other stories leading away from the gospel. Instead, the core team and I encouraged participants to guide

people to return to their previous knowledge about Christianity. Paul's words to Timothy drew special attention. Paul said, "Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because as you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful" (2 Tim. 2: 23-24). In such cases laypeople were instructed to go forward.

The preceding week of each outreach consisted of meeting people on the street, in homes, or other places; witnessing to them; and, distributing Christian literature. During this evangelistic period, all pastors and lay participants were completely immersed in the local community by helping people with their daily physical and spiritual needs. Meeting physical needs included cooking and cleaning for handicapped persons, shopping for elderly people, distributing "meals on wheels" and doing many other similar works. While laypeople helped with physical needs, they were ready with talk to people regarding their spiritual needs. Many people were ignorant of their spiritual needs, so participants discussed topics such as salvation and peace with God and provide literature.

All persons contacted received an invitation to evening meetings that consisted of contemporary Christian music and short evangelistic messages ending with an invitation to repentance. The teams supplied campaigns with special evangelistic literature that challenged people to repent and pursue deeper Christian life. After the meetings time was reserved for counseling, prayer with new converts requesting further spiritual help, and supplying each person with a copy of the New Testament. Immediately following the evangelistic event, the core team and I reviewed the day, shared our experiences, and helped each other with difficult questions.

Every week of outreach consisted of daily counseling and discipling people to follow Christ. The core team and I prepared rooms for counseling during and after the evangelistic meetings. All converts received further spiritual growth through counseling. In this counseling the leading clergy were engaged. The evangelistic meetings increased local unchurched people's interest.

The project also included connections among the core team and business organizations, humanitarian organizations, and individuals willing to support the project with material help. The core team agreed to make connections with colleagues willing to support the project with prayers and donated supplies such as food, clothing, medications, and other materials. The core team and I also connected with local firms such as, "Solid," "Luks," and other organizations seeking to develop Christianity in the country. Further, the core team and I connected some humanitarian organizations from the West such as Samaritan's Purse, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), and other organizations ready to support Christianity in the region and provide assistance during economic transition.

In light of this humanitarian dimension, forming a humanitarian organization supported the project and responded to Macedonia's state government requirements. As a result humanitarian organization greatly helped the project. The core team and I agreed that the Evangelical Church in Macedonia should supervise the humanitarian organization. This organization's activity included members of all three participating denominations working on storage and distribution of materials to people in need. The core team and I accepted participation of the humanitarian organization in the project in order to provide good opportunity for reaching people. This work was helpful in meeting

people, opening them to conversation, and raising the subject of Christianity. Such people were willing to discuss God and faith. Further these people were open to receive evangelistic literature and respond to the evangelistic call.

### **Research Questions**

There were two main questions that led this research project and gave the core team and me a clear look at the development and success of the evangelism in the Republic of Macedonia.

#### **Research Question #1**

What was the level of understanding of Christian evangelism among the pastors and lay participants in the four Macedonian churches and regions prior to, during, and after the evangelistic training and interventions?

This question was raised in order to provide a better understanding of changing conditions in post-Communist Macedonia. Participating clergy persons explored this understanding and made better use of it during and after the project in their respective churches. Developing the understanding of this question helped churches to be more active in evangelism.

#### **Research Question #2**

In light of the findings identified by question one; what were the most effective methods for engendering practical evangelism in the former Yugoslavia, in general, and in Macedonia, in particular?

The project sought to develop different evangelism methods in the country and to demonstrate evangelism's importance by practically encouraging people and including them in all possible ways of evangelism.

## **Population and Sample**

The population for this study consisted of two main sections. The first section of the population consisted of four different groups who responded to the call for developing and finalizing the project. The first group was the Committee (seven laypeople) on evangelism in the United Methodist Church in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia. The second group, the core team, consisted of four clergy persons from three different Protestant denominations interested in evangelism. The third group consisted of eighty laypersons from four churches, and the fourth group consisted of five people selected as a Research Reflection Team to help evaluate responses from survey questionnaires. This Research Reflection Team represented an economist, a lawyer, a medical doctor, a building engineer, and a salesmanager. The Research Reflection Team received responsibility to prepare the pre-project, mid-project, and post-project questionnaires, to evaluate each questionnaire upon return, and to cooperate with me and with the core team to direct any changes needed to be implemented during the project.

The second main section was the target population, consisting of all evangelized people in the Republic of Macedonia. These individuals, mostly 18 years and above, attended the evangelistic meetings and accepted counseling and discipling. Those people present at the final meetings completed the post-project questionnaire. In this evangelistic project, 168 people responded to the call for counseling and discipling. Seventy-nine people returned the post-project survey.

## **Instrumentation**

The project made use of three instruments:

1. A researcher-developed pre-project questionnaire on evangelism sent to

the laity of the four participating churches (Appendix A) in order to determine understandings of evangelism and to help in gathering data for the project.

2. A researcher-created mid-project questionnaire (see Appendix B) I distributed in order to evaluate the project's effectiveness and provide data for any necessary intervention; and,

3. A researcher-designed post-project questionnaire (see Appendix C) distributed among the core team, their lay workers, and new converts in order to evaluate instrument for evaluation of the project. The Research Reflection Team evaluated the data obtained from these instruments.

The Research Reflection Team employed a street talk protocol for evaluating the instruments. The street talk protocol was an informal interview with participants to the evangelistic meetings. The street talk protocol was very useful material that gave the Research Reflection Team a clearer picture of the project's development. The street talk protocol gave data about what people said about the project. This protocol gave the Research Reflection Team a detailed overlook of instruments and their effectiveness.

### **Design of the Study**

Evangelism is a crucial element of the church's life. Without evangelism the Church is condemned to die or disappear. For forty-five years, atheistic rule exerted great pressure upon Christianity in Macedonia. Although weak and limited, the church survived and continued its witness to society. The purpose of this project was to find better ways for the church to be revitalized and activated to its duty of evangelism among Communist atheists or adherents of other religions.

In addition, some people claimed to be Christians but had lost the real vitality and experience of the Christian faith. Through evangelism people needed to be revived and activated for evangelism. Evangelism employs the full activity of every Christian. Every active Christian desires to make Christ known to others. Christianity tends to reveal its spiritual qualities to all people.

Many Christians in Macedonia still viewed evangelism as expecting evangelist preachers to come and speak from the pulpit while other people would listen and repent. Accordingly, these Christians still were not ready to evangelize outside the church through witnessing, making disciples, and helping people in their daily lives. The adult generation still feared whether it would be permitted to evangelize and do mission work outside the church or whether such work was still forbidden.

Raising Christians' awareness and motivating them to evangelize in new and more effective ways constituted the majority of this project's work. Accordingly, the project emphasized Jesus' Great Commandment to the Church in which he said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). Participants in this project emphasized this command during the project.

Making disciples was an action of personal witnessing the word of God. Doing evangelism involves more than traveling to other countries and preaching to the nations. Evangelism involves revealing Christ to all people, and sharing God's love in practical ways. This project aimed to develop evangelism that meets people's needs and presents them with the gospel.

I created the first evaluative instrument on the basis of the research question one (see Appendix A) I developed this instrument by setting common questions about the understanding and practice of evangelism prior to the project. With this instrument I sought to find out the difference of today's conditions in comparison with the conditions during the time of Communism. Looking at those differences, I developed questions in order to determine how to develop the project further. The main purpose of this instrument determined how people understood evangelism, and what they expected from this project in the Republic of Macedonia.

After administering the instrument, the Research Reflection Team made the evaluation. The Research Reflection Team employed descriptive questions as the most appropriate method for making a comparison between the conditions for evangelism in Macedonia during Communism and the expectations of evangelism in post-Communist times. The pastors and laity from the churches that responded to the project administered the evaluation. Data collected from this instrument gave the committee and me important insight regarding project implementation.

Together with the committee and the core team, I created the second evaluative instrument (see Appendix B). The purpose of this instrument was to determine the effectiveness of the project at its midpoint and to see how participants' understanding and practice of evangelism developed to that point in the study. The distribution of the questionnaire among the active laity who volunteered during the project governed this instrument.

The Research Reflection Team evaluated this instrument's data using the descriptive questions. I compared the data from this instrument with the evaluation of the

first instrument, and that data gave me a clearer picture of the project's development.

I designed the third evaluative instrument, (see Appendix C) with the core team at the end of the project in order to develop a general picture of the project's effectiveness and to discern methods of evangelism most effective for Macedonia in future evangelistic events. I administered the questionnaire to all converted participants and the lay leaders.

Although the purpose of this instrument was similar to the second instrument, namely to determine the project's effectiveness, the core team simplified this instrument because of the new converts' understanding of evangelism. The Research Reflection Team evaluated the data identified by this questionnaire in comparison with the results of the second instrument. The data received from this instrument was the most important material for determining future evangelistic outreach in Macedonia or any similar post-Communist developing country.

### **Data Collection**

The core team and I administered three questionnaires: the pre-project questionnaire, about three months before the project's beginning, the mid-project questionnaire half-way through the project, and the post-project questionnaire at the end of the last project outreach. I administered the first questionnaire to the four clergy persons and their churches in Macedonia. I sent the questionnaire by regular mail supplied with a paid addressed return envelope. During the project the core team and I administered the second questionnaire to the participating laypeople. With this questionnaire I sought to determine the project's progress and validity of the project.

I administered the third questionnaire to the core team, their laity, and people converted through the evangelistic outreach at the last evangelistic meeting. The

Research Reflection Team collected the questionnaire as people left the meeting. The administrator of the evangelistic meeting gave instructions at the time of announcements. I instructed core team members and the committee how to deal with questions that might arise during completion of the questionnaire. In addition to the three questionnaires, I administered the personal interviews with participants. They expressed their opinions about the evangelistic project. These interviews helped the core team and me to determine the best possible way of evangelism in the country under the new circumstances and in the new and democratic time.

### **Methodology**

The initial step in this research project consisted of my vision to organize Macedonian pastors and churches interested in Christianity's continual development in the country through evangelism. I shared my personal initiative with the Committee on Evangelism of the United Methodist Church in Skopje, Macedonia. Together with the committee, I invited all Christian denominations to participate in the project and thus to work on an ecumenical basis.

The committee and I distributed a special letter of concern and initiative (see Appendix D) and offered an invitation. I wrote the letter and the committee revised it and sent it out to clergy and leaders of all Christian denominations in the country. In the letter we described the need for evangelism in Macedonia and invited support and action regarding the initiative. The letter of invitation to the clergy requested project participation in an ecumenical approach. Further, the letter encouraged church laypeople to support the project. Both pastors and laypersons were required to agree personally with the initiative the project demanded.

The committee determined that a one-month period was an appropriate time frame in which the letter recipients could respond. After personal conversations with the four pastors who agreed to participate in the project, I organized a meeting with the pastors and laypeople in order to describe the project and its strategy. This meeting uncovered a need for appropriate training in evangelism for laypeople. As a result, the project expanded to include laity training (see Append. F).

