

# Relational Evangelism: Living Out the Great Commission as a Lifestyle

## I. Reframing Our View Of Evangelism

What do we commonly think of when we consider the word “EVANGELISM”?

- Missionaries to foreign countries
- Door to door “witnessing”
- Bullhorn guy shouting at people on the street
- Billy Graham/Greg Laurie – Stadium Crusades
- Four Spiritual Laws
- Inviting a friend “to Church”
- Reserved for those who have the spiritual gift of evangelism

What are some of our common fears about “EVANGELISM”?

- Talking to people
- Not knowing enough Scripture
- What our friends will think about us

What is it that Jesus called us (commanded us) to do?

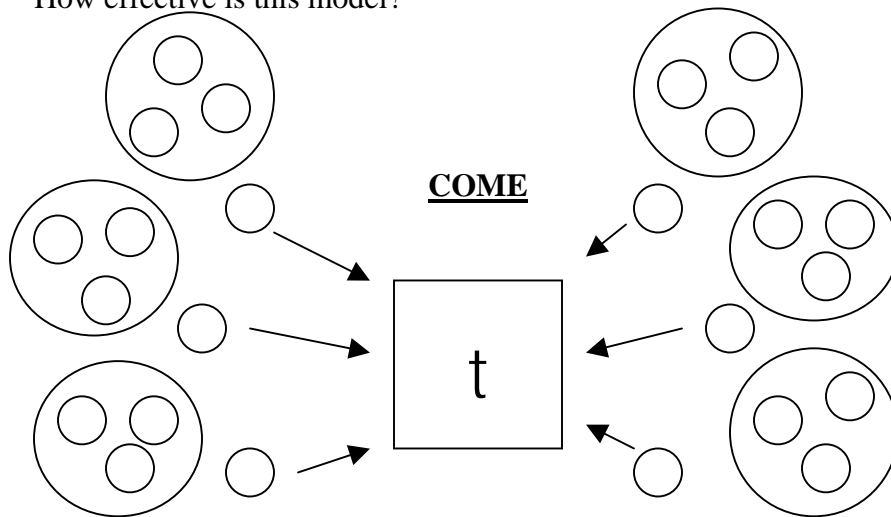
- Matthew 22:37-40: “Jesus replied, ‘**Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: **Love your neighbor** as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’”
- Matthew 28:19-20: “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.”
- When Jesus prayed to the Father for His disciples before He was arrested in Matthew 17:11: “I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name – the name you gave me – so that they may **be one** as we are one.”
- When Jesus prayed to the Father for all believers in Matthew 17:20-21: “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. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”
- Discipleship – being a follower of Jesus
- **Jesus called us to a new WAY – to live a lifestyle of faith that expresses love for God, love for others, and to inspire others to do the same while living in community.**

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## II. Our Approach to the Great Commission

