CHARTS FOR A THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM
(9th Edition)

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my Father, Arthur P. Johnston,

for his insight into a theology of missions and evangelism,

and to my wife, Raschelle, and my three children, Katie, Jon, and Josh,

for putting up with a husband and father who sometimes seems married to a computer!
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FOREWORDS

To “Do the work of an evangelist” is a clear and definite admonition of Holy Scripture. While it was first given from Paul to Timothy its implications for the church of today are clear. Evangelism, or sharing the saving Gospel message of Christ with a lost world, is not only a wonderful assignment it is the responsibility of all children of God. After all, Ephesians 4 makes it obvious that a large part of the evangelist’s assignment is to equip all of the people of God to do the work of the ministry, which in the context of the evangelist’s calling is to teach others to share effectively the Good News of Jesus Christ.

This set of charts produced by Dr. Thomas Johnston will put a new and dynamic resource into the hands of God-called servants of the Lord. They will go a long way to make the task of equipping laborers for the harvest a joy and blessing, which it always should be. Any student of this urgent and vital task will find this resource to be a jewel of a tool. To peruse them is to open a treasure trove of thought and research that God will bless in the lives of those who study them.

Dr. Johnston has taught evangelism at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) since the fall of 2001. He is an able communicator and equipper of students. His classes are marked by passion, insight and enthusiasm for the work of the Gospel. But Dr. Johnston is more than just an adept teacher, he is also a doer of the word. Ever faithful to the call of God on his life as an ambassador of Christ, Dr. Johnston shares and leads others to share the Gospel. The organization and implementation of the Midwestern Evangelism Teams at MBTS, organized and chiefly led by Dr. Johnston, is a living testimony to his diligence as a teacher/equipper. Five to six times a week in Kansas City, students from MBTS regularly go door to door, as well as on to the streets of the city, to share the Gospel. Consequently, hundreds of souls have been led into the kingdom. Dr. Johnston clearly embodies the principle that evangelism is more caught than taught. But in his ministry, it is not one or the other. Evangelism is not just caught, or just taught by Dr. Johnston. It is both caught and taught with excellence.

These charts will introduce you to Dr. Tom Johnston the researcher and thinker. I commend them to you. More than that, however, I commend to you Dr. Tom Johnston, the disciple, disciple-maker and faithful ambassador of Christ.

R. Philip Roberts
President
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Kansas City, Missouri

As a boy, someone placed in my hand the eschatological charts of the imaginative Clarence Larkin in Dispensational Truth. I was charmed—riveted to the detail of the artistry unveiled in behalf of explaining Larkin’s view of the ages. Later, I realized that many took exception to Larkin’s portrayal of end-times events, but visual assistance for a young reader not yet able to traverse the profundities of extensive theological tomes was a hook in the jaws to drag me by age fourteen into theological reflection.

Later, preparing for field-oral exams in a Ph.D. program before the days of computers, I scripted my own study charts for assistance in learning. This contained every theologian and philosopher about whom I could think from Thales to the contemporary period. Included were biographical facts, dates, bibliography, the positions taken by each writer on all of the major doctrines, and finally a column just labeled “peculiarities.”

Everyone knows that the shorter one’s explanation, the more distortion often occurs. Therefore, multi-volume studies of theology and biblical studies continue to be penned. But, there will always be a place for the visual, the succinct, the summary. Charts remain valuable tools not only for those stated reasons but also because various views legitimately (or sometimes not so legitimately) held can be juxtaposed in close proximity, enabling the student to prepare his mental categories which in turn help him sort through the perspectives of more extensive literature.

To my knowledge, Thomas P. Johnston’s Charts for a Theology of Evangelism constitutes one of the very few such summations available in this critical arena of study. These charts not only examine and contrast methodologies but also delve into theologies of evangelism. Concepts such as sin, anthropology, and the atonement are developed in their relationship to evangelism.
Charts for a Theology of Evangelism

Dr. Johnston has clearly expended an enormous amount of labor on these charts. The result of this passion for instruction is a series of charts which will be of profound assistance to a novice entering the gates of this discussion. But a scholar will also find a significant jogging of the memory through these pages.

Some may object that the charts are replete with too much information. Others may even complain that some of the comparisons are not easy to follow. but such objections are cogent reminders that the doing of evangelism may not be so complicated, but the understanding of evangelism is a different matter. The author has aided those reflecting on the subject of evangelism to appreciate the depth and breadth that actually characterize this spiritual discipline.