This research's ecumenical nature included the United Methodist Church in Skopje (the capital of the Republic of Macedonia), the United Methodist Church in Bitola (second largest city), the Evangelical Church in Skopje, and the Pentecostal Church in Skopje. These churches' respective pastors served as the project's core team. Members of four participating churches cooperated by offering their time, knowledge, and energy for this initiative. The core team of four pastors named the project "A Help from God for Macedonia." This name focused on *help*. The core team prayed weekly for help for Macedonia, asking the Holy Spirit to prepare the nation for accepting the gospel. As a result any positive change was identified as the work of God for Macedonia. Christians cannot advance Christianity in Macedonia without God's help. Through this project, the team saw God's help in Macedonia by energetically and ecumenically preaching the gospel to all people in the country. This type of evangelism represented the main action for making friends and bringing them to salvation.

The core team took responsibility for announcing the project in their churches and inviting all Christians to pray and cooperate in the project. The core team advertised the project in church periodicals in order to inform all church members. The main requests asked for participants desiring to make friends and persuade them for Christ. The core

team also advertised the project in public newspapers and received more interest in the churches' plans regarding evangelism in Macedonia (see Appendix G).

During the project I used several connected and interdependent methods to develop evangelism in Macedonia. The first method developing evangelism in Macedonia involved friendship. Friendship represents a historical way of approaching people with the gospel. A part of the project friendship made the invitation to the evangelistic meetings only possible.

The second method for evangelism involved persuasion. This method is illustrated by many biblical examples (Luke 14:23; Acts 17:4; 18:4). Also Billy Graham suggests that Christians should bring people closer to God by friendly persuasion (*Peace with God* 207). Before the start of every evangelistic gathering, the pastors and laypeople persuaded people to come to the evangelistic meeting.

The third method for this project involved evangelistic sermons. The biblical sermons offered illustrations from the common life of the people as well as biblical examples. As the Bible was still unknown to most of the audience, speakers sought to prepare understandable, clear messages. Fourth, I instructed the participants to enter into dialogue with people rather than arguments. Fifth, discipleship followed up and built upon the basis of the sermon people heard and change experienced during evangelistic preaching.

Evangelism methods in this project's four geographical regions identified included such things as evening meetings featuring an evangelistic message and contemporary Christian music, daily visits and witnessing to people, organization of special short messages in schools, hospitals, and prisons, and the meeting of people's

needs for food, clothing, and health supplies. All of these actions sought to support relationship building in order to persuade people to follow Christ as Savior.

Other ways churches were involved in evangelism to the whole community included communicating with people regarding their physical and spiritual struggles and requesting permission from local and state authorities for free open-air meetings in public places. Additionally, the core team asked local police for support and protection from any attack by people or groups antagonistic to Christianity and its mission in the country. Leaders attended the laity training seminar at the beginning of the project (see Appendix F). This training session focused on communication skills such as using a friendly approach, identifying people's real needs, supporting people, and implementing appropriate evangelistic materials for persuading them for Christ. George E. Sweazey suggests that the effective evangelism is and will always remain as a fruit of persuasive approach to all people in all ages (79).

Prior to the project's beginning, the core team discussed methods for evangelism in Macedonia. In this project, I determined methods of evangelism through the collective vision and skills of the core team. The core team exhibited flexibility regarding possible need for correcting and changing actions and directing the project toward greater effectiveness. The core team sought to develop the project on the basis of evangelism as described throughout the Bible.

The core team used texts from Acts of the Apostles describing different ways of evangelism in the Early Church,

Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there.

When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. (Acts 8:4-6)

This text provided a base for reaching people, drawing their attention, preaching the gospel of Jesus, developing friendships, and persuading people for the gospel. Further, in Acts 13 the Holy Spirit sent Barnabas, Saul, and John to preach the gospel in Seleucia, Cyprus, and other places (Acts 13:4-5). The team found this text motivating and felt the same calling by the Holy Spirit.

The text from Acts 17:22-23 served as an inspiration to the team:

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said, “Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.”

This text served as an initiative to introduce interesting themes for evangelism from the audience’s daily experiences and to develop further the method of persuasion.

The experience in Athens encouraged Paul to preach in Corinth (Acts 18:9-10). God bade him not to fear but instead instructed him to stay and preach in that city. God asked Paul to develop friendship with the Corinthians instead of escaping the situation. Paul encouraged church elders by telling them of the manner in which he preached the gospel among them and prepared to suffer in many ways for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:17). In such manner, the core team witnessed God’s encouragement through the Scriptures rather than through circumstances or the people’s attitudes. Along

with the core team, I encouraged other project participants to work boldly without fear in approaching people and developing dialogue.

Paul witnessed to governors and kings such as Felix, Festus, and Agrippa. Paul was strong in persuading even the kings and ruling people of Rome (Acts 24). Often Macedonian people still feared that government would oppose and harm them. The core team and I encouraged participants to engage political leaders without fear. The core team held three main meetings for the project in order to determine whether the program should continue in the same manner or whether it needed modification in order to enhance its effectiveness. Those meetings were held usually during or after evaluation of each project's questionnaire.

### **Reliability and Validity**

To ensure face validity, I enlisted five people from Macedonia (a Research Reflection Team composed of a medical doctor, a lawyer, a businessman, a building engineer, and an economist) for a pilot test of the questionnaires (see Appendix A, B, and C). This Research Reflection Team gave suggestions regarding some grammatical errors. Further, they made some corrections regarding style, formatting, and removal, rephrasing, or addition of questions. The core team followed up and implemented most of the suggestions. I did not test the research project for reliability.

In order to understand evangelism better in present circumstances in comparison to the period of the Communist regime, in cooperation with the core team I made the major corrections in setting the questions. The core team substantiated the Research Reflection Team's validity by drawing from the same pool of people as the Committee on

Evangelism and the core team; thus, all of these people shared common Christian backgrounds. As a result they independently prepared and validated the material.

The Research Reflection Team used open-ended questions in order to provide better insight into data evaluation. The Research Reflection Team and I decided to select this method because it gave clearer picture of the project's development and results. After the analyzing pre-project survey responses, the project team developed mid- and post-project surveys featuring structured multiple-choice questions. This approach provided better insight into participants' understanding of evangelism methods.

The multiple-choice structured question survey was most reliable because the participants would understand evangelism better than they would during Communism. This multiple-choice structured survey provided a clear picture of the best ways to improve the success of the project. The Research Reflection Team and I found this evaluative method best for this project's validity and for the projects in different circumstances in the future. I did not test for validity.

### **Data Analysis**

The major statistical procedure employed for data analysis gathered from the pre-, mid-, and post-project questionnaires is expressed in table form in Chapter 4. This procedure proved to be appropriate for the project because of the overview such procedure gives based on answers from each questionnaire.

The Research Reflection Team and I analyzed data in order to determine the development of evangelism and the best practices for evangelism in post-Communist Macedonia through the one-year period of the project. The three data sets were employed

in order to compare the understanding of the pre-project nature of evangelism in Macedonia and the possibilities for new and better ways of evangelism in the country.

The project was unique in its nature and development. As a result the Committee, the core team and I determined the means, standard deviation, and the number of data points for each questionnaire by comparing traditional ways of evangelism with the new, modern ideas given as answers to the questionnaires. In the Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) the order of setting the components was Problem => Data => Analysis => Model => Conclusions. This method starts with the problem of evangelism, compares the problem with collected data, analyzes the data, and uses the model of evangelism the process brings to the final conclusion. As a result Exploratory Data Analysis provided me with the most appropriate statistical data analysis for this project.

### **Generalizability**

I delimited the project in order to include all Christian churches in Macedonia. The purpose of this study sought to find the best ways of evangelism in post-Communist Macedonia. This project can apply in the context of any local church or denomination. Findings of this study may relate to any Christian denomination interested in evangelistic outreach. Some modifications are needed for application in other cultural contexts because of the unique situation in Macedonia as a multiethnic, multicultural, multireligious, and multilingual country. Study results are summarized in Chapter 4 and evaluated in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

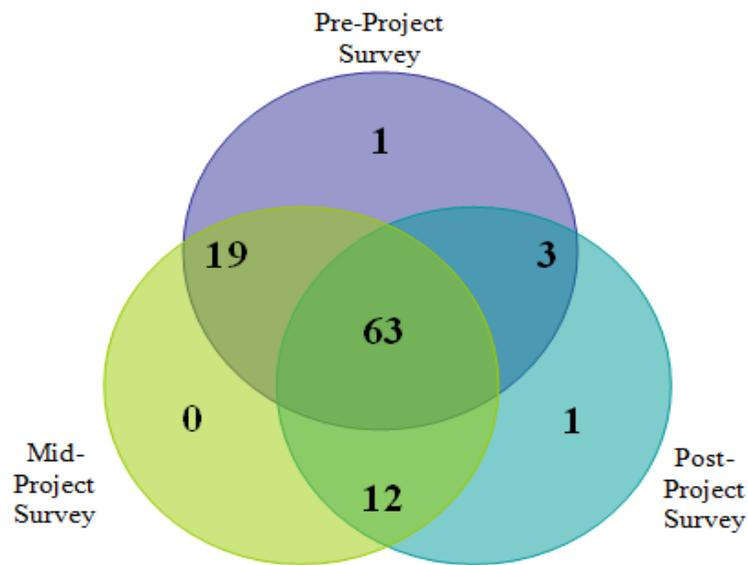
Evangelism differs depending on the circumstances, traditions, and culture of one nation compared with another. Research for this project was completed in Macedonia in 2005. The project took place when younger generations could not take enough advantage of newfound freedom, while older generations who had lived most of their lives under the communist regime had difficulty understanding the true meaning of democracy. This research sought to determine the best form of evangelism to make Christians aware of their responsibility in reaching present and future generations with the gospel.

#### **Profile of Participants**

All Christian denominations in Macedonia received an invitation letter to participate in this project. Four pastors responded positively, including two pastors from the United Methodist Church, one pastor from the Pentecostal church, and one pastor from the Evangelical Church of Macedonia. Participating congregation members received pre-, mid-, and post-project surveys. The total population for this study was ninety nine. This total included thirty nine individuals from the United Methodist Church of Skopje, 12 individuals from the United Methodist Church of Bitola, thirty three individuals from the Evangelical Church of Skopje, and fifteen individuals from the Pentecostal Church of Skopje.

Sixty-three individuals completed all three surveys (63.6 percent). Nineteen individuals (19.2 percent) completed the pre- and mid-project surveys but did not complete the post-project survey; twelve individuals (12.1 percent) completed the mid- and post-project surveys but did not complete the pre-project survey; and, three

individuals (3 percent) completed the pre-and post-project survey but did not complete the mid-project survey. In addition, one person completed only the pre-project survey, and one other person completed only the post-project survey (see Figure 4.1).



**Figure 4.1. Activity in completing the project surveys.**

Survey participants' ages ranged from 19 to 71; the average age was 49. Of the sixty-three participants responding to all three surveys, forty-one were male and twenty-two were female (see Tabs 4.1 and 4.2).