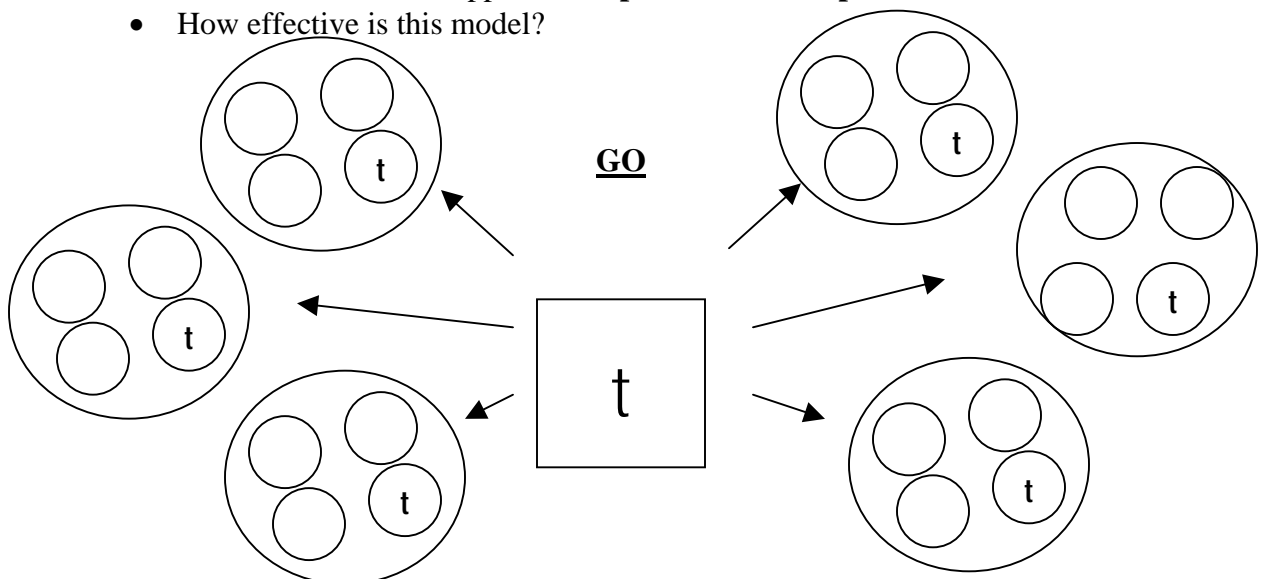
**The Extractional/Attractional Model** – the typical and traditional church approach:

- We extend invitations, find ways to attract people to the Sunday service (or event), extracting them out of their natural sphere of friends, to have them hear the message of the gospel. If they assimilate into “church culture”, they eventually find it difficult to relate with their original native culture – their old friends.
- The Sunday service asks people to “come”.
- The result is that this approach **empowers the Teacher**.
- How effective is this model?



**The Incarnational/Relational Model** – the organic approach:

- We encourage every disciple to live out their faith among their natural sphere of friends, developing authentic and genuine friendships that naturally develop trust, and allow the message of the gospel and of Christ to be embodied by the disciple and communicated in the context of each specific and individual relationship.
- The Sunday service serves the function of equipping disciples to “go” (or rather, “stay” and live differently in their native culture – their friends).
- The result is that this approach **empowers the disciple**.
- How effective is this model?



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## III. From “Oikos” to “Oikos”: Expanding Our Sphere of Relationships