As you read these chartings of positions, drink deeply from the wells that Dr. Johnston has sampled for years. You will find them enlightening, encouraging, sometimes irritating, but always engaging. The author’s prayer, along with mine, is that those who read will be stirred to a renewed proclamation of the gospel which alone can save the eternal souls of 6.5 billion people around the globe.

Paige Patterson
President’s Study
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas

A book of charts contains a treasure trove of information. Based on extensive research, such a book distills and arranges information into meaningful bites, which can be ingested and digested in a short period of time. It provides the reader with an overview of a massive amount of material in a relatively few pages.

A set of charts is a tremendous aid to learning. Just as a road atlas guides one to a destination without the driver knowing all the details of the terrain or geographical landmarks, so academic charts can be a great aid in leading the inquiring student to a proposed goal.

You hold in your hands one of the most useful books ever published in the field of evangelism. Tom Johnston’s Charts for a Theology of Evangelism is a valiant effort designed to help the reader grasp the breadth and depth of evangelistic theory and practice over the centuries.

Tom lays out in chart form the important issues facing anyone interested in studying or fulfilling the Great Commission. For instance, in a glance you can compare and analyze the eight concepts of sin (Chart 4), the fourteen theories of the atonement (Chart 7), or the eleven apologetic methods (Chart 18). This approach will help you to see how your theology of evangelism compares with other evangelists, past and present. Beware! The comparison may cause you to reevaluate your own theology and determine where and if it needs to be tweaked. This is one of the purposes of the book.

Additionally, because you will know the issues facing evangelism, you will now be able to read more intelligently other books written on the subject. You will be better prepared to determine how a given author approaches evangelism and how his theology affects his methodology. Such information is invaluable.

This book covers all the bases. In fact, an entire course on the Theology of Evangelism could be designed around the charts alone.

With unqualified enthusiasm, I commend this text to all who love evangelism and wish to become more effective in sharing the gospel with others.

R. Alan Streett, Ph.D.
Chairman and Professor of Evangelism
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INTRODUCTION

The content of these charts has developed over twenty years in the practice of personal evangelism, and in the study of the Bible and theology. I was particularly privileged to have years of discussion at the dinner table with my father, Arthur P. Johnston, as well as take three courses he taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School: Introduction to Missions, Theology of Missions and Evangelism, and Introduction to Ecumenism. I am in debt to his intellectual legacy, part of which is captured on the pages of his two books: World Evangelism and the Word of God (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 1974) and Battle for World Evangelism (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1978). I would like to dedicate this book of charts to my father, for his perseverance in remaining faithful to a New Testament (NT) theology of evangelism.

A second source of insight for these charts comes from my doctoral studies at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Southern gave me two invaluable sources of insight. First, Southern gave me a thorough historical-theological foundation in a theology of evangelism. Second, in my dissertation studies on Billy Graham’s theology of evangelism I came across something that I did not expect—change. In analyzing his view of the sinfulness of man, Graham’s terminology evolved from total depravity to the paradox of man—his basic goodness and basic evil. This gradual evolution led me to consider the content of Chart One, with the gradual shifts in the definition of evangelism it explains.

Thirdly, the privilege of teaching evangelism full-time at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has allowed me to focus my energies and thoughts in developing these charts. I am grateful to President Phil Roberts for his invitation to teach and lead evangelism at Midwestern. He has been an example to me in sharing the Gospel. Dr. Roberts not only talks about sharing the Gospel, he regularly joins the Midwestern Evangelistic Teams in our door-to-door evangelism efforts. I am also grateful to my Midwestern colleagues and students for interacting with me as I have wrestled with the issues and concerns discussed in these charts.

One of the most important points in developing a theological understanding is to properly identify and clarify the issues. On the one hand, this book of charts is an attempt to ask new questions of old areas of inquiry. On the other hand, it is an attempt to draw out old questions that have perhaps been forgotten. Understanding the link between theology and practice is extremely important. The old adage, “Methods change, but the message stays the same,” has less validity than what one may expect. Perhaps a look at the charts explaining the numerous methods of evangelism will put this adage to rest. Rather than methods evolving and the message staying the same, it may be more a matter of theology adapting to non-apostolic methods. Further, it may also be an issue of the sociological evolution (downgrade) of churches or of second generation Christians rejecting the methods of their fathers.

