

**Alabama Florida Episcopal District  
Convocation**

**March 9-11<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Held at Lomax-Hannon Junior College**

**Rev. Brian R. Thompson, Sr., Presenter**

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Missionary Supervisor**

**Bishop Seth O. Lartey, Presiding Prelate**

## Part I Outline

- I. **Evangelism (What is It?)**
  - a. **The Act of Spreading the Good News About Jesus Christ**
  - b. **Being the Light that Draws others to Jesus Christ**
  - c. **Sharing & Showing the Good News that God Loves Us (John 3:16)**
  
- II. **How to Evangelize (1 Peter 3:15)**
  - a. **Be prepared and able to express that your hope is through Christ Jesus**
  - b. **Articulate your faith with gentleness & respect**
  - c. **Be a willing vessel and speak of the goodness of the Lord**
  
- III. **Why Evangelize? (Proverbs 11:30 ESV)**
  - a. **The Fruit of the Righteous is a Tree of Life**
  - b. **Whoever Capture Souls is Wise**
  - c. **The Soul is no longer sentenced to Hell, but given everlasting life (John 3:3)** Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
  - d. **It is Commanded of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19)** Go therefore and make disciples...
  - e. **Rebirth**-Being a part of the Body of Christ gives power through the Holy Spirit to the abandon flesh and live after the Spirit of the Lord. **Acts 1:8 (ESV)**
  - f. **Do the work of an Evangelist and fulfill your Ministry (1 Timothy 4:5 ESV)**

# 5 Steps To Creating A Culture of Evangelism In Your Church

## 1. Model Evangelism Yourself

You cannot expect your people to do something that you yourself are not doing. It is as simple as that.

You can only lead people as far as you have gone yourself. If you are not actively seeking evangelistic opportunities, your people won't either.

This should be a given, but I know this is something I need to get better at myself.

It is easy to get so consumed in the busy work of being a pastor that we neglect our own obligation to reach out to people who are not part of our church.

## 2. Preach Evangelism

It surprises me how many churches desire to grow but never preach a sermon about how important it is for Christians to actually reach out to others.

Why don't we hear more sermons on how important it is for Christians to invite friends, neighbors, family members, and co-workers to church?

If you want your church to be more evangelistic, tell them to be. Preach from the many passages of scripture where people introduce others to Jesus. Then, tell your people that life and death are literally in the balance for them to do the same!

If Heaven and Hell are real, we had better start acting like it. Why aren't we doing more to rescue those headed for eternal separation from God?

## 3. Create Environments Where Non-Believers Are Welcomed And Expected

In your preaching, don't just address Christians. Always assume that there are skeptics, non-believers, or people who don't know what to believe in the room.

If you always talk in a way that assumes everyone is a Christian, then people who aren't Christians will know this isn't a place for them. However, if you regularly address those in the room who are not Christians or are on the fence, you accomplish two things:

1. You communicate that people who aren't Christians (yet) are welcome at your church.
2. You create a place where people can feel comfortable inviting their non-christian neighbors because they know you will speak to them too.

When you preach about something that is confusing or "weird" in the Bible, address it. Don't just assume that the average person accepts miracles in the Bible or other seemingly outrageous concepts such as animal sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

When you are doing things in church that the average Christian takes for granted (communion, baptism, etc.), explain it to those who may not be familiar with it.

Here is the bottom line: People will not invite other people to your church if they don't think it is a safe place for them.

If they are worried that their coworker will come to church for the first time and hear a sermon that has no application to their lives whatsoever, they simply won't invite them.

However, if they know that you address people in their coworker's situation every single week, there will be one less fear in the way of them to make the invite.

#### **4. Create Good Excuses For People to Invite Others to Church**

This one seems obvious to me, but again, many churches don't do this.

Create a good excuse for people to invite people. Maybe it's as simple as having a block party with free food after the services. Maybe you have an attraction like bounce houses for young families with kids. Maybe you have a fun event like a car show or carnival. Maybe you just take advantage of natural times to come to church like Christmas and Easter.