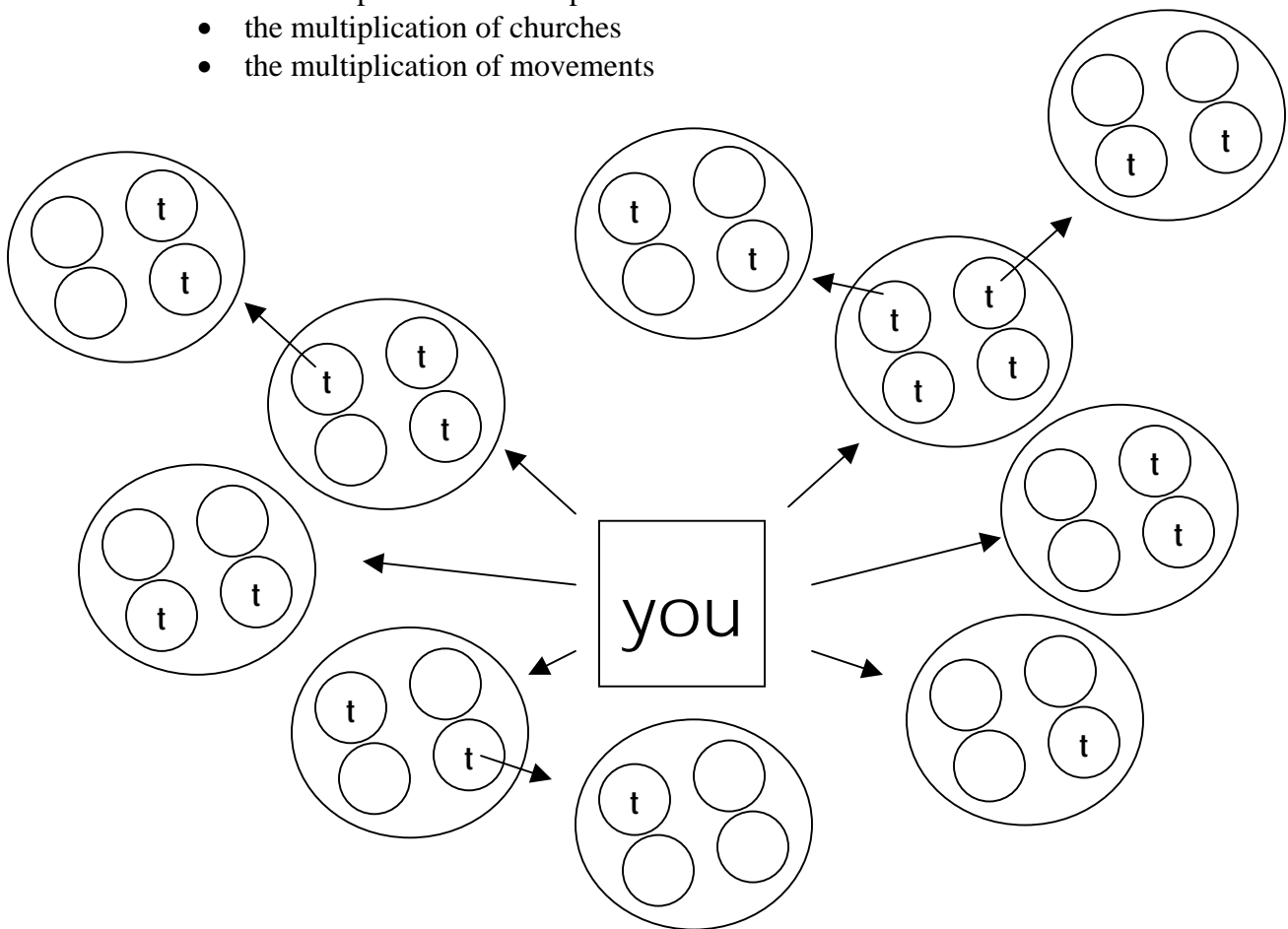
"*Oikos*" - a greek word translated as "house" or "household" referring to one's sphere of influence - our **relational communities**.

Types of "Oikos" relationships:

- Family
- Friends
- Neighbors
- Associates

"Oikos" Expansion - the organic reproduction and multiplication of relationships.

- the multiplication of friendships
- the multiplication of disciples
- the multiplication of churches
- the multiplication of movements



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## **IV. Five Organic Principles to Expanding Your "Oikos"**

### **1. Practice of Prayer**

Luke 10:2 - *"The Harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His Harvest field."*

Are we interested in their attendance or are we interested in their welfare?

What is the Harvest field?

- The city we live in - Long Beach, etc . . .
- The place we work at
- The school we go to or the school we teach at
- The sport/activity that we are involved with
- The club/organization that we participate in

Be in the practice of praying specifically - by name - for the people around us – in our “oikos”.

- Ask God to give us the desire to go out to where people are.
- Ask God to develop within our hearts the compassion to live out love to the hurting.

### **2. Pockets of People**

Luke 10:1 - *"After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of Him to every town and place where He was about to go."*

People are tribal by nature.

We need to go where His Spirit is and develop relationships there. Find out what God is doing and join Him there.

- Are we just asking God to come to us and bless what “we” are doing or are we going to where He is moving and blessing those there?
- The key is not simply in bringing people to church service, it is in being the Church to people.
- The service is used as a point of contact for corporate worship, corporate ministry and corporate equipping.

When we enter into relationships with "them", "they" become one of "us" and "we" become one of "them". We are no longer "doing evangelism" or "doing outreach". We are in community so we need to maintain an attitude of humility and mutuality. It's no longer a two-dimensional exercise, it's a three-dimensional relationship.

