

Multiplying and Mobilizing Witnesses

Lesson 3 Implementing A Strategic Plan

Instructor's Guide

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Lesson 3

Implementing A Strategic Plan

In many situations of life, the key issue is not knowing *what* to do, or even knowing *how* to do; rather, it is simply taking the initiative to do.

A very clear biblical example is found in the history of Israel and the situation of living in Jerusalem when its walls had been in ruin for 120 years. The absence of the protective walls had made them vulnerable to their enemies. The absence also created a climate of embarrassment for the residents and was a source of contention among the people themselves. Their problem was not one of not recognizing what needed to be done. It was obvious--rebuild the wall. The problem was not in knowing how to build. Skilled laborers knew how to reconstruct and repair the wall. Their problem was they lacked the following:

1. A leader with a vision.
2. A leader with a strategy.
3. A leader with the ability to train and organize the work force.

Nehemiah, through God's direction, becomes the leader and in 52 days accomplishes what had not been done in 120 years.

This story points to the heart of the church's need: leaders who have a vision, a strategy, and a willingness to help mobilize the people to be the witnessing force that Jesus intended the church to be. Perhaps Nehemiah's greatest contribution was his ability to enable the people to see the possibility of rebuilding the wall by removing their mental roadblocks.

The pastor, or some respected church leader, must be "the Nehemiah" who mobilizes the church to reach its witness potential. The first place to start mobilizing people is to remove the roadblocks.

I. Recognizing the roadblocks that inhibit mobilizing laity for witnessing.

A. Fortress mentality roadblock.

This hindrance expresses the thought, "Our responsibility is to us." We minister to and care for those who come within our walls. Whenever we attempt to witness from this mental roadblock, it is exclusive to those who we believe can or do fit in with us. Our programs and ministries are designed to draw those "like us" or to keep content those we already have inside our walls.

B. Roadblock of low expectations.

Proverbs states that where there is no vision, the people perish (see 29:18). Today, we could build on this recorded wisdom by acknowledging where there is no vision or mission purpose, the church's ability to influence its culture perishes. If little is expected in the way of witnessing from those who make up the membership of the church, then little witnessing is what the church will produce. We tend to get what we expect.

When the church clearly emphasizes the value, the importance, the benefits of witnessing and makes it the expected norm, the church produces a more mobilized witnessing force.

C. Roadblock of fear.

If we are to expect and promote a mobilized lay witness force, we must help reduce the largest roadblock of all--fear. In nearly every survey, the number one cause hindering being a positive witness for Christ is fear. The big question and challenge is how do we reduce and help overcome the fear of witnessing?

II. Removing the roadblocks to mobilizing witnesses through strategic training.

In his ancient study of warfare, Sun Tzu, Chinese military strategist notes:

“Strategy before tactics. Always.

Strategy is thought, seeking its means of execution.

Tactics is the means to carry out the thought.

Strategy is doing the right thing.

Tactics is doing things right.”

A. The first strategic step to mobilize witnesses is to remove the fear.

The Scriptures teach that there is no fear in perfect love since perfect love casts out fear. It is very difficult to love what we are not familiar with. The first step in removing the roadblock to witnessing is to get to know those you wish to witness to. This is basically known as Friendship or Relational Evangelism. Most within our churches have some friendship relationship with someone who is unchurched and pre-Christian in his or her faith experience. This is the best place to start in mobilizing the church's witnessing force.

Tactic 1: Have the church write a list of one to five personal friends or family who are unchurched. A theme I used for a six month challenge was “Each One Reach One.” The strategy was to select one person, friend, or family member to engage over a six-month time frame through a variety of fellowship opportunities. Invite him or her to join you as guests to a special church evangelism event, or through day-to-day

involvement, seek to encourage him or her a step closer in his or her faith journey towards a commitment to Christ.

These stories were then shared at the conclusion of the six months, as well as celebrations of new baptisms, new believers, and new church members who made commitments to Christ during this time frame. It is amazing how contagious this can be in mobilizing others for witnessing.

Tactic 2: Use stories of successful witnessing.

One way of sharing stories is to utilize a video clip in your worship service. This allows the people to hear first hand and see the results of the fruitfulness of witnessing. I shared a video that highlighted three couples. It started with Kent and Lorena, who shared a common interest with their pre-Christian friends, Kenny and Barb. Kent and Lorena shared their faith during a crisis event in Kenny and Barb's life. They came to a personal faith in Christ. Kenny and Barb, who shared a common interest with Dave and Shelia, were able to share their new faith with them, who also came to embrace a personal faith in Christ. Their stories made a great impact when videoed and shown; one couple reaching another couple, in turn reaching yet another. This video, shown in church, helped establish a climate of "success breeds success." If Kent and Lorena could reach their friends, so could we. A picture truly was worth a thousand words; share and show stories that illustrate the fruitfulness and the value of witnessing.