Whatever you do, circle a day on your calendar and promote it. Tell your people that you want them to invite people that day.

It sounds really simple, but again, many churches don't do it. They have events, but the events are for members and fellowship. Clearly tell people that you want them to invite people to these

events. Give them simple tools like invite cards to hand out. You will be surprised how much this works to introduce new people to your church.

## **5. Celebrate Evangelism**

When someone comes to your church and gives their life to Christ, celebrate it! When people get baptized, celebrate it! When someone in your church invites someone, celebrate it! When you hear about spiritual conversations that your people are having with friends or co-workers, celebrate it! When attendance is up, celebrate it!

Whatever gets celebrated in your church will get repeated. Celebrating evangelism shows everyone that this is what your church values. If the angels in Heaven celebrate whenever a lost person is found, it might be a good idea if we did too.

Make a big deal about it, because it is a big deal!

### **Will You Do This?**

Building an evangelistically focused church starts with you. If you model evangelism, preach evangelism, create evangelistic environments, promote evangelistic opportunities, and celebrate evangelism... your church will naturally become an evangelistic church.

Some of you are already creating a culture of evangelism in your church. Great job. Don't give up. Keep pushing the kingdom of God forward.

Some of you are part of a church that has long forgotten its evangelical roots. It is not too late to begin turning things around. God still wants to use your church to advance His kingdom.

This is not about the size of your church. It's about the size of our mission to make disciples of all nations for Jesus Christ.

Let's do this together. Let's build a culture of evangelism in our churches so that more people may find the hope, peace, love, forgiveness, and purpose that we have all found in Christ.

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## Part II

### “Keeping Them In The Boat- Outline”

#### I. Ask yourself candid and honest questions, for example:

- a) Am I connecting with the congregation?
- b) Does my church have repeat visitors?
- c) Am I teaching the principle of tithing?
- d) Are Class Leaders being utilize beyond General Claims collections to help teach various aspects of The Discipline for understanding and edification?
- e) Does the current membership really understand the vision for church growth and development and are they in the proper positions to help bring forth the vision?

#### II. Seven Known Factors That Can Contribute to Low Church Attendance:

**1) Doctrine Dilution-** explain why we believe what we believe and provide scriptural backing

**2) Loss of Evangelistic Passion** -Evangelize in love with passion, zeal, and knowledge-LET'S GET EXCITED about our Lord & Savior and draw souls with love and kindness. Psalm 92:4 & Jeremiah 31:3

**3) Failure to Connect to Community's Culture with the Word of God-** Matthew 4:19 Jesus said, Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people. Jesus not only used words that the disciples could understand, he understood what they wanted.

**4) Give Little Attention to Outreach Ministries** – Determine the needs of your surrounding community, to include neighborhoods and businesses. Execute creative ways to address those needs for the betterment of the community and long-term relationships.

**5) Unresolved Conflicts** - Write the vision, goal, and mission in which you would like to accomplish for your church. Help create an environment that welcomes all ideas, creativity, and encourage “out of the box” thinkers. Continue to teach the act of forgiveness and spiritual growth and development.

**6) Uncomfortable with Change** – Share the vision with members, how that vision is beneficial to God’s Kingdom, and immediately address any concerns that may cause stagnation in that achievement.

**7) Unable to Grasp Biblical Teachings** – 2 Timothy 2:15 Study to show thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Specifically during Bible Study & Sunday-School, allow time for questions & answers. In addition, if attendees do not understand specific acts during worship service, encourage them to write down and bring questions to Bible Study and/or Sunday school.

## **Understanding Key Terms**

**DROPOUT**—refers to those who left the church between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two.

**DECHURCHED**---refers to everyone in general who once was part of a local congregation but has since neglected the fellowship of the church.