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## 3. Power of Presence

Luke 10:8-9 – “*When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The Kingdom of God is near you.’*”

Wherever we go, the King is. And wherever the King is, people bow.

- As we develop relationships with people, when we are present in people’s lives, we are granted their favor.
- We have power and authority in their presence.
- We are called to be salt – to affect one another.

Be intentional about showing up.

- Sometimes we need to take a risk – get out of our comfort zone – and go where people are.
- It may not be your native environment, but it might be theirs. In nurturing a relationship, you are trying to get to know them so be willing to invest time with them.
- If you get an invitation from someone with whom you are trying to nurture a relationship with . . . go! This is a good sign! It means that they are inviting you into their “oikos”. This is an open door to build trust with them.
  - Would you like to hang out for coffee some time? - Yes!
  - I’m having some friends over at my place for a dinner party. Would you like to come? - Yes!
  - There’s a new movie out this weekend. Do you want to go with me? – Yes!
  - We should go bike riding some time. – Yes!
  - Give me a call some time. – Yes!

Invite others into your social circle.

- Extend invitations to people with whom you are trying to nurture a relationship with to non-threatening social activities that you are already doing.
- Provide opportunities for people to be welcomed in your presence.
  - Invite someone out for coffee, breakfast, lunch or dinner.
  - Invite someone into your home to share a meal.
  - Host a dinner party. Make it potluck!
  - Plan a movie night (DVD) in your home (or someone else’s).
  - Ask someone to accompany you to a social event you are going to.

Be willing to walk with people through life.

- If you’re not around, then you can’t get to know each other. If you don’t get to know each other, then you can’t nurture a relationship. If there is no relationship, then there won’t be trust. If there is no trust, then you can’t present Christ effectively.

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## 4. Person of Peace

Luke 10:5-6 – “When you enter a house, first say, ‘Peace to this house.’ If a *man of peace* is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you.”

A person of peace is characterized by:

- Receptivity – open (or at least not hostile) to you and the peace of Christ
- Relational Connections – knows lots of people
- Reputation – either good or bad

When you enter a particular “oikos”, the person of peace will be the one who has influence – natural and personal leadership with the rest of the “oikos”. It is his or her “oikos”, not yours.

Extend your friendship (blessing) to the “oikos”. If there is a person of peace there, he or she will welcome you.

Nurture a relationship with the person of peace. You don’t necessarily have to build relationship with every person in that “oikos”. The person of peace is the first domino that leads to the rest of the “oikos”. When the person of peace begins to pursue Christ, he or she will naturally speak of Him to the rest of the “oikos”. You simply remain present and available to bless and serve and, at the appropriate time, equip the new disciples. In this context, a church service would not be a foreign environment to them and new disciples would find it natural to attend for further corporate worship and equipping.

Examples of persons of peace:

- Samaritan Woman (John 4:39-42)
- Cornelius (Acts 10)
- Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)

## 5. People of Purpose

Luke 10:2-3 - "*The Harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His Harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.*"

We ask Him to send out workers so He answers that prayer by sending us!