Tactic 3: Develop a training center.

Most people tend to experience less fear if they feel knowledgeable about things. Sponsoring scheduled classes that instruct how to share your story of faith with one who is pre-Christian is a key tactic to helping overcome fear in witnessing. These classes may utilize material like:

- www.missionevangelism.org
- *Going Public with Your Faith*, William Carr Peel and Walt Larimore
- *Living Proof*, with a video series, Jim Peterson
- Network with video series – Willow Creek Association
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The intent of these studies would be to help familiarize the church with the understanding of how to witness in the context of their everyday lives.

Tactic 4: Give practice opportunities.

Actual experiences provide great teaching moments. Encourage the new witness to focus on someone with whom they have some common ties. This provides a sense of affinity and reduces the fear of how to connect with this person.

Another approach is that of teaming a rookie witness with a seasoned , veteran witness. This team approach allows the rookie to observe the veteran in action. In the course of instruction, the veteran allows the rookie to have an opportunity to initiate a witnessing moment. The veteran acts as an encourager, as well as a supportive help during the first few witness encounters. Eventually, the rookie becomes the seasoned veteran training another rookie.

Tactic 5: Celebrate the wins.

There is nothing more powerful as a means of multiplying and thus mobilizing people to witness as to be able to see or be part of a celebration of new believers and see the effectiveness of witnessing.

- Plan deliberate celebrations during worship that showcase the connecting line of witnesses to new believers.
- Sponsor dinners that allow new believers to share their stories. Introduce those witnesses who were helpful in someone moving to faith.
- Include video clips in the worship service that show the positive way people's lives have been impacted through a variety of witnessing events.

These are but three of the many ways that the church can sponsor and create a celebration of witnessing. Celebrations showcase the difference witnessing is making in the life of the church.

Tactic 6: Find people with common ground interests.

It's sometimes said that Christians and pre-Christians have little in common. That is true. Our belief system is different, as are our life values. Yet, there are many commonalities.

Common ground is simply a shared area of life. One area is that of the work place. Another is that of hobbies or special interest, sports, reading, computers, etc. Look for common interest needs or talents that you share with pre-Christians. Once you've identified a target connection, build a bridge of relationship that will open the door to sharing your story of faith in Christ.

Tactic 7: Develop a farm-team concept.

A farm team in sports is where younger, inexperienced players are being developed to become major leaguers. In the church, we must develop a farm-team concept at all levels (children, youth, and adult) that insures that there will be a renewing resource of witnesses.

How do we develop a farm-team system? Consider the following Suggestions, and then build from them.

A. Children: Develop children's events and programs that feature and encourage your believing children to share their stories of faith in Jesus.

- Jump rope team: Kids learn to do jump rope routines that they can perform at civic events and share their stories.
- Children's choir and drama
- Invite a friend/tell a friend: Children are encouraged to bring an unchurched friend to a special children's sponsored event.
- Special servant days: The children select a servant day ministry that puts them into action helping the church or local community.

B. Youth: You might use many of the same ideas as children, but expand to youth level of involvement.

- Camp-outs: An opportunity for teens to bring non-Christian friends and allow believing teens to share devotionals, as well as testimonies.

C. Adults: Again a continuing expansion of ideas that intentionally allow for and encourage the believing adult to share, with non-Christian friends and family, their stories of faith.

In developing a farm-team model, you are creating a culture that embraces witnessing on a daily basis. The farm-team model gives opportunity for those involved from every age group to share the love of Jesus in a way that opens the door to present a living and spoken witness for Christ. The farm team ensures a continuing resource pool of developing witness.

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**Participant
Booklet**

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Participants Small Group

1. Set SMART Goals to mobilize your church for the next three months.

S ~ Specific

M ~ Measurable

A ~ Attainable

R ~

T ~

2. Discuss hindrances you are experiencing, that are inhibiting the church's mobilization of its witnessing force.



3. Discuss how you can utilize the tactics suggested in this lesson with specific ministries for your church.

4. Write out your personal strategic plan for mobilizing your church.

5. Discuss ways you can personally model a witnessing example before your church.