**UNCHURCHED**---May refer to those who do not belong to a church. It can include both those who once attended a church and those who have never stepped foot inside a sanctuary.

**RECHURCHED**—denotes the group of people who once were unchurched but have since returned to a local body of believers.

**An Effective/Essential Church is a Healthy Church**---Although struggles are not eliminated altogether, discovering ways to understand them can help you address those areas in which improvement is needed.

### **III. Take Your Church’s Pulse-**

- 1) Gather feedback from assessments/surveys in key areas, for example:**
  - a. Hospitality
  - b. Church Members
  - c. Church Facility
  - d. First Time Visitors

- 2) **Help Members to Discover Their Spiritual Gifts**
  - a. Assists in understanding God's Will for their life
  - b. Is beneficial to know areas in ministry one should focus
  - c. Supports one's fulfillment in their area of interest
  - d. Helps to see how the Holy Spirit is operational in one's own life
  - e. Builds unity and dedication
  - f. Useful in helping to identify and fulfill one's purpose in the Body of Christ

## **Now That You Have Some Ideas About the Needs of Your Church & Community, What Are You Going To Do About It?**

### **IV. Pray & Execute a Plan to Grow a Healthy Church- James 2:17-18 (Work your Faith)**

1. **Plow**-Prepare & Share Results of the Surveys
2. **Plant**-Empower Leaders to Develop Ideas Centered Around Improving the Area in which they Serve.
3. **Prune**-Evaluate Whose on Board & Ask for Commitment
4. **Plan**- Create A Vision Centered Around Achieving the Goals for Your Church & Community Habakkuk 2:2 And the Lord answered me, and said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables...."
5. **Perfect**-Create Smart Goals
  - a. Specific
  - b. Measurable
  - c. Achievable
  - d. Relevant
  - e. Timely



# SMART Goal Worksheet

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Target Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Achieved: \_\_\_\_\_

Goal:

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## Verify that your goal is SMART

**Specific:** *What exactly will you accomplish?*

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**Measurable:** *How will you know when you have reached this goal?*

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**Achievable:** *Is achieving this goal realistic with effort and commitment?*

*Have you got the resources to achieve this goal? If not, how will you get them?*

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**Relevant:** *Why is this goal significant to your church/community?*

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**Timely:** *When will you achieve this goal?*

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**This goal is important because:**

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**The benefits of achieving this goal will be:**

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**Take Action!**

**Potential Obstacles**

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**Potential Solutions**

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**Who are the people you will ask to help you?**

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**Specific Action Steps:** *What steps need to be taken to get you to your goal?*

| <b>What?</b> | <b>Expected Completion Date</b> | <b>Completed</b> |
|--------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
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## A BIBLICAL PROCESS TO MAKING CHRISTIAN DISCIPLES

1. The following are six biblical disciplines that should improve Christian discipleship in the Body of Christ:
  - a. Spend time with the Master.
  - b. Live in the Word.
  - c. Pray in Faith.
  - d. Fellowship with Believers.
  - e. Witness to the World.
  - f. Minister to Others.
2. To follow through on these disciplines, we must first decide to deny ourselves.
  - a. And He said to all, “If any person wills to come after Me, let him deny himself **[[a]disown himself, [b]forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests, [c]refuse and give up himself]** and take up his cross daily and follow Me **[[d]cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying also]** **(Lk. 9:23) (AMP)**.
    - 1) We improve in Christian discipleship by abandoning the “It’s all about me” mentality. It begins with the following:
      - ❖ Choose to be born again **(Jn. 3:3) (Rom. 10:9-10)**.
      - ❖ Choose to deny any self-centeredness that could hinder the sincere humility and faith God desires (1 Pet. 5:6).
      - ❖ Choose to renew the mind (Rom. 12:2).

### #1 TEACH HOW TO SPEND TIME WITH THE MASTER

- b. Jesus said, “I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much (abundant) fruit. However, apart from Me [cut off from vital union with Me] you can do nothing” **(Jn. 15:5)**.