**Table 4.1. Age of survey participants**

<b>Age</b>	
Average	49
Minimum	19
Maximum	71
Median	54
Mode	23
Skew	-0.37424

**Table 4.2. Gender of survey participants**

<b>Gender</b>		
	Male	Female
Pre-Project Survey	53	33
Mid-Project Survey	54	40
Post-Project Survey	46	33

**Research Question # 1**

What was the level of understanding of Christian evangelism among the pastors and lay participants in the four Macedonian churches and regions prior to, during, and after the evangelistic training and interventions?

The descriptive data, drawn from analysis of the three surveys, provided a baseline of the participants' understanding of evangelism: what participants believed evangelism to be, what methods they counted as most effective, and what role denominational pride played in evangelistic activities.

The preproject survey questions were designed to reveal participants' level of understanding of evangelism in Macedonia prior to this project. The survey started with the questions, "What does evangelism mean? What is your definition of evangelism?" (see Appendix A).

The pattern of descriptors that resulted from response analysis provided insight into participants' understanding regarding the meaning of evangelism. Three major themes emerged from the analysis: Evangelism is (1) making disciples of Jesus Christ and helping these disciples build a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, (2) sharing the good news with others, and (3) inviting nonbelievers into the church (see Table 4.3).

Eighty-six participants (74 percent) defined evangelism as "making disciples of Jesus Christ." Nevertheless, two subthemes emerged under this response. One subtheme included a more positive spin, as participants' understanding was offering their love to help others build a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The other subtheme was more aggressive, indicating that Christians have to do anything in their power to convince others and make them Christians.

**Table 4.3. Pre-Project Survey Question Number 1**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 1: What is your definition of evangelism?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Convincing others to follow Jesus	20	23.25%
Helping others have a personal Relationship with Jesus Christ	44	51.16%
Sharing the good news with others	8	9.30%
Inviting non-believers into the church	14	16.28%

The next series of questions, in the pre-project survey measured the most expected methods of evangelism. As shown in Tables 4.4 and 4.5, question two revealed that 89.5 percent of respondents claimed that their church had nourished evangelism in the past fifteen years. In addition, 88.4 percent of responses to question three were positive, saying their church had actually undertaken evangelism projects in the past.

**Table 4.4. Pre-Project Survey Question 2**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 2: Has your church nourished Evangelism in the past fifteen (15) years?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	77	89.5%
No	9	10.5%

**Table 4.5. Pre-Project Survey Question 3**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 3: Has your church undertaken Evangelism projects in the past?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	76	88.4%
No	10	11.6%

The most popular evangelism methods in Macedonia prior to this project included distribution of literature (81.4 percent), encouragement for laity to invite neighbors to their local churches (63.95 percent), special music (56.98 percent), and youth concerts (25.58 percent; see table 4.6).

**Table 4.6. Pre-Project Survey Question 4**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 4: Which ways of evangelism were undertaken?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Distribution of literature	70	81.4%
Encouragement to invite neighbors to my church	55	63.95%
Special Music	49	56.98%
Youth Concert	22	25.58%
Other	17	19.77%

The majority of respondents (90.7 percent) agreed that the evangelism message developed by their church was welcoming (see Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7. Pre-Project Survey Question 5**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 5: What was the nature of the Evangelism message that your church developed?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Welcome to our Church	78	90.7%
Come to meet Jesus	6	6.98%
No response	2	2.33%

Survey responses analysis revealed patterns in participants' views regarding more effective evangelism initiatives (see Table 4.8). The most voiced pattern appeared preaching by a pastor and having choir music. Another pattern that emerged was preparing marketing materials for members to use when inviting neighbors and friends. Some participants specified that a good speaker can be their own pastor or a guest pastor. Nonetheless, if the local pastor was speaking a majority of subjects saw the need of inviting a guest choir. One participant was very concerned about evangelism and noted,

For any evangelism event, we always need something new. For example, if there are guest choirs coming to our church, my friend are more likely to come if they know something new and out of the ordinary is happening,

their curiosity level increases.

People will be more interested to come and listen when a good speaker and good music are organized during the evangelistic meeting (see Table 4.8).

**Table 4.8. Pre-Project Question 6**

<b>Pre-Project Question 6: Which of the following would you suggest are better ways for inviting non-churched individuals? (circle all that apply and add your comments below)</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Preparing good music (having choir music)	79	91.86%
Having a good speaker (preaching by a pastor)	85	98.84%
Distributing leaflets and brochures	63	73.26%
Personally inviting people	48	55.81%
Have special events outside the church building	26	30.23%

When asked of the most common response to their invitations a majority of participants (85percent) indicated positive response. (see Table 4.9). One participant said, “People are usually polite and kindly thank me and say they will do their best to come to church with me the following Sunday. Most of the time, they were open to my invitation. They might not come in the end, but initially their response is positive.” This claim indicates participants’ openness to the invitation.

**Table 4.9. Pre-Project Survey Question 7**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 7: What is the most common Response to the invitation you offer?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
I will come	73	84.88%
I will try to come	8	9.3%
I will not come	5	5.81%

The pre-project survey attempted to test the laypersons' willingness to engage in evangelism events held across denominations. Subjects were asked if and why they would cooperate with other Christian denominations in evangelism events (see Table 4.10). The ratio of *yes* to *no* answers was sixty-two to twenty-four (62:24).

**Table 4.10. Pre-Project Survey Question 8**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 8: Would you like to cooperate with other Christian denominations in special evangelism events?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	62	72.09%
No	24	27.91%

Participants in this project indicated they would seek support from other sources or denominations. Only 17.44 percent of responses indicated they would not ask for support. Of those who would seek support, only 11.27 percent suggested specific ways that they would seek support (see Table 4.11). Suggestions included promotional materials and free bibles (see table 4:12).

**Table 4.11. Pre-Project Survey Question 9**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 9: Do you plan to ask for support from other sources and/or denominations?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	71	82.56%
No	15	17.44%

**Table 4.12. Pre-Project Survey Question 9**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 9: If yes, in what ways?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Free Bibles	5	62.5%
Brochures	2	25%
Flyers	1	12.5%

When participants were asked whether they would be opposed to inviting evangelists from other denominations in question 10 (see Table 4.12), data revealed a positive relationship among the responses of question 8 (see Table 4.10). The majority of participants (70.93 percent) expressed no opposition to inviting evangelists from other denominations. Nevertheless, nearly one third of the respondents were opposed to inviting evangelists from other denominations. This finding appeared to be significant because it revealed that 29.07 percent of participants did not truly understand the meaning of evangelism and making disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Table 4.13. Pre-Project Survey Question 10**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 10: Would you be opposed to inviting evangelists from other denominations?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	25	29.07%
No	61	70.93%

Fifty-nine participants (68.6 percent) noted in response to question 11 of the preproject survey that inviting their friends would be easier if they were better prepared (see Table 4.14). Suggestions included that if the pastor had prepared brochures and leaflets they would be more daring to knock on others' doors and share the gospel. If Christians have something to hand out to their friends, they would use the opportunity to

start conversation. Data of this question revealed that 65 percent of participants often do not feel empowered and equipped as laypersons to engage in evangelism efforts.

**Table 4.14. Pre-Project Survey Question 11**

<b>Pre-Project Survey Question 11: What are your expectations of this project?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Be prepared to invite my friends to church	59	68.60%
To be equipped as lay evangelist	56	65.12%
Equip our congregation to be evangelistic	1	1.16%
Unanswered	24	27.91%

After the pre-project seminar, I asked the participants to invite nonchurched persons to a number of events organized by congregations participating in this research. Evangelism events following the pre-project survey included revival services, Sunday morning services, and Christian music concerts. Congregations held such events throughout the duration of this project. The mid-project survey evaluated subjects' attitudes and interests toward these evangelism efforts.

Ninety-four participants in this project completed the mid-project survey. Eighty-two participants had already completed the pre-project survey, and twelve participants had not returned the pre-project survey (see Table 4.15).

**Table 4.15. Mid-Project Survey Question 1**

<b>Mid-Project Survey Question 1: Did you complete the pre-project survey?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	82	87.23%
No	12	22.34%

In order to ensure that participants understand their roles in this project, the core team and I asked subjects if instructions were clear (see Table 4.16) and whether handouts, leaflets, and brochures were clear and easy to understand (see Table 4.17). Most participants (97 percent) indicated that they understood the instructions. Only 3 percent of respondents indicated that handouts, leaflets, and brochures were not clear and easy for people to understand.

**Table 4.16. Mid-Project Survey Question 2**

<b>Mid-Project Survey Question 2: Were the instructions clear to understand your role in this project?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	94	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 4.17. Mid-Project Survey Question 3**

<b>Mid-Project Survey Question 3: Were the handouts, leaflets and brochures clear and easy to understand for people?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	91	96.81%
No	3	3.32%

Survey subjects said that 337 nonchurched individuals were invited to these evangelism events. Participants' responses to question 4 indicated that a majority of the nonchurched persons showed a positive attitude: One hundred and fifty-five individuals (45.99 percent) were very interested; 146 individuals (43.32 percent) were curious; and, thirty-two individuals (9.5 percent) showed no interest (see Table 4.18). Four individuals (1.19 percent) voiced opposition to the invitation.

**Table 4.18. Mid-project Survey Question 4**

<b>Mid-Project survey Question 4: Of all the people you invited to the evangelism events, what was their attitude? (Please include the number of the individuals you invited according to their interest level.)</b>		
Very Interested	155	45.99%
Curious	146	43.32%
Not Interested at all	32	9.5%
Opposed	4	1.19%
<b>Total non-churched persons invited</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>100%</b>

When participants rated styles of evangelistic meeting, they observed to be most interesting for those evangelized, a majority (52.13 percent) answered contemporary worship, 36.17 percent said traditional sermons, and 11.70 percent liked traditional church music (see Table 4.19).

**Table 4.19. Mid-Project survey Question 5**

<b>Mid-Project survey Question 5: What style of evangelism event was most interesting for people?</b>		
Traditional worship	4	36.17%
Traditional Church Music	1	11.70%
Contemporary worship	9	52.13%

Positive relationship appeared between response to an invitation at the altar call and the request for Bibles and other Christian literature (see Tables 4.20 and 4.21).

People ask for more Christian literature to be distributed. The project experienced a great request for Bibles in the local language.

**Table 4.20. Mid-Project Survey Question 6**

<b>Mid-Project survey Question 6: In your opinion, in general, what was the response to the invitation at the Altar?</b>		
Followed by many	78	82.98%
Followed with hesitation	13	13.83%
Followed poorly	1	1.06%
I saw almost no response	2	2.13%

**Table 4.21. Mid-Project Survey Question 7**

<b>Mid-Project survey Question 7: How strong was the request for Bibles and Christian literature?</b>		
Very strong	69	73.40%
Somewhat strong	15	15.96%
Weak	6	6.38%
Very Weak	4	4.26%

The next series of questions (questions 8-10) collected information about the process of the project. No significant comments were made when asked for recommendations for the project (see Table 4.22).

**Table 4.22. Mid-Project Survey Question 8**

<b>Mid-Project survey Question 8: Do you have any recommendations for this project?</b>		
Having handouts and brochures is helpful	11	1.01%
No recommendations	93	98.94%

All respondents were willing to continue their involvement with this study (see Table 4.23) and also all responded positively when asked if their pastors were cooperative throughout this project (see Table 4.24).

