

The Navigators B&P Ministries. KMJ - 2006

Workshop: Evangelism for Cowards

Presented by David Hinds (david_hinds@airmail.net)

A new believer who associates with Christians soon becomes aware of a well-documented principle: Christians RARELY (if ever) share their faith. They will serve on committees and boards, teach classes, organize activities, give to the building fund and show up for formation faithfully every week, but personal evangelism is a foreign concept. What is the problem? Is it disinterest in the Gospel? What does Jesus say the problem is? Hint, read Matthew 9: 35-38)

I. Why should we get involved - don't we pay the professionals to do this for us?

- ◆ The purpose for Christian professionals within the body of Christ is to train the laity to accomplish the mission; not to do it themselves. Read Ephesians 4: 11-13 and discuss the implications of this passage.

- ◆ What is the mission of each individual Christian and what does this require of me, personally?

Matthew 28: 18-20. _____

2 Timothy 2: 1-2. _____

Matthew 4: 19. _____

1 Peter 3: 15-16. _____

II. What exactly is evangelism? Definition: Evangelism is a mysterious, supernatural process conducted by our sovereign Lord to bring a person from spiritual death to life and from condemnation and judgment to eternal joy with the Lord here and in heaven. It appears to be a multi-faceted, long-term process. Our role in the process is **finding** out where a person is in his spiritual journey, **helping** him take one step closer to faith in Jesus, **leaving** him for the next person who will help him further. This process depends totally on God, but He allows us to be part of the process.

III. Know your fish! (What is the lost person's greatest obstacle to overcome?)

Genesis 2: 16-17 _____

2 Corinthians 4: 3-4 _____

Ephesians 2: 1-9 _____

Because of this, you as the evangelist are liberated from feelings of guilt and inadequacy and can exercise the patience, love and grace needed to assist the lost person through the process. The process of moving the lost from death to life is utterly and completely God's. There is nothing

you can do to get anyone saved; you can only cooperate with the Father. So Relax and walk in the Spirit. Read John 6: 44.

IV. The process of evangelism: Concept of links in the chain - discuss 1 Corinthians 3: 5-9. In your own experience, did you come to faith as a result of a single encounter or multiple encounters? The essence of this entire process is **prayer**, especially for the regeneration of the unbeliever (the dead don't receive the Gospel – funeral home evangelism is non-confrontational, but not very effective!). Remember, Ephesians 2: 1-9.

Phase 1. *Breaking up the hard ground* (or learning to relate to the dead) -This is the beginning phase where our primary objective is to exhibit a life style that earns us the right to be heard.

1. Relationships take precedence over conversions. Use this model to initiate conversations: **FORM** - Family, Occupation, Recreation, Message.
2. Be transparent - Non-Christians don't want the pressure of your perfection, they want the comfort of your reality. 1 Corinthians 1: 26-29, 2: 1-5.
3. Quality of your life: If Christianity isn't working for you, it's very hard to export it to another. The unbeliever wants to see the difference Jesus is making in your life.
4. Serve the unbeliever in practical little things. Mark 10: 45. Write down some ways to serve your unbelieving friend.
5. Adapt to them, don't demand they adapt to you. We are not trying to make them good and acceptable (clean 'em up), we are trying to lead them into a saving relationship with Jesus. 1 Corinthians 9: 19-23. What disgusting thing can you learn to put up with for the sake of the Gospel? (do you own an ashtray?)
 - ◆ Beware of the Christian ghetto (Christian bookstores, businessmen's clubs, health clubs, professional groups, Political office, etc.) We must be "in the world", while being careful not to be "of the world."
 - ◆ If someone must be somewhat comfortable in the relationship to the discomfort of the other, who should it be?
 - ◆ Honest compliments, genuine interest in what they are interested in.

Phase 2. *Planting the seed* - Helping them make the emotional, mental and volitional transition from Gospel ignorance and indifference to informed interest.

1. Your personal faith story. Illustrations of how faith has made a real difference in your life. What brought you to your decision?
2. Know very well a clear, concise and accurate method of sharing the Gospel (the Gospel, the whole Gospel and nothing but the Gospel). **1 Peter 1:15. ♥ My favorite "Evangelism for Cowards" model!**
3. Eliminate religious jargon (we use it more than you think!) Speak to them in their own language (the one you use everyday).