- **Spend Time with the Master** daily by making Jesus your first priority.
- **Scriptural Example:** *And in the morning, long before daylight, He got up and went out to a deserted place, and there He prayed (Mk. 1:35).*
- **REASONS FOR SPENDING TIME WITH JESUS**
  - To know God through fellowship with Him.
  - To receive direction and guidance for daily decisions.
  - To bring our needs before God.

## #2 TEACH HOW TO LIVE IN THE WORD

- c. “Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples; And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free” (**Jn. 8:31-32**).
- **Living in the Word** is the way to have Christ living in you.
  - We will not grow spiritually, unless we regularly partake of the Word of God and obey it. “Man, shall not live and be upheld and sustained by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4).
    - Living in the Word is done by hearing, reading, studying, meditating and memorizing verses of our Bibles regularly. (**Jn. 14:26**) (**Joshua 1:8**)
    - Taking notes from sermons to apply them to our lives.
    - Attending Sunday Worship Service, Bible Study, Sunday school weekly and completing the Master Life Discipleship Program.

## #3 TEACH HOW TO PRAY IN FAITH

- d. Jesus said, “If you live in Me [abide vitally united to Me] and My words remain in you and continue to live in your hearts, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you” **(Jn. 15:7)**.
- This is done by “**Praying in faith.**” **(Mk. 11:24)**
  - Practice asking God for things that are in line with His will. **(1 Jn. 5:14-15)**
  - God’s will is found in God’s word. **(2 Tim. 3:16-17)**
  - God refuses to grant His approval of any prayer that is not in agreement with what He desires. **(James 4:3)**
  - Praying in faith consist of:
    - ✓ Approaching God with **thanksgiving** and **praise.** **(Ps. 100:4)**
    - ✓ **Confessing** our sins before God is asked of anything. **(1 Jn. 1:9)**
    - ✓ Make your **request/petition** known to God. **(Phil. 4:6)**
    - ✓ Practice **interceding** on behalf of others. **(Jn. 17:9-26; 1 Tim. 2:1)**
    - ✓ Always close your prayers in “**Jesus**” name and not in “**His**” name. **(Jn. 14:13-14).**
    - ✓ Acronym to help remember the elements of prayer is “A.C.T.S” = Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

#### #4 TEACH HOW TO FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

- e. Jesus said, “I give you a new commandment: that you should love one another. Just as I have loved you, so you too should love one another. By this shall all [men] know that you are My disciples, if you love one another [if you keep on showing love among yourselves] **(Jn. 13:34-35)**.
- a) Jesus commands that we practice “**Fellowshipping with other believers.**” The following are actions that we should practice and encourage our family members to display so that all people will know that we follow Jesus:
- Practice living in peace with our fellow Christians.

- Practice reconciliation with those who trespass against you and those you trespass against.
- Practice loving people so that others know that we are Christians.

## #5 TEACH HOW TO WITNESS TO THE WORLD

f. Jesus said, “When you bear (produce) much fruit, My Father is *honored* and *glorified*, and you *show* and *prove* yourselves to be *true followers* of Mine” (Jn. 15:8).

- I. Jesus commands that we “**Witness to the World.**” This can be done through the following Christian practices:
  - Practice regularly praying for lost persons by name.
  - Practice sharing your testimony with others when a God given opportunity arises.
  - Practice sharing the plan of salvation with those who are open to hearing it.
  - Practice following up with those persons that you lead to Christ.

## #6 TO THEM HOW TO MINISTER TO THE WORLD

g. Jesus said, “No one has greater love [no one has shown stronger affection] than to lay down (give up) his own life for his friends” (Jn. 15:13).