**Table 4.23. Mid-Project Survey Question 9**

<b>Mid-Project Survey Question 9: Would you be willing to follow through the rest of this project?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	94	100%
No	0	0%

**Table 4.24. Mid-Project Survey Question 10**

<b>Mid-Project Survey Question 10: Are the pastors cooperative in your needs throughout this project?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	94	100%
No	0	0%

**Research Question # 2**

In the Light of the findings identified by question one, What were the most effective methods for engendering practical evangelism in the former Yugoslavia, in general, and in Macedonia, in particular?

The post-project survey mainly focused on evaluating the observed behavior of those evangelized and the openness to evangelism of the population in post-Communist Macedonia. By doing so, I searched for data to answer the second research question, The project sought to develop different ways of evangelism and to demonstrate the importance of evangelism by practical encouragement of laypeople in the church.

The post-project survey was completed by seventy-nine participants at the end of the evangelism events that took place throughout this project. Sixty-six of those participants had completed the pre-project survey as well (see Table 4.25) and seventy-five participants had completed the mid-project survey (see Table 4.26).

**Table 4.25. Post-Project Survey Question 1**

<b>Post-Project Survey Question 1: Did you complete the pre-project survey?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	66	83.54%
No	13	16.46%

**Table 4.26. Post-Project Survey Question 2**

<b>Post-Project Survey Question 2: Did you complete the mid-project survey?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	75	94.94%
No	4	5.06%

For each event, participants were encouraged to invite non-churched persons personally. Television and newspaper ads were placed, and other individuals were invited during acts of humanitarian aid such as providing food and clothes to needy families. Personal invitation was perceived to be the most effective way of evangelism (see Table 4.27). In addition, 64.56 percent thought that humanitarian aid was also an effective way

to invite others to the church. Television ads were believed by 20.25 percent to be effective, while newspaper ads were perceived to be effective by only 10.13 percent.

**Table 4.27. Post-Project survey Question 3**

<b>Post-Project survey Question 3: What advertising methods do you think were most effective? (circle up to two)</b>		
TV	16	20.25%
Newspaper	8	10.13%
Personal Invitation	75	94.94%
Humanitarian aid	51	64.56%

Participants in this project reported that the most attention-grabbing elements of the evangelism events for the invited unchurched people included music, sermons, and counseling by scoring above the seventy-fifth percentile, while liturgy was selected to be valuable by only three respondents (see Table 4.28).

**Table 4.28. Post-Project survey Question 4**

<b>Post-Project survey Question 4: What elements of the evangelism events do you think were most attractive to people? (circle all that apply)</b>		
Music	72	91.14%
Sermon	75	94.94%
Liturgy	3	3.8%
Counseling	60	75.95%
Other	0	0%

Prior to this project, all worship in the participating congregations was done in a traditional style, which included traditional hymns and liturgy. However, part of this project was to evaluate the acceptance of contemporary styles of worship as a mean of evangelism. The contemporary worship style included upbeat music and casual atmosphere. Nearly Half of the participants (49.37 percent) assessed contemporary worship as being a valuable means of evangelism, and 50.63 percent did not. (see Table 4.29).

**Table 4.29. Post-Project survey Question 5**

<b>Post-Project survey Question 5: In your opinion, how attractive was the contemporary style of worship?</b>		
Good	39	49.37%
Somewhat Good	2	2.53%
Not Good	38	48.1%

In addition, at each event during this project, volunteer greeters stood at the entrance at the beginning and at the end of the event. Their task was to shake hands, speak to, and welcome anyone who came in. Participants in this project gave their opinion on how important the greeters were in the evangelism events. No one thought they did not make much difference, while 94.94 percent thought they were very important and 5.06 percent expressed that they were somewhat important (see Table 4.30).

**Table 4.30. Post-Project survey Question 6**

<b>Post-Project survey Question 6: How important do you think are the warm greeters at the entrance?</b>		
Very important	75	94.94%
Somewhat important	4	5.06%
Didn't make much difference	0	0%

When participants were asked to evaluate how clear the message was during the evangelism events and whether the altar call was personal, 83.54 percent responded positively (see Table 4.31).

**Table 4.31. Post-Project Survey Question 7**

<b>Post-Project survey Question 7: In general, do you think the message was clear and the altar call personal?</b>		
Yes	66	83.54%
Somewhat	1	1.27%
No	12	15.19%

In attempt to answer the first research question fully, “What was the level of Christian understanding of evangelism in Macedonia prior to, during, and after the project?” the eighth question of the post-project questionnaire measured the willingness of veteran Christians to accept further spiritual instruction (see Table 4.32). Seven respondents, or only 8.86 percent, felt satisfied with their knowledge and indicated they did not need further spiritual instructions. One response read, “I have learned the most important things of Christian life through my experience, and I don’t think I need much further instruction.” However, the majority of post-project respondents believed they did need further spiritual instruction. Comments of those thirsting for further spiritual instruction portrayed the never ending need to grow in their Christian understanding. One

respondent noted, “Spiritual instructions are our daily need, and they should never stop in our life.” Another respondent’s comment included, “The Bible is very rich and my soul is weak. I desperately need more instruction.”

**Table 4.32. Post-Project Survey Question 8**

<b>Post-Project survey Question 8: Do you, as a Christian, would like further spiritual instructions or do you feel everything you need you have acquired?</b>		
Yes	72	91.14%
No	7	8.86%

Respondents were asked to suggest ways that in their own opinion will serve to approach the needs of people better. The major theme that emerged from 60.76 percent of the respondents was the need to be better equipped, whether for spiritual discipling or availability of Christian literature (see Table 4.33). Others, at 21.52 percent of respondents, believed that social assistance through humanitarian aid was important. In addition, 10.13 percent of respondents believed that advertising of the church was necessary, whether through newspaper, television, or radio ads.

**Table 4. 33. Post-Project Survey Question 9**

<b>Post-Project survey Question 9: What would you suggest for better approach to the needs of people?</b>		
Spiritual discipling	24	30.38%
Christian literature	24	30.38%
Social assistance (humanitarian aid)	17	21.52%
Advertisements (newspapers, TV, radio)	8	10.13%
Other	6	7.76%

Questions 10-12 of the post-project survey measured the conditions for evangelization in post-Communist Macedonia. In question 10, respondents voiced one overriding theme: the freedom in the post-Communist society (91.14 percent). Other themes that emerged included the ability to go to church without a fear of who might know about it (73.42 percent), the ability to pray without fear (24.05 percent), the experience of peace of mind (17.72 percent), and the increased thirst for growth in their own spiritual life (11.39 percent; see Table 4.34).

**Table 4. 34. Post-Project Survey Question 10**

<b>Post-Project Survey Question 10: What condition differences there are between the evangelism in communist time and now?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Freedom	72	91.14%
Go to church without fear	58	73.42%
Ability to pray without fear	19	24.05%
Peace of mind	14	17.72%
Grow in my Christian faith	9	11.39%
Being able to spread the good news	4	5.06%

When respondents were asked to list what had led them to a better understanding of the gospel in the present time compared to the time during Communism, several themes emerged, including the freedom to attend church regularly, availability of frequent evangelistic meetings, small group Bible study at the church and in private homes, and the availability of Christian literature and the Bible in their own language (see Table 4.35).

**Table 4.35. Post-Project Survey Question 11**

<b>Post-Project Survey Question 11: What has led you to better understanding of the gospel in the present time compared to the communist time?</b>		
	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
The Bible in my own language	54	68.35%
Frequent evangelistic meetings	48	60.76%
Small groups Bible Study at church	39	49.37%
Small groups Bible Study in private homes	30	37.97%
Availability of Christian literature	15	18.99%
Freedom to regularly attend church	9	11.39%

Only ten respondents (12.66 percent) gave answers to the last question of the post-project questionnaire when asked, “Do you have any comments about the possibilities for evangelism at the present time?” Respondents agreed that the

possibilities were great and that church members need to be more active in communicating with people and inviting them to the church. One respondent said, “Now is the best time, but the devil is strong opposing Christians. Therefore we need unity in prayer and work in teams.” Another respondent noted that church members need better education regarding persuading people for the gospel. Finally, one respondent strongly believed in the church providing social assistance saying, “For drawing the attention of people toward the spiritual things more easily, we need to help them materially. There is still need of humanitarian aid to help people who struggle physically to turn them toward spiritual needs.” The economical transition confuses people and the need to help them is crucial. Humanitarian help opens interest to the gospel message.

Evaluation findings determined if intervening variables of gender or age impacted the outcomes. While gender did not affect any significant differences, age played a dominant role in the preference for contemporary or modern worship compared to traditional worship. While younger generations (40 years old and younger) preferred contemporary service styles with modern music and a casual atmosphere, older generations generally preferred traditional old hymns and using liturgy throughout worship. This data was extracted from evaluations based on mid-project survey question 5 and post-project survey question 5. Further, each survey asked for the participants’ ages (see Table 4.36).

**Table 4.36. Participant's Age in the Surveys and Worship Preference**

	<b>Average Age</b>	<b>Maximum Age</b>	<b>Minimum Age</b>	<b>Median Age</b>
Contemporary Worship	34	64	19	33.5
Traditional Worship	58	71	23	59

### **Summary of Significant Findings**

1. A comparison of the results of the mid- and post-project surveys with the pre-project survey revealed a positive improvement in the understanding of evangelism by the participants from the four churches.
2. Persons mostly respond positively to preaching from the pastor and appreciate a good choir.
3. Persons need to be better equipped and trained for ways to share the good news more effectively with nonchurched members.
4. Laypeople take pride in their own denomination and fear interdenominational proselytizing; therefore, people fail to understand the meaning of evangelism and making disciples of Jesus Christ.
5. The most effective approach for inviting nonchurched persons is through personal invitation and showing personal interest in them.
6. A post-Communist society offers great potential for evangelization among nonchurched persons due to a new sense of freedom.
7. The growing importance of having both traditional and contemporary worship styles holds the interest of both older and younger generations.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

A diligent student of Christian evangelism finds different types of evangelistic approaches (Green 50-75). Some types of evangelism are culturally specific while other types of evangelism prove to be practical and important across cultures. The Gospel message the Church proclaims at present time does not change. The Gospel concerns the human situation of sinfulness and need of reconciliation with God.

The good news about Jesus Christ brings people into a restored relationship with God and transforms the whole life by giving new meaning and changing human perspectives. The gospel also teaches people to recognize and accept their responsibility for the environment and care for nature. The good news brings people to enjoy the social, economic, political, cultural, religious, and other environmental privileges in their physical life. Further the good news offers peace with God through Jesus Christ in the spiritual lives of Jesus' followers.

God invites people to live in harmony and peace with him as creator and in harmony with other people around them. People of all ages are invited equally to God through Jesus Christ and treated as God's children in urgent need of God's mercy and salvation given through Jesus Christ.

#### **Major Findings**

Working on this research project I faced several findings that need to be discussed in order to improve the quality of evangelism in Macedonia in the future.

