

GROWING IN GRACE LETTERS! – Calling saints in Christ, (in our homes and with one another in Church), to walk in the Steps of Jesus! (1 Peter 2:15-25) Edited by James Bell, a servant of Jesus Christ!

2 3 26 V1n39 — EVERY MEMBER OF OUR LOCAL CHURCH — SPREADING the GOSPEL!

Genuine Christianity is rooted in RELATIONSHIPS!

The primary relationship is, of course, a personal, saving relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. **The next vital relationship** is that of fellowship in the body of Christ — specifically of being together **in a local church** with other brothers and sisters in Christ. (Acts 1 & 2; 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4)

It is in a local church CONTEXT that we are able to carry out the various '**one to another**' **this-is-what-love-looks-like ministries** which are stated over 50 times in the Epistles. **In the Christian Home and in the local assembly of saints in Christ, Christ is our exalted HEAD and we are 'serving members' in His Body of which He is, of course, the Head!** **AND AS AN OVERFLOW of these relationships we are motivated by the indwelling compelling of the Holy Spirit to PROCLAIM the Gospel of Christ — by LIFESTYLE and by PREACHING!**

Therefore, look at the concentric circles below.

These are called **Concentric Circles**, because all of the circles are related to and have a specific connection to the first circle.



REALITY: All too often we have hidden ruptured and/or strained relationships in our Bible believing Christian churches and homes; **and/or** just plain **WORLDLINESS** that hinders the spread of the Gospel of Christ!

This is one reason that we find it easy to **jump past** family, relatives, friends, neighbors, business or work associates, and even acquaintances and **go to Person X** to evangelize!

We run out to “Person X” and we give them the gospel or a tract; and then, we run back to the safety of our ‘Rabbit Holes’ — places where we are isolated from the world!

Jesus told the early disciples, “You shall be my witnesses in [1] Jerusalem; [2] Judea; [3] Samaria and [4] to the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:7-8)

[IN 2026, the ‘principles’ of this verse, apply to us!]

WITNESSES— that is, we are to demonstrate by our lives real

evidence of Christ in our lives **to the people in our world, starting with those closest to home—** **This is the 'MUSIC!' OF THE GOSPEL, WHICH MAKES the gospel tracts, sermons, Bible Studies, etc, all the more believable!** **[NOW, AS TO THE 'CONCENTRIC CIRCLES' --**

Person X may be in the high crime streets of a big city or in a third world, or in a poverty-stricken country, or in a rescue mission, or a jail— **SO, WE go to them!** We evangelize. We come home. We tell others about our efforts. We go back to our business, job, home, church, and/or daily routines; and every so often we repeat the cycle.

Others will commend us for being willing to 'go to the streets' or to a foreign land and minister for a few hours, days, or even weeks. THUS, we feel good. We are EVANGELIZING the world! Now there is **no doubt** about it— Person X needs the Gospel and they are a part of the world that we are called upon to evangelize! **Ministry to Person X is valid and needed!**

HOWEVER, WHY is it that all too often

We do not GO TO

THE FOLKS, close to us, IN CIRCLES 2 - 6?

[1] IT COULD BE because they know us! They know our salty language, lustful looks, greedy grasping, anger,

business deceit, gossip, etc. They see how we are at work or at school or in our home. **THUS:** We might need to, first of all, ask for their forgiveness or give forgiveness— which if that is what we need to do— just do it! That is powerful witnessing!

[2] ANOTHER REALITY: With Person X, we don't have to deal with our 'hang-ups' ... OR THEIRS ... and we can 'love them and leave them!' We make a 'quick trip' to a third world country, (Or even stay 45 days as I have!), but then we come home. Again, yes, there is need and a place for such endeavors. **But frankly, such labors** are usually simple and easy **as compared to** witnessing to those in circles 2-6!

EVEN with 'Third World' type missions/evangelism right in our own town, or with outreach efforts toward neighbors just down the street— it's different and often far more difficult!