- a) We show ourselves to be followers of Jesus when we “**Minister to others.**”
- b) We have a responsibility to minister to others.
- c) We are dealing with family members and people with real issues.
- d) Become familiar with the scriptures so that we can provide others with the word of God that deals with their specific life challenge.
- e) Recommend you purchase the “Quick Scripture Reference for Counseling’ 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition at Life Way for \$12.99.

f) The following are ways we can “**Minister to others.**”

- **Serve** Christ by serving Him in the local church.
- Encourage **tithing** at your local church.
- Practice doing kind deeds for persons in need monthly.

### References

All Scriptures are taken from the Amplified Version Bible.

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## HERE ARE 8 REASONS CHURCHES WHO WANT TO GROW END UP STAYING SMALL

**1. The pastor is the primary caregiver.** Honestly, if you just push past this one issue, you will have made a *ton* of progress. When the pastor has to visit every sick person, do every wedding, funeral and make regular house calls, he or she becomes incapable of doing other things. That model just doesn't scale. If you're good at it, you'll grow the church to 200 people and then disappoint people when you can't get to every event any more. Or you'll just burn out. It creates false expectations and so many people get hurt in the process.

**2. The leaders lack a strategy.** Many churches today are clear on mission and vision. What most lack is a widely shared and agreed-upon strategy. Your vision and mission answers the *why* and *what* of your organization. Your strategy answers *how*. And *how* is critical. Spend time working through your strategy. Be clear on *how* you will accomplish your mission and don't rest until the mission, vision and strategy reside in every single volunteer and leader.

**3. True leaders aren't leading.** In every church, there are people who hold the position of leadership and then there are people who are truly leaders (who may not hold any position in your church). Release people who hold titles but aren't advancing the mission



and hand the job over to real leaders. Look for people who have a track record of handling responsibility in other areas of life and give them the job of leading the church into the future with you. If you actually have leaders leading, it will make a huge difference.

**4. Volunteers are unempowered.** Sure, small churches may not have the budget to hire other staff, but you have people. Once you have identified true leaders, and once you're clear on your mission vision and strategy, you need to release people to accomplish it. Try to do it all yourself and you will burn out, leave or simply be ineffective. Empower volunteers around an aligned strategy and you will likely begin to see progress.

**5. The governance team micromanages.** If you need permission every time you need to buy paper towels or repaint an office, you have a governance issue. Most boards who micromanage do so because that's where most people simply default. You need a board that guards the mission and vision and empowers the team to accomplish it and then gets out of the way.

**6. Too many meetings. Speaks for itself!**

**7. Too many events and programs that lead nowhere.** Activity does not equal accomplishment. Just because you're busy doesn't mean you're being effective. If you check into most small churches (remember, I was there...I'm not judging, just being honest), there are a lot of programs that accomplish little and lead nowhere. Stop them. Yes people will be mad. Even have the courage to cut some good programs. Good is the enemy of great. Then go out and do a few great things.

**8. The pastor suffers from a desire to please everybody.** Many pastors I know are people-pleasers by nature. Go see a counselor. Get on your knees. Do whatever you need to do to get over the fear of disappointing people. Courageous leadership is like courageous parenting. Don't do what your kids want you to do; do what you believe is best for them in the end. Eventually, many of them will thank you. And the rest? Honestly, they'll probably go to another church that isn't reaching many people either. I realize the diagnosis can sound a little harsh, but we have a pretty deep problem on our hands. And radical problems demand radical solutions.

Resources:

[http://www.freechurchforms.com/survey\\_examples.html](http://www.freechurchforms.com/survey_examples.html)

[http://www.westlakechurch.com/site/pub/sermons/pdf/070410\\_Gift\\_Help\\_Churchcb2.pdf](http://www.westlakechurch.com/site/pub/sermons/pdf/070410_Gift_Help_Churchcb2.pdf)

[www.collegetransition.org/docs/ica.SMARTGoalWorksheet.doc](http://www.collegetransition.org/docs/ica.SMARTGoalWorksheet.doc)

<http://careynieuwhof.com/8-reasons-most-churches-never-break-the-200-attendance-mark/>

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