Many of the issues discussed herein gather a significant amount of emotional weight. The arrangement of the topics may cause some to be disenchanted. To others the arrangement will be enlightening. It is my prayer that this book of charts will allow others to glean from my thoughts, and develop their thoughts in a coherent way. If this is the case, then this book may well become “charts for constructing a conservative theology of evangelism.”

The first chart that I began developing was the chart on methodologies of evangelism. It is placed first in this book of charts because it weds the concept of methodology and theology. Chart 1, “Ninety-Nine Evangelism Methods from Formal to Informal” consists of six charts. It shows that theology and practice are inseparably linked. When methods do change, as they often do, it is usually for sociological (or generational) reasons, rather than for theological reasons. I have placed thirty-one theological and practical issues along the bottom of the chart with questions for the reader to consider as differences are noted between various methods of evangelism.

The translation of εὐαγγελίζω as “evangelize” in Galatians 1:8-9 sheds new light on the importance of methodology: “But even though we, or an angel from heaven, should evangelize you contrary to how we evangelized you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is evangelizing you contrary to what you received, let him be accursed.” In these verses we have the fascinating link between method and message, evident by use of the word εὐαγγελίζω which seems to highlight method more than it does message. These verses validate the importance of vigilance in considering methodologies of evangelism.
Charts for a Theology of Evangelism

Chart 2, “Twelve Views of Proclamational Evangelism and Methodology,” is an outgrowth of the next chart, Chart 3. As the twelve views were developed in relationship to theology, it seemed to me that particularly the five views of the atonement could be used as a measuring stick for methodology. Hence, I included a continuum of nineteen methodological issues related to the practice of evangelism.

Chart 3, “Twelve Views of Proclamational Evangelism and Theology,” compares the practice of evangelism, theology, and some practical issues in Christianity. It unifies many of the elements found in the other theological charts. Chart 3 lays a foundation for understanding the concept of theological drift (cf. 2 Tim 4:4), which is further explained in Chart 4, “Fifteen Contemporary Views of the Atonement,” as well as in Charts 28 and 29.

Chart 4, “Fifteen Select Contemporary Views of the Atonement from Substitutionary to Christus Victor,” is an expansion of half of the theological portion of Chart 3. Chart 4 explains the array of views of the atonement “from Substitutionary to Christus Victor” also positing several directions of theological drift. The chart does not use the Five Manifold Theories of the Atonement, but rather uses common terminology, based primarily on their differing conceptions of sin and salvation. Three possible directions of drift are highlighted in this chart: rationalistic, emotive, and charismatic. The initial seed thought for Chart 4 came to me during an evangelistic outing. I was sitting on the ground in a driveway speaking to a homeless man who was sitting on his jacket. I approached him and asked him what he thought of Jesus. As it turned out, he was interested, but skeptical about religion. So I began to share a “Roman Road” version of the Gospel with him. As I was trying to show him that he was a sinner, another person from our group came in and cut into my conversation, beginning to draw the “Bridge to Life” illustration on a piece of paper. The homeless man followed the second presentation, but never received Christ, as he never acknowledged his sinful state. It struck me that there was a significant philosophical or theological difference between the two presentations. This led me to contemplate the distinction between the more relationally-oriented “Bridge to Life” and the more substitutionary-oriented “Roman Road.”

Chart 5, “Four Theological Circles in a Theology of Evangelism,” provides examples of three circles that correspond to the relationship between the atonement, the Great Commission, Evangelism, the decision, and the result of the decision. The four circles are “Mere Proclamation,” “Mere Relationship,” “Mere Kingdom, and “Mere Social.” Many theologies of evangelism blend the content of these circles.

Chart 6, “Nine Select Conceptions of Sin,” seeks to explain some primary historic approaches to sin. Knowing specific views of sin allows one to notice when others are using them consciously or unconsciously. Chart 7, “Charting the Doctrine of Sin,” seeks to expose primary issues involved in defining sin. The selected concepts may also be of assistance in diagnosing views of the atonement, as the concepts of sin and atonement for sin are inseparably linked.

Chart 8, “Select Biblical Descriptions of Sin,” was expanded from a study of Jesus on Total Depravity. One of the strongest statements on sin in the Gospels comes from Mark 7 when Jesus describes those items that come from the heart of man. These were compared to the Ten Commandments and several lists of sin in other NT writings. Lastly, I compared these with some “social sin” passages in the Old Testament (OT). The purpose of this chart is to examine more completely the Bible’s definition of sin as it relates to the models of the atonement developed in Charts 2 and 4.