##### **1. Understanding of Evangelism**

The pre-project seminar contributed a positive change in participants'

understanding of evangelism at the beginning of the project. Pre-project seminar participants expressed their enthusiasm in developing new kinds of evangelism in modern and more effective ways. They expressed eagerness regarding project outcomes. Seminar participants gave accounts of their experience through the post-project questionnaire, expressing their enthusiasm in seeing the big difference in the lives of people. Participants expressed benefits of their new attitude to God by responding to his love to all people and loving one another the share peace and joy.

The participants of the four churches through the pre-project seminar received these project findings in a positive manner. Significant changes in the understanding of evangelism appeared. As noted in Chapter 3, consequent understandings of evangelism during the Communist period were limited to expository preaching. That kind of preaching functioned in limited conditions, because the Communist regime did not allow evangelizing people in their homes or locations outside registered and strongly controlled church buildings.

To understand evangelism better according to the description of evangelism in Chapter 2 of this research involves returning to the roots Jesus established with his disciples. These persons and the Church after them went about making disciples, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and communicating the gospel to the world. As noted in Chapters 1 and 3 of this research, this understanding of evangelism was not limited to interpreting the word of God preaching in the church, or other activities, but instead used all possible ways to reveal Christ to all the world and share God's love in practical ways. Christians include more positive signs as evangelism offers better understanding God's love and helps others build personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The other sign indicated that Christians should convince others to follow Jesus Christ. This project fulfilled my long-held expectation that the Macedonian people should receive the gospel. Many generations being lost through the darkness of atheism would be renewed through the gospel.

## **2. The Role of Preaching and Music**

In spite of the development of new types of evangelism, the older generation of the evangelized people still mostly responded to preaching from the pastor. Contemporary music made responding to the gospel easier for the younger generation. Many evangelized attendees also expressed appreciation for choral music. This attitude showed that the post-Communist society experienced a quick change toward contemporary ways of evangelism.

People hear the good news and expect the gospel to provide an answer to the problems and questions they have concerning their spiritual lives. Evangelistic preaching brought the listener to self-recognition. People recognized themselves as lost in their sinful situations trying to find a way out. Preaching of the good news gives people the answer and solution to their situation and calls them to repentance.

As a result evangelistic preaching as described in Chapter 2 of this research involves proclaiming the gospel message to all people. The joy of people who have received Christ resulted from attending contemporary worship or choir singing. Also, the right use of illustrations took place in enlightening the focus of the message. Short illustrations especially designed for particular points in the message strengthened the whole message and brought the receptor to a clearer understanding of the gospel and a stronger decision.

### **3. Training for Effective Evangelism**

Participants from the four churches soon recognized that evangelism was their duty as noted in Chapter 2 when Francis of Assisi claims by “even using the words”(Pio 1). This project proved evangelism as a duty of every Christian. Every Christian recognizes God’s gift to him or her and share God’s love by loving all people and sharing the gospel with everyone. The results of the project showed that volunteers from the four churches needed better equipping with evangelistic materials and biblical knowledge in order to reach and communicate with all levels of people. As a result the pre-project seminar was very important for the volunteers. These volunteers learned how to distribute Christian literature and witness to people, persuading them to come to the evangelistic meeting. Also the seminar participants were instructed in discipling new believers by using the Bible and other Christian literature.

The need for training is expressed in the section on mobilizing laity in chapter 2 of this research. During this evangelistic project the need for stronger effect of laypeople appeared as very important to accomplish the evangelistic work by sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with non-believers. By training the laypeople in the church, I found that the church fulfills its evangelistic strategy in the world.

In this research project, I tried to train the speakers to be as direct in their call for decision and conversion as possible. People mostly make decisions after such a call. Accordingly, speakers made the call clear and personal, and many people from the audience responded.

### **4. The Attitude of Laypeople Toward Cross-Denominational Evangelism**

This project revealed the reason some churches do not like to cooperate or to

allow their laity to be active in evangelism. They are proud of their own denomination. Some clergy people indicated that their denomination was the right one and all other Christian movements were heretical. I tried to persuade these people that this evangelism is not proselytizing the members from one Christian denomination to another but is bringing them to spiritual renewal in their Christian lives. In the pre-project seminar I discussed evangelism methods and tried to keep the participants away from disregarding other Christian denominations.

During the pre-project seminar, I taught the participants that evangelism demands a personal response of every person to the Lord. Evangelism is biblical, practical, and persuasive and has life application. Fear of proselytizing members had no place. This project invited all Christian denominations in Macedonia to work together for spiritual renewal. The project leadership worked hard against proselytizing Christians because many people lost their identity as Christians during the Communist rule. The project was designed to bring such people to Christ.

In this new democratic time, the Church faces the great challenge of encountering all levels of people in order to reach all people for Christ. This challenge is even greater in light of Macedonia's and the former Yugoslavian states' multiethnic, multireligious, and multicultural characteristics. Without deeper understanding of differences among Christian denominations, people are proud of their own denomination or as they usually call it, "their church." They usually claim that their denomination is the best, and they do not accept any change and do not attend any meeting that does not include their denomination's authorities or does not have their church authorities' approval. For many Christian denominations, the fear of interdenominational proselytizing is such a major

issue that they do not even want to discuss any idea of deeper Christian or spiritual life. The fear from proselytizing is present by the hierarchy of some Christian denominations in the country. The clergy people of some denominations do not recognize the authority of the gospel. Through this research project, I wanted to transcend denominational barriers; therefore, this project worked on an interdenominational basis.

### **5. Effective Approach to Unchurched People**

This research project drew me to investigate how the good news about Jesus Christ was proclaimed in the past so that I could direct this project toward better success in reaching all genders and ages of people today. I learned that in the feudal period in the middle of the nineteenth century, on a market Saturday morning, an unknown man stood on the small hotel balcony in the center of the town of Radovish, Macedonia, and began to preach to a group of people who came to get their supplies in the village. A multitude of people gathered to hear what this stranger was preaching in broken Macedonian language. Many of them believed in the gospel he preached. Through that way of preaching, the gospel came to that town and other regions in Macedonia. Later the mission station in Thessalonica supplied this region with Bibles and other Christian literature.

In comparison to this story, I found that the present experience of evangelism differs in many ways from that time. After Communism failed, people would not be drawn by chance and be interested in standing and listening to the message of an unknown person. Communist teaching taught people to be wary of any unadvertised message and anything from an unknown person.

Preaching in this project was advertized by as many means as possible. People usually believe officially recognized news edited or censored by the authorities. The place of preaching had to be set in advance, advertized, and secured from any kind of interruption. If that place would be a church building or any place with mostly church official's presence, it would be most accepted and trusted for preaching.

This research project developed several different approaches to proclaiming the gospel to the post-Communist society in Macedonia. Personal witness, social assistance, evangelistic preaching, both liturgical and contemporary music, disciple making, and growth to Christian maturity are the approaches that attendees accepted most. This research project showed that the Church is in great need of constantly finding new and innovative ways to attract people from all age groups according to their experiences or expectations. The major discussion with the Committee and the core team was on finding more effective ways of approaching and inviting people to the evangelistic meetings and to activities in the church. Therefore, a larger group of laypeople was invited to help. As this group of people came from the four churches, I organized the pre-project seminar in order to instruct them on how to approach people more effectively and raise interest in them to come to the evangelistic meetings. Personal conversation with nonbelievers engendered interest by the laypeople to understand evangelism as the fruit of love explained in Chapter 2.

Approaching people with Christian literature or humanitarian aid were the most effective ways of personal evangelism. This project helped the laity to continue this way of approaching people and drawing their attention to the gospel even in the times after the project. All volunteers in the project found the most effective approach for inviting non-

churched persons to the evangelistic meetings through personal communication and invitation. This approach illustrates the parable of Jesus in Mathew 22:2-10, in which the master prepared a big wedding. In order to have the wedding room full, the master sent his servants to invite every individual to come to the wedding ceremony. "So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests" (Matt. 22:10). Persuasion is an important part of evangelism.

Most large gatherings started after individual communication with people, persuading them and inviting them to come. According to my experience and the evidence of post-project survey question 5, success in attendance depended very much on the kind of approach and the strength of persuasion to the individuals. This effective approach to people is a result of what the core team learned from Acts 8:4-6 in approaching people in friendly and persuasive manner. This text was the basis for reaching unchurched people, developing mutual friendships with them, and persuading them for the gospel of Jesus. The section on mobilizing laity in Chapter 2 also deals with this effective approach.

I recognized that people in general have not changed in their nature. They still are as sensitive and emotional as ever. The preaching and especially the climax of preaching, the invitational appeal to the altar for repentance, mostly touches their emotions and brings them to decision. Evangelistic preaching, as much as contemporary singing, makes people more receptive to the message. Therefore, the appeal for repentance and conversion is as powerful as it was during, and after the political changes that have taken

place in former Yugoslavia. Positive and emotional appeal is the crucial element of evangelistic preaching.

I discovered that the message of evangelistic preaching is very connected to the life of every individual without any cultural difference. The listeners are communicating with the evangelist and believe that everything the evangelist preaches is worth accepting and being understood as something practical and important for future physical and spiritual life. Through the evangelistic preaching, I found that catching the interest of all receptors makes the gospel a joyful message to the individual that touches the inner being of both youth and adult equally. The whole evangelistic event makes people think about their salvation and at the end of the event they make the final decision in accepting Christ as their personal savior and Lord.

## **6. Freedom as a Great Opportunity for Evangelism**

A post-Communist society offers great potential for evangelism among nonchurched persons because there is a new sense of freedom. The Communist way of thinking in general was called *single-thinking*. This expression came from Communist centralized authority and command. The Communist regime, through the educational system, indoctrinated a way of thinking that new generations had to follow. They had to think in the atheistic way and no other way of thinking would be progressive or acceptable for them. Special prisons were full of other thinking people who were submitted to brainwashing in order to become single thinking like others who, by fear, were pressed to silence and obedience.

In the post-Communist society a great potential for evangelism emerged among nonchurched persons because they experience a new sense of freedom. People of the

younger generation for the first time in their lives sensed a real freedom to think and act as they found best in a democratic way of thinking. They no longer had rules from other persons or authorities to shape their thoughts and decisions. They would no longer lose their occupations for professing the Christian faith. For the first time, people experienced freedom to integrate their beliefs with their occupations. No more either/or (either Christianity or occupation), but every person was free to make his or her own decision to follow the Christian faith without interrupting his or her occupation.

### **7. Catching the Interest of all Generations through Both Traditional and Contemporary Worship Styles**

I discovered, through this project, many different circumstances that caused the conditions for evangelism in Macedonia and the former Yugoslav regions to differ from other regions and from previous historical periods and political contexts. The historical, political, and religious experiences of Macedonia and former Yugoslavia made the population more interested in better society by giving all generations a chance to come into relationship with God through Jesus Christ as the only risen savior.

Both the older and the younger generations participated in the project. The older generation was more comfortable with the traditional worship, comparing with what they had heard or experienced in the past. During the Communist era, some people visited the monasteries under the guise of enjoying the tourist attraction but attended the traditional liturgical worship services, baptized their infants, or celebrated weddings. Others remembered the time of their childhood or early youth before the Communist regime came into power. When they learned through religious education some of the prayers and Christian expressions that remained in their memory all their lives.

