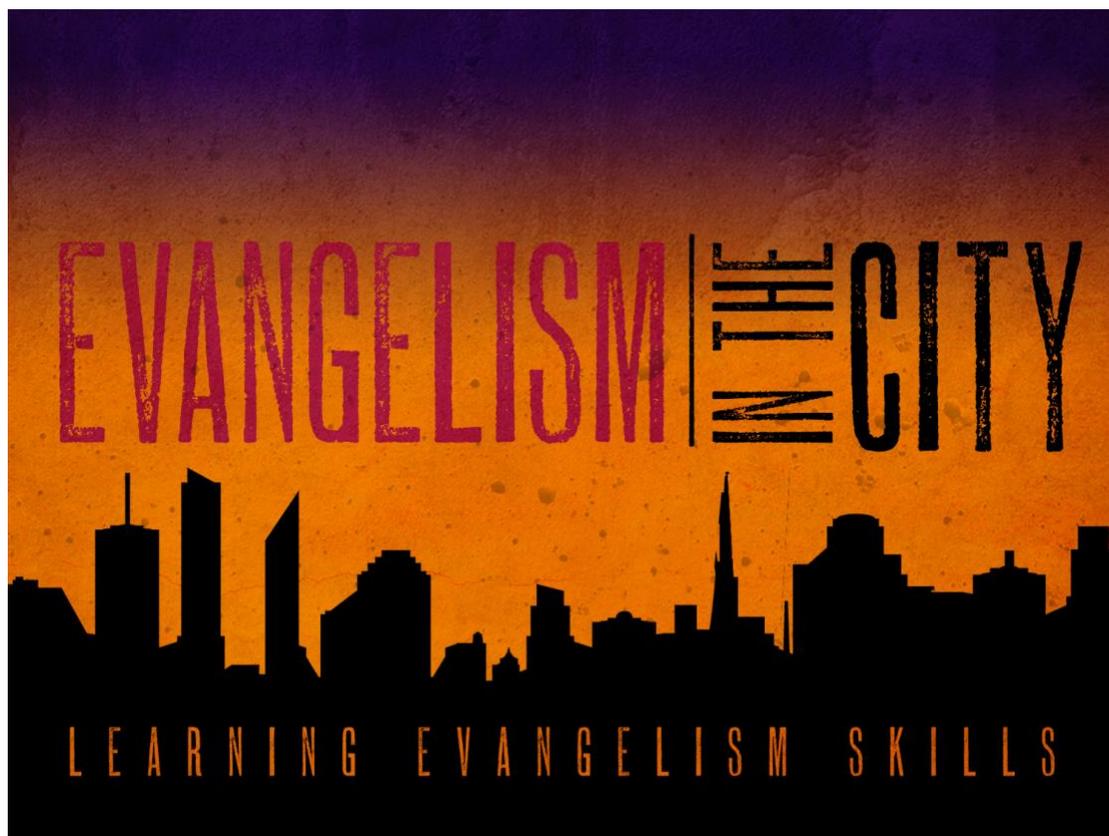


UNIVERSITY CHURCH OF CHRIST



Teacher – Steve Patton

## Purpose of the Class

We are to be an evangelistic people. It is at the heart of who we are. Yet, in many congregations, evangelism is seen as the responsibility of the “evangelist” or, at best, a handful of members who meet to do “evangelism stuff.” Yet in the New Testament we see an entirely different mindset. “*They who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.*” (Acts 8:4). The explosion of kingdom growth during the apostolic period can be attributed mainly to every member trying to play a role in bringing the lost to Christ.

The purpose of this class is twofold. First, we want to regain the evangelistic mindset of first century Christians - disciples whose hearts rejoiced in the Gospel and wanted to share the good news with everyone. Motivation is essential to becoming a successful soul winner.

Second, we want to prepare ourselves to work as soul savers. Lots of Christians care about souls but feel inadequate in reaching out to people. We will develop evangelism skills that aid us in reaching out to the lost. We will work on how we treat guests in our services, how we follow up with visitors, how we invite people to services, how to approach people for bible studies, how to know *who* to approach, and we will learn to teach someone the Gospel. We will learn new ways of finding prospects that have been successful with other evangelists, including outreach Bible studies and more effective use of the internet. We will have online interviews with other evangelists across the country who are having success.

When we finish the class, we will continue our efforts by regularly meeting and working together in other ways. I am excited about the possibilities. We have had great success here before and I want us to be successful again.

The class will ZOOMed each Sunday. I plan to put the weekly handouts online. Be committed to this class and we will be blessed by the Lord in our work.

## Lesson 2 - Evangelistic Opportunity in Tampa

### Present growth trends in the church

- Declining for over 40 years. Once the fastest growing group in the U.S.
- 75% of most congregational growth comes from transfers from other congregations.
- A typical church has 8 baptisms a year: 6 children of church members and 2 others. Half of these drop out, leaving only 4 permanent new members.
- If this pattern continues the Lord's church would cease to exist in 35-40 years.
- Obviously we are failing in our evangelism efforts.

### The Potential for Growth of the Church in Tampa.

- What percentage of the people in Tampa would you say are lost?
- What percentage of those do you think are good prospects for the Gospel?

### The Makeup of New Testament Churches Paul Established

- Were all the members of one nationality and race?
- Did all members come from the same cultural background?
- Were all members raised in God-fearing families?

### The Makeup of our community

- Article: Sun Belt, Suburbs Get More Diverse (USA Today, by Haya El Nasser)
  - From 2010-2019 a 19.7% increase in population
  - From 2010-2019 Tampa Bay had a 18% increase in African-Americans; 30% Hispanic or Latino; 4.4% in Asians. I'm pretty sure that trend continues as well as other cultures growing, including Indian and Middle-Eastern.
  - A multi-cultural environment is an excellent source of prospects.
- The populous environment of an urban setting
  - The nature of an urban setting - Tampa Bay population: 3,100,000. It had an estimated growth rate of almost 20% between 2010-2019.
    - A large pool in which to find prospects.
    - Paul's pattern in where he went to evangelize - Antioch of Syria, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, etc. - all major population centers. From there the gospel spread into surrounding regions. (Ephesus: Acts 19:10; Thessalonians: 1<sup>st</sup> Thess. 1:8)
    - Our location in an urban center is a great advantage for evangelism!
    - Large numbers not from Tampa and often disconnected and alone.
    - Majority are disconnected from a specific church or denomination.
    - Your *large* potential contact list (people you see on a recurring basis,
  - The "Unchurched" population

- About 45% of the population do not claim to be a member of a church, mosque or synagogue and do not claim to have attended a church in the past six months.
- According to Gallup polls, 25% of the unchurched say they would visit a church - if invited by a friend.
- All these factors are positives for evangelism.
- For Consideration:
  - Passages to read and consider: Matt. 28:19,20; Isaiah 2:2,3; 2<sup>nd</sup> Cor. 4:13; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:2, 24-26.
- **Assignment**: Next Sunday consider yourself a first-time visitor. Observe with a fresh look. It starts when you first see the building. Note the property. First impressions outside and inside – Foyer; auditorium; restrooms; first impression of the worship and understandability of it; post service, etc.