[3] AND ALSO, with ministry in Circles 2-6 — it's week after week, month after month, year after year. Ministering to those in Circles 2-6 is much like the ministry of the career missionary. We are there for the long haul— planting, watering, praying, and waiting for the **LORD to give the increase!** **We can't leave them!** **We can't just do Sunday School...** or Youth or Children's ministry... or ministry to a neighbor... or to a co-worker **once or twice a year.** Rather, we **MUST minister to them week after week and year after year— or at least maintain availability to minister, being alert for the next opportunity...** as we **continue to pray and agonize for their souls!** **REALITY: To folks in our Circles 2-6, we are THEIR**

career missionaries! We are their full-time Ministers. SADLY: this is why many folk are looking for a church to merely attend; and not one where they will be equipped and called upon to labor for the Master!

IN OUR 'CIRCLES 2-6, we MAY have to stop and give sacrificially of ourselves and our time... you know... just like the Good Samaritan! HAVE WE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED THIS— if we find an 'open door' with a family, with an individual — do we not have to be prepared to follow-up week after week and even beyond?

If at Sunday School or at Church services, we discover a need someone has ... Be it a member or a visitor ... — doesn't the Sunday School class, (or you as a member), have opportunity/responsibility for follow-up ministry?

Over the years a good number of dear ones have told me that they feel that it is much easier to minister the Gospel in this particular foreign land or that one. It could be. But here is some larger reality: If we were the actual ones living in and ministering in that 'third world' country; or ministering in a big city Rescue Mission every day, 365 days a year and year after year— we would not think it easy; and we would see and experience the intense spiritual blindness and warfare in those mission fields!

Years back I had spent 2 weeks, 1 month, and then 45 days in India. **All of those dear folks were my Person X!** But all who were Person X to me— those same folk were the people of Circles 2-6 to the Indian pastors and gospel workers— 365 days a year. They did not get to LEAVE after 45 days and, thus, get out from under the daily load of evangelizing / discipling folks in Circles 2-6!

On three different occasions I, along with others, walked the streets of major cities in India, passing out tracts and doing street preaching. In years past, a number of our folk have done good ministry in Mexico, or at the Jail, or Rescue Mission. **These are all ministries to our Person X group. Praise the LORD!** But our 'Person X' group is the Rescue Mission's workers' or India's pastors' and churches' and/or the Mexico pastor's and their Christian worker's Person 2-6 Group! **MOST OF THE REAL WORK IS DONE IN THE 2-6 GROUPS, BY THE CHRISTIAN WORKERS WHO LIVE IN THEIR MIDST, YEAR AROUND!**

Yes, we can have a valid ministry to Person X, especially IF or when we leave them connected to local churches and ministries.

But as any farmer knows— he must do more than scatter a bunch of seed and then leave town!

FRANKLY, whatever we do among Person X is a 'piece of cake!' ... when compared to the labor required from the native pastors or from the Rescue Mission Staff!...

[BY THE WAY: THIS REALITY SHOULD ENVISION OUR PRAYING FOR MISSIONARIES and NATIVE PASTORS, ETC.

BUT, again, the PRIMARY QUESTION for us is— WHO IS GOING TO TAKE THE GOSPEL TO THOSE IN OUR ‘2-6’ WORLD? And the answer is that I MUST! AND SO MUST YOU!