The younger generation manifested ignorance to most Christian qualities experienced in the past by the older generations. They showed interest in the witness of the gospel through the lives and practice of Christians in the present. They found the gospel relevant to their time and lifestyle by the way of witness and by the contemporary style of singing and worshipping God.

Through catching the interest of both generations a connection appears to the discussion in the conclusion of the research review in Chapter 2. The connection is made by the claim of Arias who calls the message of the kingdom of God a *Costly discipleship* because it gives the answers to all questions, remedy for all evils, joy in the new life. The message of the gospel presents challenges, demands, and tasks in the kingdom of God (89).

The older generation still enjoyed the traditional type of evangelistic meetings. The younger generation was influenced by the new contemporary worship style. This young generation requested more music in the evangelistic meetings and appeared more prepared to understanding the message. Recognizing this importance of providing a contemporary style of worship, I decided to have both traditional and contemporary worship in order to hold the attention of both older and younger generations. As emphasized by Hunt (69).

### **Implications of Findings and Practical Application**

Based upon the experience of this research project, several implications appeared as helpful and suitable for use in further development of evangelism in Macedonia, specifically, and the former Yugoslavian territories, in general. As already noted, after the fall of Communism, new conditions for evangelism in Macedonia appeared. These new

conditions urge everybody who wants to develop evangelism in the country to use all possible opportunities of freedom because people still fear that the freedom the nation experiences might be taken away again.

Evangelism in Macedonia has enormous freedom that was not experienced for a long time. This freedom implies using media, buildings, open air grounds, all possible music and speaking instruments and all available people called by God to spread the good news to the nation. Also a great potential in using all types of technology that would improve the understanding of the gospel and by the use of visual and other aids help people better understand the message of the gospel.

Prior to the research project, the volunteers understood very little of the breadth of possibilities for evangelism. The experience of how much can be accomplished through evangelism surprised the people who were involved in the project.

The findings and implications of this research project will be of benefit to all local churches and Christian denominations in Macedonia and in the former Yugoslavian countries that would undertake evangelism. Knowing the conditions in most of the independent states of former Yugoslavia, this project would help to identify ways of approaching every individual and catching their interest in the gospel. Especially the pre-project seminar should be more attentive to the religious community being evangelized (atheistic, Muslim, or other) in order to prepare evangelists better for the outreach.

In order to have an organized and successful project, this research suggests several steps to be taken in the future:

1. Better development of the seminar material and a deeper look into the literature that needs to be distributed among people;

2. More and deeper persuasive work with other Christian denominations in the area in order to get better connection and coverage of the population being evangelized;
3. Extreme care with other religious groups present in the area in order not to raise religious intolerance or enmity;
4. More open and closer dialogue and cooperation with political, governmental and business organizations for reaching people of all levels for Christ.

Also through the work of this research, some questions arose that need further research. The participants set these questions:

1. How can we make the gospel more interesting to people?
2. How can we bring better harmony in family life?
3. How can we lift the importance of the gospel to people of all ages?

#### **Weaknesses of the Study**

This project could have been strengthened by a larger number of volunteers and churches working together in this field in order to make better progress in the development of evangelism in the Republic of Macedonia. The absence of the major denominations of the country in the evangelistic outreach made the project and the study more limited to a smaller number of attendees and respondents to the project. The problem arose from the lack of understanding of the seriousness of spreading the good news to all people in the community and more widely to the whole region.

#### **Recommendations for Further Studies**

Evangelism is a great subject and requires a wide variety of outreach to all people, generations, nationalities, and religions. Continuing evangelism is needed in every society as the best way of reaching people for salvation in Christ. The project of

evangelism for a limited time of one year is not the only way of success. Evangelism is a continuous process that engages every Christian in every time and to every person who has not accepted Christ as personal Savior and leads to continuous active Christian life. Present Christianity is still under the same obligation that Jesus gave to those present at his ascension by saying, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt. 28:19-20). In order to approach people better in post-Communist societies an important step must be taken in deeper study of the social, political, economic, religious and cultural context in order to reach all levels of society, genders, and ages of people. Much to be further developed in the field of discipling the new converts in studying the Bible and prayer as a result of their conversion and further growth in active witnessing to others.

### **Conclusion**

Prior to the project an urgent need of revealing and developing the new conditions for evangelism appeared in Macedonia. Mostly those conditions dealt with the democratic freedom from political pressure of *single-thinking* idea and freedom of mind of individuals that no more pressure or persecution existed against Christian belief. Unfortunately many people had little understanding of real evangelism after the fall of Communism, and the kind of evangelism that was known was a strange fear of the authorities and very limited. I have now found how practical this research project can be in the future activities of churches and Christians. A major progress of knowledge and understanding of evangelism appeared after the fall of Communism, and people

experienced a strong development of evangelistic actions during and after the project in different parts of Macedonia.

The response to a new and contemporary way of evangelism combined with music and personal witnessing was the result of changes that took place after the communist regime. A transition period continues between older and younger generations that need special attention in order to reach and bring to repentance more people from all stages of life.

Great need appears for finding ways and materials that would attract people and bring them to the gospel. After they repent and convert, discipleship is very important as the next stage of the evangelistic project. Evangelism is closely connected to discipleship in order to continue building the Church of Jesus Christ. Little understanding of the connection existed between the evangelism and discipleship prior to the project. The pre-project seminar especially revealed this subject.

The important phenomenon at the beginning of the project was the fear of proselytism. For some Christian denominations, this idea was the main hindrance to participation in the project. Prohibitions were ordered against attending the seminar and the project for members of some Christian denominations present in Macedonia. Although only four churches responded to the invitation for participating in the project, teaching was developed among the participants to equip them in evangelism in their churches during and after the project.

Through this project I found that the best means for engendering a viable evangelism in Macedonia and in the former Yugoslavian territories is for the whole population in the region to be brought to repentance and through discipleship to be

prepared to witness to others. The great need for proclaiming that Jesus is the Christ to the new generations is the mean that leads to progress and strengthening of Christianity in the region of Macedonia and wider.

**APPENDIX A**

**Evangelism Activity Letter and Survey**

Skopje,

Date: March 27, 2005

Dear friend,

Thank you for accepting to work with us in this project. It is of vital importance to make this project possible in order to help our nation by finding the best ways for reaching every person and presenting them Christ.

I am glad you know Christ as your personal Savior and understand the meaning of faith in Christ in this lost society. Therefore, I urge you to look carefully at the following questionnaire on the next pages and give as accurate answers as possible.

Please return the filled questionnaire to the Pastor as soon as you complete it.

There is no need of writing your name at any place and you are free to remain completely anonymous.

Remaining grateful,

Pastor Kitan Petreski





**APPENDIX B****Mid-Project Survey**

July 18, 2005

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

1. Did you complete the pre-project questionnaire?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
2. Were the instructions clear for understanding your role in this project?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Were the handouts, leaflets, and brochures clear and easy to understand for people?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Of all the people you invited to the evangelism events, what was their attitude?  
(Please include the number of individuals according to their interest level)
  - a. Very Interested \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Curious \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Not Interested at all \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Opposed \_\_\_\_\_
5. What style of evangelism event was most interesting for people?
  - a. Traditional worship
  - b. Traditional Church Music
  - c. Contemporary worship
6. In your opinion, in general, what was the response to the invitation at the altar?
  - a. Followed by many
  - b. Followed with hesitation
  - c. Followed poorly
  - d. I saw almost no response

7. How strong was the request of Bibles and Christian literature?

- a. Very strong
- b. Somewhat strong
- c. Weak

8. Do you have any recommendations for this project?

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9. Would you be willing to follow through the rest of this project?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. Are the pastors cooperative in your needs throughout this project?

- a. Yes
- b. No

**APPENDIX C**

**Post-Project Survey**

August 27, 2005

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:   M     F  

1. Did you complete the pre-project survey?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
2. Did you complete the mid-project survey?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
3. What advertising methods do you think were most effective?
  - a. TV
  - b. Newspaper
  - c. Personal Invitation
  - d. Humanitarian aid
  
4. What elements of the evangelism events do you think were most attractive to people?
  - a. Music
  - b. Sermon
  - c. Liturgy
  - d. Counseling
  - e. Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. In your opinion, how attractive was the contemporary style of worship?
  - a. Good
  - b. Somewhat good

c. Not good

6. How important do you think are the warm greeters at the entrance?

a. Very important

b. Somewhat important

c. Didn't make much difference

7. In general, do you think the message was clear and the altar call personal?

a. Yes

b. Somewhat

c. No

8. Would you, as a Christian, like further spiritual instructions, or do you feel everything you need you have acquired?

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9. What would you suggest for a better approach to the needs of people?

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10. What different conditions are there between the evangelism during Communism time and now?

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11. What has led you to a better understanding of the gospel in the present time compared to Communism?

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12. Do you have any comments about the possibilities for evangelism in the present time?

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**APPENDIX D**

**Letter of Invitation to All Denominations in the Republic of Macedonia**

**From:** The Committee for Evangelism in the UMC Skopje  
Debarca 9  
1000 Skopje, RM

**To:** Clergy and/or synods of the Christian denominations in the R. M.

**Date:** January 14, 2005

Dear Colleges,

As Christians we all serve one Lord and Savior, but our history has taught us that the separation was not a good witness to non-Christians and the community around us. Therefore, our senior pastor has a vision to develop an evangelistic project that will cover the whole region of the Republic of Macedonia. In this project we want to invite you as a Christian denomination present in Macedonia to take action and participate in the project. With this project we do not like to fight for proselytizing members from each other, but to bring people to Christ and bring them in connection to their mother church.

Your support for this project would be a great contribution to the success of the work of evangelism in the country. Let us equally take this responsibility and in mutual cooperation make an effort for spreading and strengthening the Christianity in our country.

On March 25-27 this year, there will be a seminar held here in Skopje for those who would like to learn more about evangelism and how to find a way to develop it in cooperation with others.

We count on you to participate in the project so that we can come and work together for the glory of our God and for the salvation of our nation. Please respond to

this invitation in the way you feel appropriate no later than February 15, 2005 so that we can start preparing the material and development of the project.

With respect and brotherly love in Jesus Christ we remain yours,

The Committee of Evangelism in the UMC Skopje

Rev. Kitan Petreski – Pastor

## **APPENDIX E**

### **BOOK OF MINUTES**

#### **1. Meeting Held with the Board for Evangelism of the UMC in Skopje**

The meeting of the board was held on Monday January 10, 2005 in the church building starting at 7:30 PM. Present at the meeting were all seven members.

The main agenda was the discussion of evangelism in the Rep. of Macedonia taken as a part of the project of evangelism organized by the senior pastor Rev. Kitan Petreski in different churches and other places in Macedonia. After making a special program with an invitation to all clergy who would like to participate in the project, the senior pastor made a motion of writing an invitation letter explaining a development of a project that he had in mind for evangelism in the Republic of Macedonia. For that project he suggested all Christian denominations to be included and invited. At first, the members hesitated because of the doctrinal and traditional differences and asked whether those denominations would agree to participate in the project. The pastor explained that it would be mentioned in the invitation and discussed at the first proposed meeting. The Committee agreed and accepted to start the project by writing a letter to all Christian denominations in the country.

