The Ever Widening Circle of World Evangelism

"...And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

There are three types of unconverted people in the world today (John 3:16-17):

1. Those who reject the Gospel.
2. Those who neglect (put off) the Gospel.
3. Those who have never heard the Gospel.

Each of these three groups of people will be lost and condemned because they have not believed the Gospel.

The difference is that the first two groups of people had the opportunity to hear the gospel but rejected or neglected it. Sadly, the third group of people will be lost because they did not hear the Gospel, therefore they did not respond.

In Matthew 13:38 Jesus told us, "The field is the world." The seed that is planted is the Word of God, and we are called to sow the seed (witness).

With the understanding that the field is the world, many times we carelessly sow the seed wherever and whenever we can. Many missionaries go into countries and start a church in several different locations, each distant from the other without any thought of how to bring the churches into maturity and also a fellowship with other churches in the national organization. However, in the Word of God it seems that Jesus had an organized, systematic way of church planting and witnessing in mind.

This is the ever widening circle of world evangelism found in Acts 1:8:

A. Jerusalem
B. All Judaea
C. Samaria
D. Uttermost part of the earth

Every Christian is responsible for beginning to witness in his Jerusalem (home, neighborhood, city) and to work from there in an effort to evangelize the world around them.

If we cannot be effective in our Jerusalem, chances are the Lord will never send us to the uttermost part of the earth.

One of the qualifications for those involved in the ministry is that he would need to have his wife, children, and those in his household under control. Paul instructed Timothy in 1 Timothy 3:4-5, if we cannot lead our home, then how can we lead the church? We must have a fruitful ministry in the church in our home before we ever go to plant churches elsewhere.

God has called us to be a "World Christian." This is not the same as being a "World*ly* Christian." He wants us to be "Fishers of Men" (Luke 5:10).

The local church is the best medium of evangelism available with every member called to be a witness. New converts are usually zealous with witnessing. They have come freshly from the world and many contacts can see their changed lives and be drawn into the church. The longer you are in the church the less contact you have with people of the world.

New converts have many they can witness to with their new found life in Jesus Christ. Encourage new converts and members to begin witnessing where they are and then allow God

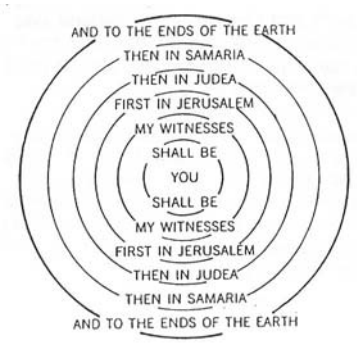
to open doors around you. Churches will always grow when an effort is made to reach out to people.

Churches will be healthy when they reach out and bring new people into the family of God.

- Jerusalem represents the local church. This becomes the base for evangelism.
- Judaea represents the geographical area that surrounds the local church.
- Samaria represents the outcasts of society who no one would normally want to be associated with. This could also include a further region from your center (Jerusalem).
- Uttermost part of the earth represents World Missions. Every church needs to be involved in World Missions no matter where they are located. World Missions is the responsibility of the entire church. Churches in Africa, Europe, Central America, etc. all need to be involved in reaching the world. Acts 1:8 was written to every Spirit filled believer no matter where they live, throughout all time.

Acts 1:8 is an outline for witnessing in the Book of Acts.

1. Jerusalem	Acts 1-7
2. Judaea	Acts 8-12
3. Samaria	Acts 8-12
4. Uttermost parts of the Earth	Acts 13-28



The chart is taken from *The Church Growth Handbook* by William M. Easum. It illustrates the growth principle: Start witnessing and evangelizing where you are and work your way from there in an ever widening circle.

Study Questions

1. What are three types of unconverted people in the world today? _____
_____
_____
_____

2. Why will these three groups be lost when Jesus comes? _____
_____
_____

3. Where is the Ever Widening Circle of World Evangelism found? _____

4. Where is a good place to start witnessing? Why? _____
_____
_____
_____

5. What is the best medium of evangelism available? _____
_____

6. Why are new converts good witnesses?_____
_____
_____
_____

7. What will happen when churches make an effort to reach out around them?_____
_____
_____
_____

8. What does Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria and the uttermost part represent?_____
_____
_____