Chart 9 and 10, “Warfield’s Systematic Theology Chart and Evangelism I and II,” are further attempts to explain the variety of positions as regards a theology of evangelism, using Warfield’s chart (from his The Plan of Salvation) as a rubric. I added one view to his chart which I call “hyper-Calvinist,” in order to provide for an additional approach to the theology of evangelism. As it turns out, Warfield’s chart does provide a helpful framework for the analysis of various views of evangelism.

Chart 11, “A Comparison of Select Issues in Old Testament and New Testament Theology,” seeks to examine those aspects of theology and practice that have continuity from the OT to the NT, and those that have discontinuity. It is important to understand that, especially with views of the atonement, the OT provides a seedbed for multiple views of the atonement that are either considered equal in priority with the substitutionary atonement (as a synthesis), or are believed to trump an emphasis on the substitutionary atonement. Thus, while there may to be continuity between the OT and NT in regards to the atonement, it often depends on what is predetermined to be the NT Gospel emphasis.

Chart 12, “Understanding Old Testament Principles for Personal Evangelism as Compared to NT Principles,” begins to examine principles for evangelism in the OT and NT in terms of the Gospel sharing situation. These comparatives are messenger, recipient, initiative, analogies, primary message, definition of sin, call for decision, response, point of decision, affirmation of decision, and saving faith.
Charts for a Theology of Evangelism

Chart 13, “Biblical Authority, Sources of Meaning, and Evangelism,” explains some aspects of interpretation which can infringe upon the inerrancy of Scripture. It seeks to explain the source of meaning in the text by noting different possible sources of meaning and ways that meaning is derived from them.

Chart 14, “Comparison of Twelve Select Apologetic Approaches,” seeks to clarify the variety of approaches in the term “apologetic.” Because of the contemporary currency of the term, because of its fluid use, and because apologetics is a cousin to (and often replacement for) evangelism, it was deemed necessary to examine this subject.

Chart 15, “Verbal Order of Salvation Based on Select Verses,” looks at the *ordo salutis* from the point of view of its verbal elements. Chart 16, “Verbal Order of Salvation Based on Select Verses, with the Addition of Some Conflicting Conceptions,” takes Chart 15 and includes additions to the verbal order of salvation. These charts illustrate the absolute necessity for a verbal testimony of the Gospel and a verbal confirmation of the Gospel for true salvation.

Chart 17, “Hearing and Believing in the New Testament,” provides the scriptural foundation for the need for the verbal communication of the Gospel as seen in Charts 14-15. It surveys some passages which make it very clear that there is a need for the verbal communication of the Gospel for salvation to take place. If there is truly an absolute need for a response to the verbal communication of the Gospel, then Chart 5’s “Mere Proclamation Circle” is confirmed.

Charts 18A-B, “Preaching the Four Quadrants in Evangelism—Protases and Apodoses,” look at four aspects of biblical revelation: promise, blessing, warning, and curse. When dealing with the “Positive Christianity” of the “Reconciliation Model” (see Chart 3 and 4), the “negative” of the four quadrants in preaching can be overlooked. The result may be a malnourished congregation with stunted spiritual growth and anemic ability for true spiritual warfare. Perhaps this is why God spoke of this in Jeremiah 26:2, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Stand in the court of the LORD’s house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, who have come to worship in the LORD’s house, all the words that I have commanded you to speak to them. Do not omit a word!’”

Chart 19, “Competition for the Main Idea,” summarizes the conclusions that I have come to in seeking to understand the various approaches to evangelism and the Christian faith. Bailey Smith was right when he warned Christians that there are many subtle substitutes to proclamational evangelism, most of which are good. The challenge of this chart is to keep the main thing the main thing.

Chart 20, “What Is Commanded by the Great Commission? A Linear View of the Great Commission” proposes to understand the five Great Commission passages in a linear sense, rather than in a competitive sense (e.g. 1 Cor 1:12). Given plenary inspiration, it follows that the Great Commission passages do not contradict or negate one another, but rather compliment and enhance one another.

Chart 21, “Two Methods of Evangelism—Evaluating the Human Element,” graphically portrays the result of requiring a human preparation for the proclamation of the Gospel. Basically, the pietistic elements of evangelism are negated by the human element. Following up on this thought, Chart 22, “Two Methods of Evangelism—A Look at 1 Corinthians 1-2,” looks at both spiritual and carnal methods of evangelism. While not listed in the chart, it may be that an emphasis on lifestyle, friendship, and service (as noted in Chart 21) corresponds more closely to the natural method than the supernatural.

