

## **SECTION 3: JESUS FILM TRAINING MANUAL**

### **Topic 1: Purpose & Advantages of Film Evangelism**

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#### **“Make Disciples of All Nations/People”**

For more than twenty generations Jesus’ command has not changed. To this day the objective has remained the same. To know Him more intimately in our personal lives and to take His message of love and forgiveness to the world.

Jesus is Lord, and you and I have the privilege of proclaiming it to the ends of a lost world. But, the task is awesome! Daily the population of our planet increases faster than the population of the church. Half the world’s people remain illiterate and cannot respond to the written word. In the midst of this incredible challenge, evangelists and mission leaders are increasingly turning to various forms of media in order to reach these vast numbers of people.

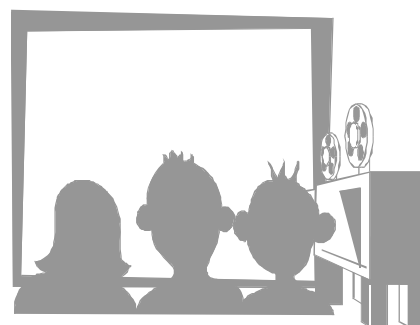
Of all the tools available for evangelism, perhaps none is as versatile or transferable as film. Films serve as a “filter” to find the ripe fruit that God has already prepared. For years our mission efforts have been characterised by going house-to-house to find people interested in the gospel. But in many places entire villages will come to see a film, especially if it is in their own language. From the beginning, the men and the leaders of the village hear the message of Christ. In some patriarchal societies if these men come to the Lord, the entire village will soon follow. In any case, those who respond can be taught how to grow in their faith and win others. They can then return to the village to re-evangelise those who have not yet responded.

The JESUS-film is the strategy that globally expose the most people to the Good News of Jesus Christ. (S9, T4, Page 218 Statistics)

In addition to serving as a filter to find the ripe fruit, evangelism through the use of the JESUS-film has other advantages:

#### **A. ADVANTAGE NO 1:**

Films reach people who can’t read. Almost half the world is illiterate or only marginally literate. Since 1900 Christians have printed more than four billion Bibles, New Testaments and scripture portions. However, this effort has not helped those who cannot read.



In talking with the ambassador to the United Nations from Swaziland, he made this comment:

*“You missionaries sometimes do it wrong. You speak first to the women and children and we are a patriarchal society. And you*

bring too much literature. We are working very hard, but only 28 percent of our population is literate. You could more easily reach people of our country through drama and films.”

Seeing a film also assists in retention because the people hearing the story of Christ are having it reinforced visually. They get a greater understanding of the message of Christ through the graphic presentation of His power, His forgiveness and His great love for ordinary people.

## **B. ADVANTAGE NO 2:**

Almost anyone can show films. It takes many years to train an evangelist to be a great speaker. But even illiterate field workers can be trained in a short time to show an evangelistic film. As film teams are mobilised and trained, it is almost like having hundreds of Billy Graham’s travelling around sharing the message of the gospel.



## **C. ADVANTAGE NO 3:**

Films command attention. Films draw large crowds and attract many who might never come to an evangelistic meeting or more traditional church service. Films in one’s mother tongue can communicate clearly. One of the great advantages of the JESUS-film is its availability in so many languages. For two hours people are able to see and hear the simple message of Christ in their own language. God is already preparing hearts all over the world, and many respond when they are able to clearly understand God’s plan of salvation.

## **D. OTHER ADVANTAGES:**

There are some additional reasons why the JESUS-film particularly has been effective:

- a The JESUS-film is faithful to the scripture. Jesus speaks no words other than those found in the Gospel of Luke.
- b The JESUS-film is accurate. More than five years of research went into the preparation of the film. This research has helped to produce a film that relates extremely well to most parts of the Third World. In many parts of the world people still live in a first century culture - fishing or farming for a living. They will wear sandals, and a wealthy man is

someone who owns an ox cart. There is a great impact in a Philippine fishing village when Jesus performs the miracle of the fish. In the farming villages they understand when He relates the parable of the sower. And in Africa they understand when He heals a demoniac.



- c The JESUS-film is a great teaching tool for new believers. Many film teams show the film over a period of a week in order to explain carefully the meaning of Jesus' words. Viewers visualise what it may have looked like at the time of Christ since all of the scenes were filmed in the Holy Land as close as possible to where the events actually took place 2000 years ago.
- d The JESUS-film is available in multiple formats for appropriate cultural use. In some countries, showings in theatres and on television might be more appropriate than outdoor events. In other countries, use of video cassettes in homes might be more effective.
- e JESUS-film showings are intended to plant new churches and help excising churches to grow. These showings are never intended to be an entertainment event. Those organisations that are seeing the most from the JESUS-film showings have a complete strategy to train counsellors and establish follow-up groups.
- f Finally, the JESUS-film has served as a bridge of cooperation. More than 686 (1/1/98 stats) mission organisations are now using the film as a part of their ministry. In some countries, as many as ten organisations have divided up the cities and villages to make sure the entire country is covered. Many others are working with the JESUS-film office to begin joint efforts to translate new languages for some of the unreached peoples of the world.

**With this background then, we move on to the first steps involved in planning an effective film showing.**