Secondly the committee requested from the pastor a full control and inclusion of what he would do and undertake in the proposed project. The pastor promised such cooperation and was grateful for their faithful support in the project. The pastor gave a proposal letter of invitation that would be sent to all Christian denominations in the country expecting responses before the next meeting, to which they agreed.

The next meeting was scheduled for January 14, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer.

## 2. Meeting held with the Board of Evangelism

**Date:** January 14, 2005, at 8:00PM

**Agenda:** Proposed Letter to all Christian denominations in Macedonia

(see Appendix D).

Decision for sending the letter and setting a waiting time for response.

Naming the Board of Evangelism

**From:** The Committee for evangelism in the UMC Skopje

Debarca 9

1000 Skopje, R. M.

**To:** Clergy and/or synods of the Christian denominations in the R. M.

Dear Colleagues,

1. As Christians we all serve one Lord and Savior, but our history has taught us that the separation was not a good witness to non-Christians and the community around us. Therefore, our senior pastor has a vision to develop an evangelistic project that will cover the whole region of the Republic of Macedonia. In this project we want to invite you as a Christian denomination present in Macedonia to take action and participate in the project. With this project we do not like to fight for proselytizing members from each other but to bring people to Christ and bring them in connection to their mother church.

Your support for this project would be a great contribution to the success of the work of evangelism in the country. Let us equally take this responsibility and in mutual cooperation make an effort for spreading and strengthening the Christianity in our country.

On March 26 this year, there will be a seminar held here in Skopje for those who would like to learn more about evangelism and the way to develop it in cooperation with others.

We count on you to participate in the project, so that we can come and work together for the glory of our God and for salvation of all people in our nation.

Please respond to this invitation in the way you feel no later than February 14, 2005 so that we can start preparing the material and get underway with developing this project.

With respect and brotherly love in Jesus Christ, we remain yours,

The Committee of Evangelism in the UMC Skopje

Rev. Kitan Petreski – Pastor

2. The Committee made a list of recipients and gave it to the pastor to send the letter immediately. They are

- The Synod of the Orthodox Church in Macedonia,
- The Synod of the Roman Catholic Church in Macedonia.
- Seven pastors in the United Methodist Church in Macedonia,
- Four pastors of the Evangelical Church in Macedonia,
- One pastor of the Pentecostal Church in Macedonia,
- One pastor of the Baptist church in Skopje, and
- One pastor of the Congregational Church in Skopje.

3. The pastor proposed to name the Committee for evangelism in the UMC with the name “Committee.” It was accepted unanimously.

The next meeting was set for Feb. 14, 2005. The meeting was adjourned by prayer.

### 3. Meeting of the Committee

**Date:** February 14, 2005 at 8:00 PM

**Agenda:** Overlook the responses from Christian denominations.

Preparing the letter of invitation to the clergy who agreed to cooperate.

Preparing program for the seminar for those willing to participate in the project.

Preparing the questionnaire (see Appendix C)

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1. The pastor reported that most of the addressed recipients of the letter responded positively. They are two pastors from the UMC in Macedonia, one pastor from the Pentecostal church in Macedonia, and one pastor from the Evangelical church in Macedonia. The pastor and the Committee appointed them as the core team to work with the pastor.

2. It was decided a letter of encouragement and appreciation be sent to those pastors for their readiness to cooperate with the pastor. They were invited to attend the next meeting of the pastor and Committee for preparation of the material for the proposed seminar in March.

3. The pastor presented a global outline of the program for the seminar in March. Some requests and changes were made in the program. The program was given to the pastor for further development until the next meeting.

4. The pastor also presented a questionnaire (see Appendix C) that would be given to the core team and laypersons that would be appointed by the core team and volunteer in the project. The next meeting was agreed to be on March 11, 2005.

5. The meeting was adjourned with prayer.

#### 4. Meeting of the Committee and the Core Team

**Date:** March 11, 2005

**Agenda:** Preparation of a place, time, and material for the seminar.

Preparing the questionnaire to be given to the participants and  
pastors at the seminar.

Announcing the Humanitarian Organization

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The meeting started with a prayer. The core team was specially greeted with a word of appreciation from the pastor about their readiness for cooperation with the pastor and willingness to be included in the evangelism of the country. The importance of evangelism in the country was especially stressed and the duty given from the Lord that we should go and make disciples of Jesus among all nations.

It was discussed that the most convenient place for the seminar would be the sanctuary of the UMC in the capital of the country. It was accepted and the time of the seminar would be March 25 until 27 from 9:00 AM till 12:00 PM

The pastor presented some suggestions about the learning books and other material to be presented to the participants of the seminar. He also asked the members of the Committee and the core team if they have any material for that occasion. They found that very little material could be found in the local language for that case. It was decided that the material should be given to the Pastor before the next meeting.

After short introduction about the need of information and the purpose of the project the pastor presented a questionnaire. The questions were examined and found that they are most convenient for the situation in Macedonia. Finally it was accepted

unanimously. The questionnaire was given to the Pastor to prepare for distribution to the participants and other volunteers at the seminar.

At the end of the meeting, the need for a humanitarian organization was raised. As an important tool for the project, the humanitarian organization was named "Agape." We choose leadership of the organization to be the Evangelical Church in Macedonia. The pastor should organize the storage and make lists of material available for distribution.

The next meeting was decided to be on March 16, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer by one of the pastors.

## 5. Meeting of the Committee and the Core Team

**Date:** March 16, 2005.

**Agenda:** Preparing the collected material for the seminar.

Deciding who would be the presenters at the seminar.

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The pastor stressed the importance of the written material to be handed out to the participants who would lead them to better understanding of evangelism and the best ways of approaching people, witnessing to them, and inviting them to the evangelistic meetings.

The other point for discussion was raised about the process of making disciples and making the gospel more interesting to the new believers.

It was decided that the core team should work with the pastor in developing a short paper of instructions that would be handed out at the seminar.

It was unanimously decided that the pastor would be the best presenter at the seminar as he knows the questions and has worked on evangelism for a long time and in different cultures.

After these decisions the next meeting left open when the pastor would find the best opportunity to invite the Committee and the core team.

The next meeting was scheduled for March 21, 2005 at 7:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned with prayer.

## 6. Meeting of the Core Team

**Date:** March 21, 2005

**Agenda:** Pre-project Seminar

Timetable, breaks, refreshments etc.

Books, handouts, and teaching material

The meeting was opened with prayer and announcing the agenda.

As the seminar comes close, there were some questions that the core team discussed the best way of organizing them. The presenters gave a short overview of the material for teaching. Kitan gave them some corrections and advised what would be the best according to his project and how to be developed. The core team and presenters agreed and sorted the material in a special order and made a timetable for the seminar.

The members of the core team selected the persons for helping at the breaks and serving the refreshments. The main discussion was concentrated on selecting the teaching material. As there were not many books available in the Macedonian language there were chosen several books in Serbian, Croatian, and Bulgarian languages as the easiest way for following the seminar and learning to practice the possible ways of evangelism.

The core team agreed to make some handouts for the participants for easier following the presentations. Because there was a lot of material in English and German, there was a strong selection made as there was not enough time for translating the material and not many people understand those languages.

After the selection was made and the activities ordered and given to the volunteers, the meeting was closed. The next meeting was scheduled for March 27, 2005, and after the prayer the meeting was adjourned.

## **7. Meeting with the Participants on the Pre-project Seminar**

**Date:** March 27, 2005.

**Agenda:** Open discussion on individual questions and answers with the participants

Handing out the evangelistic material for distribution

Encouraging and sending out the participants of the seminar

After the pre-project seminar, the organizer of the seminar, Pastor Kitan invited all participants to the seminar and had a closing meeting. The leader gave an introduction to the meeting with great stress on the meaning of evangelism in the country and using his personal experience of pastoral work in and after Communism, he offered great encouragement. The participants were encouraged not to fear anyone because it is the time of democracy and the right of every individual to communicate with others and to witness for Christ.

Some of the participants asked questions about any kind of opposition by the local police what to answer and how to use the freedom of communication. After a short discussion about this question, the leader then handed out some of the materials for distribution among the individuals, such as Bibles, leaflets, and booklets. He reminded that there will be more prepared by the core team through the evangelistic actions in the selected periods and places of evangelism.

The next meeting was scheduled for April 11, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned with a special encouragement and prayer by the leader.

## **8. Meeting of the Committee and the Core Team**

**Date:** April 11, 2005.

**Agenda:** Evaluation of the pre-project survey  
Electing the Research Reflection Team.  
Miscellaneous

The coordinating pastor, Kitan Petreski, with prayer and announcing the agenda, opened the meeting. The agenda was preceded and unanimously accepted.

The coordinating pastor expressed his thanks for the kind cooperation and the response to the survey. There was some kind of selection done to the survey but the core team found that it will be a lot of work and they would not be able to do the whole work.

Therefore, the assembly started discussing about finding proper persons who would take care over the evaluation of this and the coming surveys. After hearing several motions a question was raised for finding educated persons from all representing churches and elect them as a special Research Reflection Team. After a longer discussion the four persons were elected. The assembly accepted them unanimously. The pastors took responsibility to inform them and coordinate with Pastor Kitan to arrange the date for their first meeting.

Under miscellaneous was a discussion about the goods distribution and witness, which was explained by the presiding pastor. The literature and humanitarian materials should be available by the next meeting.

The next meeting was agreed to be on May 2, 2005 at 7:30 PM.

The meeting was adjourned by prayer.

## **9. Meeting of the Committee and the Core Team and Seminar Participants**

**Date:** May 2, 2005.

**Agenda:** Humanitarian materials and their distribution

The distribution of the materials

Seriousness of the matter–invitation to full cooperation

Miscellaneous

It was announced that the humanitarian material arrived and was stored ready for distribution. The participants were organized in groups with possible vehicles to start distributing and witnessing to people.

The leading pastor instructed them again on how to use the materials and the literature to make people interested. It was agreed that they would come every morning until the day of evangelism and start the day activities with common prayer. The leading pastor asked all participants not to be discouraged but to attend in their full number. They promised. After several questions the meeting was adjourned by prayer.

## **10. Meeting of the Committee and the Core Team and Seminar Participants**

**Date:** May 16, 2005.

**Agenda:** Opening from the leading pastor Kitan Petreski  
Reports from the evangelistic outreach  
Invitation for the next outreach in Prilep  
Transportation and accommodation  
Miscellaneous

The meeting was opened with prayer. The leading Pastor Kitan gave introduction about the importance of evangelism and invited all participants to full support and cooperation. He expressed special gratitude to the donors of goods, finances, and evangelistic material for development of the project. Also he gave thanks to all participants for their energy and willingness to cooperate. He heard a good number of positive reports and asked if there was any misunderstanding or problem in the outreach. After all reports he invited them to the next evangelistic outreach in June in Prilep. He promised that probably there would be some other members who would join the group and cooperate in the work.

