

**Washington, North Carolina Intentional Community Evangelism
Community Evangelism Seminar Report
by
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August 18-19, 2008, I had the privilege of leading a Community Evangelism Seminar in the community of Washington, NC. Washington, the county seat of Beaufort County, is a historic eastern North Carolina town situated on the Pamlico River with a population of around 9,800 people. In spite of the town's historic nature and tourist attractions, Washington is faced with its own inner city type issues including poverty, drugs and street gangs.

Evangelism efforts in the area are primarily being led by 4 churches working together including First Baptist Church (SBC), 15th Street Church of God, Temple of Jesus Christ (African American Independent Church) and Lay People from Old Ford Church of Christ. (This area has a large concentration of churches affiliated with the Church of Christ movement.)

Prior to my involvement with the group, efforts had been spearheaded by Jonathan Jones, the Assistant District Attorney for Beaufort County. His experience in the District Attorney's office dealing with drug offenders, gang members and murders in the community has instilled him with a burden to reach the low income/high crime areas of Washington. Jonathan managed to bring together a team of about 7 people including 3 pastors. This team began monthly outreach efforts (Tract distribution) in the target neighborhood that lies between 7th and 9th street.

On April 11, 2008 I was invited by Jonathan Jones to meet with the team and help them determine how to expand their outreach efforts into the community. This connection came through a mutual friend who recommended my ministry to Jonathan. During the meeting, I made a number of recommendations to the team including the implementation of the Intentional Community Evangelism process. They contacted me and scheduled the Community Evangelism Seminar for July 18-19.

A week before the conference, Jonathan informed me that 84 people had preregistered for the training. Having grown up in eastern North Carolina, I found that bit of news extremely encouraging. Very few churches in this part of the state have a heart for evangelism. It is obvious that God is at work in the area.

On Friday night of the conference, we received 63 registration cards back from participants representing 7 churches. Out of those registrations, 38 out of 63 respondents said that they had led someone to faith in Jesus Christ before. 33 out of 63 had attended an evangelism training seminar

before. When asked what the number one reason why people don't share the gospel, 40 respondents gave "fear" as the number 1 answer and "Don't know how" as the number 2 answer (19 responses)

The topics that I taught during the conference included prayer and evangelism, prayer walking, sharing the gospel (including how to start a witnessing conversation) and hindrances to evangelism. I taught three main methods for sharing the gospel including using tracts, the Roman Road and the Evangecube. (See PowerPoint Attachments)

On Saturday, a number of people had other commitments and could not go out with us. Nevertheless, we had about 28 people go into the community to prayer walk and share the gospel. In spite of a little rain shower, we saw 8 people come to faith in Christ! One group had the opportunity to lead 5 people to Christ in a group setting.

Follow-up comments I received via e-mail from conference participants include:

"We thought you provided all the tools we need to share the message of salvation with others. Now we just have to get out and do it!" -- A Evett

"I am now BOLD! Much Bolder than before. I [am] ready to go out and save some souls! Thanks so much. The training was excellent." -- D Sarff

After talking with Jonathan Jones, the churches are planning to form prayerwalking and evangelism teams to get out into the community on a weekly basis. There is also talk of continuing the implementation of the Intentional Community Evangelism process through additional training and hosting a large event in the spring of 2009. I am recommending an Intentional Community Evangelism weekend blitz for that weekend event.

I am continuing my relationship with the churches in Washington through Jonathan Jones. The pastor of First Baptist Church shared his desire to have me back this fall for additional ministry opportunities. I will be recommending further training resources to this group to help them reach their community.