

Excerpts from C. Peter Wagner's book  
*Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow*  
Regal Books 1979

**Target area 1: new members.** I believe that new members, as a part of the membership class ought to be required to go through formal training in sharing their faith...Perhaps the main reason why this suggestion has not caught on in a big way is that pastors, staffs, and church boards are *too timid!*

After suggesting this for some time, I was delighted when I discovered that at least one church had already been doing it. College Hill Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, Ohio is a model that needs to be studied closely.

The senior minister is Jerry Kirk. With his encouragement under the direct leadership of the Minister of Evangelism, Ron Rand, the church began to **require** training in evangelism in 1973. Over the previous 4 years attendance had been showing a decadal rate of decline of minus 4 percent. But then the 4 year period from 1973 through 1976 showed a decadal growth rate of 109 percent. Their program is called HELPER, an acronym for "How to Equip Lay People to Evangelize Regularly." In the training, several different methods of sharing the faith are taught.

College Hill does not fear that higher standards for membership will hurt church growth. They have found that higher membership standards will do just the opposite. The church has become stronger by making it harder to get in.

**Target area 2: current members.** It is not easy to establish "requirements" for current church members as it is for receiving new members. I would put as many current members as possible through an evangelism training program of one kind or another.

College Hill has also done this. Their pastoral leadership has set as a goal putting 100 percent of the membership through the HELPER training. For one thing, it has become an unwritten regulation that church officers must have gone through the training before they are elected to office. At this writing 44 percent of the members have taken the training, a remarkably high figure and a good example for other churches to follow *if they decide to take church growth seriously.*