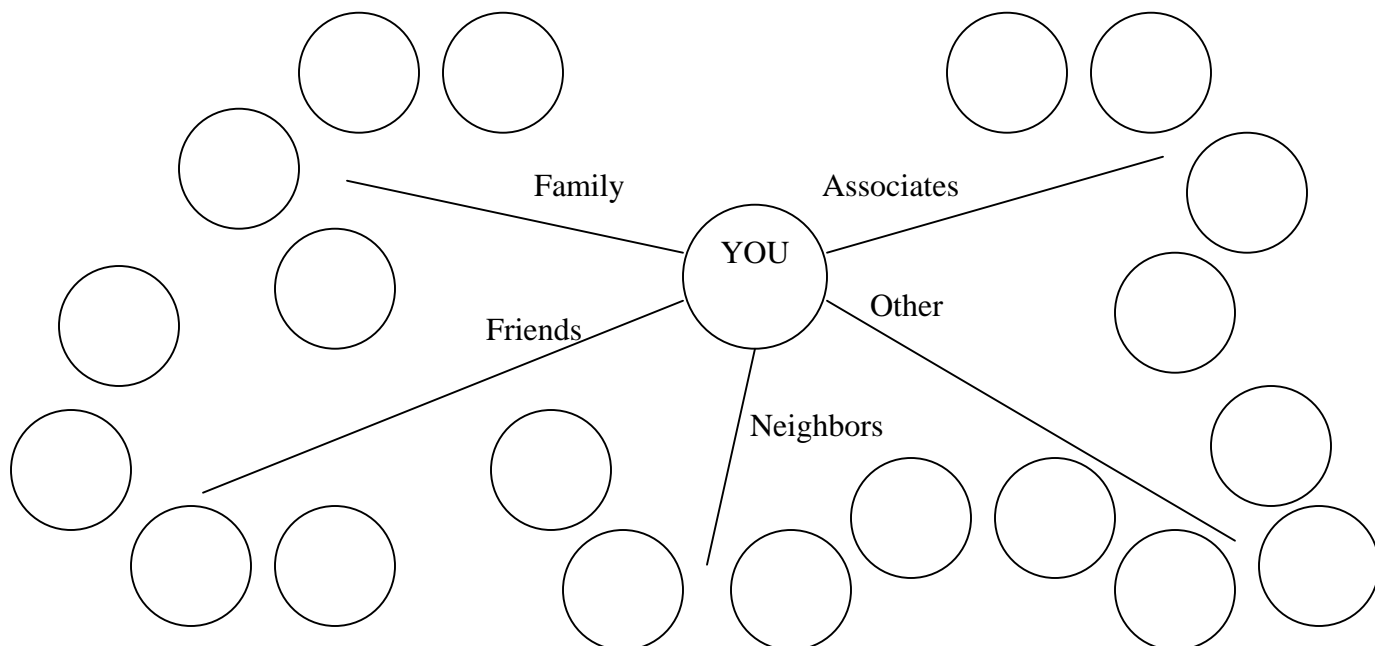
New disciples are **born in the Harvest** and **born for the Harvest**. These are workers **FOR** the Harvest **FROM** the Harvest! They can be most effective in granting their new peace to their own “oikos” right away before they become anchored by the routines and restrictions of church culture.

We all have the same purpose – the same call – **to live out the Great Commission**. We are to **love God, love others** and **inspire others to do the same!** Even the new disciple can do that!

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## V. Practical Application: “Oikos” Exercise

1. Create an “oikos” map by writing names in the circles for each particular type of “oikos”. Use the map below or use a blank sheet for more space.
2. Add additional circles and additional groups of circles for other “oikos” that you connect with.
3. Consider which person in each “oikos” or grouping is the Person of Peace. Make a star or some other notation in those people’s circles.
4. Begin to pray (by name) for God’s peace and blessing on every person in each “oikos”.
5. Find a way to connect with each Person of Peace over the next month. Begin to nurture a positive and healthy friendship with these people.
6. Gather the other people in the “oikos” along with the Person of Peace to do something together. This is the bringing together of this particular community.



### Living Out Community and The Great Commission

We are starting a group that will explore a genuine sense of community while living out The Great Commission. We will challenge each other to be intentional about the practice of fellowship and walking in discipleship. We will be trained and equipped to expand and shepherd our relational spheres by unpacking the organic principles. We will share personal stories and pray for the Harvest.

This lifestyle group will meet on **Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.**

To be part of this group and for location contact **Eric Leocadio**  
at **twoworldcollision@yahoo.com**.

*Note: Organic principles were articulated first by Neil Cole, Executive Director of Church Multiplication Associates, Founder of Awakening Chapels, and Author of “Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens”.*