Pastor Kitan specially invited all participants to attend the evangelistic outreach in Prilep and to pray for successful spread of the gospel to all people.

Pastor Kitan explained about the transportation possibilities and for the accommodation in Prilep and thanked the group for their full support of the outreach.

Under Miscellaneous there were some questions for clarification.

The next meeting was scheduled for May 30, 2005, and the meeting was adjourned with prayer.

## **11. Meeting of the Committee and the Core Team and Seminar Participants**

**Date:** May 30, 2005.

**Agenda:** Reflections on the past experience  
Encouragement and preparation for the second evangelistic  
outreach

The meeting started with prayer led by Pastor Kitan.

He expressed his gratitude for the great work done in Skopje in the beginning of the month. Many people have come to see him and also other pastors of the core team. New people requested more literature, especially Bibles and needed counseling.

Going to Prilep is a bit different than Skopje. Prilep people are in many ways different, especially the Gypsies, as Prilep has the biggest percentage of the Gypsy population in the country. Kitan specially appealed not to disregard them and not to neglect them because they have the same soul as any other, and they need salvation in the same way as any other person.

The other things remained the same as the practice in Skopje. The core team agreed to be present in Prilep and take part in the whole outreach.

The next meeting was scheduled for June 13, 2005 at 7:30 PM.

The meeting was concluded with prayer by one of the pastors of the core team and adjourned.

## 12. Meeting of the Core Team and Outreach Participants

**Date:** June 13, 2005.

**Agenda:** Gratitude from Kitan  
Reflections from the evangelistic outreach  
Miscellaneous

One of the core team members was conducting the meeting. He invited one person to start the meeting with prayer. The word was given to Kitan who expressed deep gratitude for the good attendance and desire to work on the field of the Lord. He thanked all participants also for the time and energy spent in this summer heat and desire to serve the Lord. He also explained the importance of the project as a fruit of great freedom in the post-Communist time. As most of the outreach participants were of the younger generation, they did not have any experience of the persecution, but they expressed praise to the Lord for the freedom and even support from the local authorities in this project. It was said that they might come to some opposition by some people who still oppose Christianity, but the suggestion came that they should try to escape the situation and not enter into any discussion.

The outreach participants were organized in groups and the maps of the area were given them so that they would know the streets and places of the city. In most of the groups, the pastors of the core team were either present or close for support or intervention.

There were some questions for clarification, and the meeting was closed by prayer.

The next meeting was scheduled for July 4, 2005 at 7:30 PM.

## **APPENDIX F**

### **Training Material for the Laity Seminar**

What I was able to provide for all of you who are interested in evangelism is a list of several books and booklets that were available in the Serbian, Croatian, or Bulgarian languages for deeper studying of the subject of evangelism. Unfortunately there is no material you can find in the Macedonian language yet. I strongly hope that the nearby future there will be some material, but I cannot promise you this time any type of material for this field.

There are some practical leaflets and handout materials that will guide you toward better presentation as I have prepared for the seminar. Because of the size of the material it was not translated from Macedonian into English.

## APPENDIX G

### Letters to Advertisement Companies

#### 1. A letter to the National Radio & TV Station in Skopje:

From: The Committee and the core team for evangelism in the Republic of Macedonia

To: The RTV Skopje

Date: April 11, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam,

In the name of the Committee and core team for Evangelism in the Republic of Macedonia and in my personal name, I write you this letter with a special request to help us in the great project we prepare all across the country in different cities and places. As your company holds the local radio stations in most of the bigger cities and towns as all radio waves are under your control, we ask you to advertise the evangelism that will take place on the following dates in Skopje as well as in other places in the country.

- |                             |                                    |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Skopje: May 8-14, 2005   | 4. Ohrid: August 7-13, 2005        |
| 2. Prilep: June 5-11, 2005  | 5. Strumica: September 11-17, 2005 |
| 3. Bitola: July 10-16, 2005 | 6. Stip: October 9-15, 2005        |

According to your advice, we send you this list believing that you will advertise this project in the given times and remind your local stations to do the same in their given periods. In the meantime we shall be in contact with your representatives and discuss locally more precisely about the project.

Sincerely the organizer of the project,

Rev. Kitan Petreski

## **2. A Letter to the newspaper “Vecher”**

From: The Committee and the core team for evangelism in the Republic of Macedonia

To: The RTV Skopje

Date: April 11, 2005

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are organized as a group of pastors and lay leaders from various churches in the Republic of Macedonia. My privilege as organizer of the project is to inform you that we are going to fulfill evangelism outreach in the next months of this year in various places. We would like to ask you as the editor of the newspaper if you would be willing to find proper place to advertise our meeting in different places and times. For this time we would be glad if you can put the enclosed text for the following days:

May 8-14, 2005.

Thank you for understanding our action and being ready to help people know about our action.

Sincerely,

Rev. Kitan Petreski

Note: With some modifications this letter was sent to the editor several times of the year as the project developed in different places in the Republic of Macedonia.

## **APPENDIX H**

### **CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROJECT**

After the approval of the project for development of the dissertation on Evangelism in the Republic of Macedonia, I contacted church members, boards, clergy and laity, individuals, and groups to organize this project. The project was developed in the following manner:

Monday, 10 January 2005, I had a meeting with the Board on Evangelism in the United Methodist Church (UMC) Skopje. The discussion developed because of the importance and need for evangelizing the whole population in Macedonia and the need of cooperative work with other Christian denominations. The result of that meeting resulted in the decision to write a letter of invitation to the clergy and/or synods of Christian denominations in the Republic of Macedonia to participate in this project (see Appendix D).

On 14 January 2005, I met with Board of Evangelism to present the letter of invitation and to complete its final draft. The letter was approved and prepared for mailing.

Monday 14 February 2005, I met with the Committee for the review of responses from the clergy and synods whether they had accepted or refused participation in the project(see Appendix E, no.3). During the meeting, the Committee and I decided that I would contact the four pastors who accepted the request to participate in the project by telephone and to organize a meeting. Also, I presented the draft of the program for the seminar.

After a telephone conversation with clergy who responded to the invitation letter, on Monday 11 March 2005, I held a meeting with the four pastors from different denominations and the Committee on Evangelism of the UMC in Skopje to organize the work. During this meeting, the core team was elected, the pre-project survey was approved, and the pre-project seminar was organized (see Appendix E, no. 4).

On Wednesday, 16 March 2005 I held a meeting with the core team for common prayer and to go over a final preparation for the seminar for the laity who would participate in the project. I presented them the program and designated persons who would take responsibilities for different duties. I also presented the materials for the seminar (see Appendix E, no. 5).

On Monday, 21 March 2005, I had a meeting with the core team. The main discussion that took place was the preparation of the pre-project seminar including the timetable and seminar materials (see Appendix E, no. 6).

On Friday, 25 March 2005, the core team and I started the seminar for the laity who responded to the invitation of their pastors and announced their coming. The program was announced, instructions given, and handouts distributed.

Saturday 26 March 2005, the seminar continued with presentations, discussions, and exercises with the participants.

Sunday 27 March 2005, the pre-project surveys were collected for evaluation and the seminar was concluded with the morning worship service. The core team met at the end of the day for a final look at the seminar and the preparation of the survey materials for evaluation by the Research Reflection Team. There was time for further planning of the project. Monday 11 April 2005, the core team met to discuss ways to simplify the

development of the project. The outcome reflected in electing a Research Reflection Team from members of the churches represented by the four pastors of the core team. The core team decided that I should send a letter of invitation to each of these members (see Appendix E, no. 8).

On Monday, 2 May 2005, the core team, the evangelistic outreach participants, and I met to discuss the first evangelistic outreach in Skopje. The participants received the instructions on how to use the materials. The core team and I organized the participants in groups to take over different parts of the city (see Appendix E, no. 9). From 4 May until 7 May, they gathered in the morning for fellowship and prayer. Then, they went to their destinations in the city. From 8 May until 14 May, the evangelistic meetings took place. From day to day more and more people came.

On Monday, 16 May 2005, the core team, the participants, and I gathered for evaluation of the evangelistic outreach and the experience from the first part of the project. The participants gave positive reports and expressed readiness for the next evangelistic outreach in Prilep a month later (see Appendix E, no. 10).

On Monday, 30 May 2005, the core team, the participants, and I met together again to prepare for the evangelistic outreach in Prilep. They all agreed to be there on Wednesday 1 June 2005 and start the distribution and witness to people (see Appendix E no. 11). Every morning from 1 June until 4 June they came together for prayer, instructions, and fellowship.

From 5 June until 11 June 2005, the core team, the participants and I held the second evangelistic outreach in Prilep. The evangelistic meetings took place in the evenings, and many people from different nationalities attended.

On Monday, 13 June 2005, the meeting to evaluate the evangelism outreach in Prilep took place. The core team, the participants, and I reviewed reflections from the outreach and evaluated the evangelistic outreach. We agreed to continue the great work in July (see Appendix E no. 12).

On 4 July 2005, the core team, the participants and I gathered to prepare for the next evangelistic outreach in another city of Macedonia. We agreed that on 6 July we should come together for prayer and instructions before we would go through the city. Each morning from 6 July until 9 July 2005, we started with common prayer and instructions and went to distribute goods and literature and to witness. The main evangelistic outreach started on 10 July with a morning worship and continued throughout the week with evangelistic outreach.

On 18 July the core team and I met together for outreach evaluation and to review the mid-project surveys collected at the end of the evangelistic outreach.

On 1 August the core team, the participants, and I met together for a prayer and to prepare for the next outreach. As Ochrid is a tourist city and populated with many different ethnicities, the participants had a special preparation as a reminder from the initial seminar. From 3 August until 6 August we distributed goods and literature with witnessing to all people. From 7 August until 13 August, the evangelistic outreach took place, and it appeared very successful.

On 15 August the core team and I had a meeting to evaluate the evangelistic outreach and to prepare for the next outreach event in September.

On 5 September the core team, the outreach participants, and I came together to prepare for the next outreach. The days for distributing goods and literature started on 7

September and took place until 10 September. From 11 September until 17 September, we had intensive evangelistic outreaches. The time and the work were very progressive among many different nationalities.

On 19 September the core team evaluated the outreach and discussed about final organization and encouragement to the participants to carry on the good work and efforts.

On 3 October the core team and I met together with the participants and discussed evangelism in Macedonia, their part, and the great effort they have done for the project. We organized the work and agreed to do the last evangelistic outreach in this project. From 5 October until 8 October, we distributed literature and goods and witnessed to people, inviting them to the evangelistic outreach. From 9 October until 15 October, the core team, the participants, and I undertook evangelistic outreach every evening. At the end of this outreach, we distributed the post-project surveys and received them back.

On 17 October the core team and outreach participants had a special meeting of evaluation and celebrating the success of the project and the great cooperation among all participants in the project. Our last meeting took place on 7 November, when the Research Reflection Team took special responsibility to evaluate the surveys and make a report of its success.

I expressed special gratitude to the core team, the Committee, the Research Reflection Team, and all participants in the project for their great work and enthusiasm during this project, proving that evangelism in Macedonia can be developed and can make a great change, spreading Christianity to all people in Macedonia and other post-Communist countries.

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