4. Do not make your primary appeal based on the benefits you have received (the benevolent slot machine approach - getting more out than you put in); but on the character and work of Jesus Christ.
5. Follow the outline of Paul's testimony in Acts 26 (Before, How and After).
6. Be sure to recognize his good ideas and thoughtful efforts at religion (even if they are utterly ridiculous and heretical).
7. Get your Christian flag up early in the relationship. Boldly bring up the subject of the Gospel (most people are really interested in eternal life. Ecclesiastes 3:11).

- ◆ What is your religious background?
- ◆ What have you learned in the area of spirituality?
- ◆ What, in your opinion, is a real Christian? Do you know any?
- ◆ Have you come to a place in your life where you have settled the issue as to your relationship with Jesus, or are you still considering it?
- ◆ Suppose you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to ask you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" What would you say?
- ◆ (In responding to a problem he mentions) I'm learning more and more that only Jesus can meet my needs in that area.
- ◆ (After listening to a tape or reading a book you have suggested) What did you think about those ideas?

8. Get them into some situation to examine the scriptures
 - ◆ Andrew dinner, evangelistic luncheon.
 - ◆ Evangelistic Bible study - breakfast or lunch once a week.
 - ◆ Books - something that has been meaningful to you: The Case for Christ, Lee Stroble; C.S. Lewis's Mere Christianity, The Question of God, Dr. Armand M. Nicholi, Jr.
 - ◆ Tapes - Personal testimonies, teaching, preaching.
 - ◆ Personal Bible reading - Study the Gospel of John individually and discuss it weekly.
 - ◆ Present the Gospel yourself and follow up with any of the above.
 - ◆ Applying God's principles to a personal crisis.

Phase 3. Watering (Hanging in there with them to give the seed an opportunity to grow). 2 Peter 1: 5-8. This is the stage where your unbelieving friend is trying to find out if you really love him, or if you are using him to promote your own religious agenda (scalp hunting, etc.).

Phase 4. Harvesting (the invitation, drawing the net, asking for the order). This is the easy work after the hard work of **Breaking the Ground**, **Planting the Seed**, and **Watering** has been accomplished. Note: we can harvest other peoples hard work - in fact, that is usually the way it works. Evangelism is normally a team effort, though we rarely know our teammates. When God finishes the process of bringing the spiritually dead to life, salvation is a deal they can't refuse!

V. Where do we Fish? Answer: where ever there are fish!

✓Customers ✓Suppliers ✓Friends ✓Employees (try a weekly brown bag evangelistic Bible

study) ✓ Professional societies ✓ Service organizations - Lions, Rotary, P.T.A. etc. ✓ Sports
✓ Class reunion ✓ Teach a Sunday School class in a dead church (fish gather in great numbers
wanting to be fed) ✓ Lead a small group Bible study and teach the members how to fish. Man the
phones or be a counselor at an evangelistic crusade (shooting fish in a barrel - it's good practice)
✓ Speakers bureau to give testimony for outreach groups ✓ Prison ministry ✓ Teaching business
or other vocational secular courses ✓ Run for political office, ????????

VI. Summary

- A. Acts 26: 18 shows the three stages of the process of salvation and gives us a model of practical prayer for the lost. What are the stages?

Note: Because the process of evangelism is on God's sovereign timetable, it can be accomplished in one hour or one lifetime. This is not a method of friendship evangelism where we focus on making friends to the exclusion of consistently sharing the Gospel. Jesus sent us to reap (John 4: 38), which should always be our primary focus. Be on the lookout for limited time opportunities. It is not always necessary to know a person well before sharing the Gospel (Acts 8: 26-39).

- B. Pray that God will give you opportunities to be involved in the evangelism process and that you will be alert to them.

C. Remember, your job is not to close every sale, but to be a link in the chain, always moving people forward toward a decision.

D. It is our calling as Christians to represent our Lord wherever we are. (Colossians 3: 17, 2 Corinthians 2: 14-17).

A good farmer assesses the condition of the crop and what stage it is in, and works accordingly - this is what brings assurance of the harvest.

Bonus: Read Mark 4: 26-29 and ask, "In the process of evangelism, what is God's responsibility and what is my responsibility?"