Chart 23, “Twelve Approaches to the Great Commission,” examine conceptions of the mission of the church. The first chart on this page places the Great Commission passages in a chronological pattern, and the second chart shows the differing conceptions of the Great Commission, from soul-winning to discipleship, Christian stoicism, and finally Christian community.

Chart 24, “Non-Proclamational Alternatives to Mere Proclamation,” addresses the most common reasons why “mere proclamation” is not to be considered the major emphasis of the Great Commission. This author believes that “mere proclamation” is the primary, major, and only focus of the Great Commission, and is the only credible view of God’s mandate to the church which stays true to the doctrinal teachings of Scripture on salvation.

Chart 25, “A History of Select Evangelism Methodologies in Churches of the United States,” places prominent approaches to evangelism on a timeline to show the historical milieu in which they flourished. In order to keep the chart from an unruly size, it was limited to methods of evangelism in the American church history. Solomon wrote, “So there is nothing new under the sun.” These words remind the reader that there is no new methodology of evangelism. There is the guise of the new (cf. Eccl 1:10-11), but there is nothing truly “new.” For this reason it is helpful and necessary to examine methodologies of evangelism in light of history.
Charts for a Theology of Evangelism

Chart 26, “Unity and Disunity in Church History: An Overview of Select Groups and Movements,” seeks to provide broad strokes in the history of unity (cooperation or ecumenism) and disunity (separation). Because every generation has its unity and disunity advocates, it is helpful to understand what has happened in the past in order to assess the reasons for and benefits of unity or disunity in the present.

Chart 27, “Select Western Church Denominational Start-Ups, Revival Movements, and Writings Negative to New Testament Evangelism,” provides a history of denominational start-ups. Particularly in the church in the United States, awakenings and revival movements often led to the founding of new denominations. When established denominations resisted the conversion emphasis and evangelistic zeal of the revival or awakening, new denominations were founded—if their culture allowed for dissident churches to organize. This chart notes movements and denominations, as well as some writings antagonistic to NT evangelism.

Charts 28A-C, “Three Approaches to Ecclesial Lifecycles and Evangelism,” address a topic much discussed in church sociology—organizational drift. I have added to these charts some points of application to evangelism. As Christians, churches, and denominations move through their organizational lifecycle, they tend to move away from apostolic evangelism.

Chart 29 seeks to develop the concept of theological drift, as noted sociologically in the previous chart, from the standpoint of Jude 11 and other New Testament admonitions to spiritual leadership. The deceptive drift into less-than-conservative theology is tricky, as noted in this chart, as well as Charts 3 and 4.

Charts 30 and 31 correspond to views of the ordinances of Christ and evangelism. As churches move away from salvation by grace, through faith, in response to the Word of God, they begin to emphasize some type of grace being communicated through the ordinances of Christ—Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These charts consider various churches, their views of the ordinances, and the relationship of these views to evangelism.

Chart 32, “A Comparative Overview of Select Church Growth Principles,” seeks to understand the church growth principles of contemporary authors. The main points of seven authors are summarized under the headings of the 14 chapters of Thom Rainer, as found in his The Book of Church Growth. Perhaps the reader will note the lack of agreement on basic church growth principles among some of these authors. In this case we are driven to look in the pages of the Bible for ecclesial principles of the NT church.

Chart 33, “Streams of Ecumenism—A Visual History,” expands a chart that my father created while he was doing his doctoral work on the ecumenical movement. I have included the 19th Century, as well as brought it up to the year 2000. The remarkable change of views in the Roman Catholic Church are noted in the encyclicals and writings listed in that column.

Chart 34, “Eighteen Models of Unity and Separation,” gleans from the work of Jude Weisenbeck on the unity of the church, to which I have added models of separation. It is an attempt to show the panorama of views of unity available for those who are discussing unity. Some contemporary books on unity omit a discussion of this topic, possibly because it brings to light the harsh reality of the end-game of a discussion of unity. Again, it is wise to learn from the past.

Charts 35A-C, “Examining Cooperation,” look at elements of cooperation in the continua: social, theological, and missiological. It begins by noting twenty-six aspects of unity in the three continua. It then lists several 19th and 20th Century multi-church theological statements that have guided church unity. And finally it provides suggested guidelines for ecclesial cooperation.

It is my prayer that these charts may accomplish two things. First, allow God’s people to develop a biblical theology of evangelism. And second, lead to an awakening of NT evangelism. If these goals are fractionally met, then my efforts will have been worth the while.

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