BUT, WE PROTEST: “The people in my “2 to 6” world are not responsive to the gospel!” ... And, “it’s so hard...” and “what if it requires me to spend time with them every week...?” **WE MUST REMEMBER:**

First, Many a great harvest has come after a number of apparent crop failures! Let us keep planting, watering. God will give the increase! **Second,** we are called to be faithful. For 100 years or more, Noah worked on building an ARK and PREACHING RIGHTEOUSNESS and living a GRACE-FILLED life BEFORE a people who would ultimately be destroyed! BUT NOAH KEPT ON PREACHING! We are, likewise, called to be faithful! **Third,** look in the Bible— very often God has His servants in ‘gospel-hardened’ places! Just ask Noah! And then remember, that Jesus says that the last days will be like the days of Noah! **Fourth,** **beware of modeling after the apparent success methods of the entertainment oriented religious harlot!** Our lost world does not need PLAY ACTING visuals! **They need REAL VISUALS— Christians who genuinely love and forgive, who are manifesting joy and hope in trials and tribulations, who manifest the COMPASSION of Jesus and who are walking in holiness.** **Fifth,** A MASTER KEY with the folks in our “2-6”

world, IS THE REALITY THAT life tumbles in for all of them. They have both good and ‘bad’ things that happen to them. **And the same things happen to saints in Christ!** HOWEVER, THE LOST do not have resources to help them deal with the trials and troubles.

BUT, BEING IN CHRIST, WE DO! **As they WITNESS you winning the battle over bitterness, revenge, hate, fear, and resentments— the Gospel is being seen in Circles 2-6!** The MUSIC of the gospel is flowing from you. You are making them ‘THIRSTY’ and HUNGRY for good news, for GRACE to handle life! You are **REVEALING JESUS, the LIGHT of the world!** Thus, when life does tumble in, we often have FRESH OPPORTUNITIES... or “points of contact” to sow seeds of kindness and love! Love is, after all, meeting real needs.

Thus, real ‘2-6’ evangelism/missions/witnessing OFTEN starts with how I treat my wife, my family, MY CHURCH FAMILY, those closest to me, those who are neighbors, those I work around; and/or those I may casually meet in the town/county where I live.

Real ‘2-6’ evangelism/missions/witnessing starts with being a congregation that loves, that forgives, and that seeks to live holy and pure! Real 2-6-evangelism CONTINUES as we TELL what great things God has done and is doing for us— (1) Andrew went to Peter; (2) Philip, to Nathaniel; (3) The woman at the well,

back to her city; (4) **Cornelius** went to his household; (5) **The Philippian jailer**, to his household; (6) **The demonic of the Gadarenes** now sitting at the feet of Jesus, fully clothed and in his right mind was told by Jesus to go back to his home people and to tell them what great things the LORD had done for him! **(7) AND THIS WEEK... I WILL BE GOING TO _____?**

(Some of the concepts for this article are edited from and the diagram is from *Concentric Circles of Concern*, by W. Oscar Thompson, Jr.)

Grace to all in Christ!

James Bell / www.southsidegallatin.org

SUNDAY SERVICES: FEBRUARY, 2026: 8, 15, 22

[1] Sunday School at 9:30am: Nursery, Children's classes, Youth, and Adult classes. **[2] WORSHIP SERVICE at 10:45am!**

****NOON Covered Dish, Fellowship Meal:**

THIS MEAL, FOR FEBRUARY, IS MOVED TO SECOND SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8!

2/15 - LORD'S SUPPER SERVICE

2/22 – 5:00pm 4th Sunday Evening Worship

EVERY SATURDAY* 8:00 AM,** — Men's Bible Study! (Doors open by 7:30am... coffee, juice, donuts, and Hardee's Biscuits are available!) **FEBRUARY 7 / Romans 6**

**NEXT Ladies Bible Study, 2/17/26 @ 11:00 AM –
Read Acts 5**

*****TUESDAYS: LADIES PRAYER MEETING @ 10:00am**

***Young Adults ... Tuesdays at 7:15pm at Jaden
and Rhi's home!***

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS @ 6:30pm,

MEN'S Prayer Service // YOUNG FAMILIES SERVICE

LOVE OFFERINGS UNTO THE LORD by MAIL or by ONLINE:

BY MAIL (checks), make out to Southside Baptist) — MAIL TO:
Southside Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1594, Gallatin, TN 37066 /

TO GIVE via ONLINE GIVING:

<https://southsidebaptist.breezechms.com/give/online>