

"EVANGELISM MADE SIMPLE"
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INTRODUCTION

1. The importance of sharing the gospel with others cannot be over-emphasized
 - a. Jesus wants everyone to hear the good news of salvation - Mk 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.
 - b. He has provided the gospel as God's power to save all who believe - Rom 1:16-17

2. But what is the most effective way to reach people today? The Institute For American Church Growth asked over 10,000 people this question: "What was responsible for your coming to Christ and this church?" Their replies were:
 - a. I had a special need - 3%
 - b. I just walked in - 3%
 - c. I liked the minister - 6%
 - d. I visited there - 1%
 - e. I liked the Bible classes - 5%
 - f. I attended a gospel meeting - 0.5%
 - g. I liked the programs - 3%
 - h. A friend or relative invited me - 79%

3. What can we learn from a survey like this?
 - a. It confirms that gospel meetings as traditionally held have lost much of their effectiveness.
 - b. It justifies churches' concern to pick their preachers carefully and to give special regard to the quality of their Bible classes.
 - c. The obvious point of the survey is this: If churches are to grow, it will be through the efforts of individual members!
 1. Preachers, programs, classes may help, but in most cases they will only maintain the size of the congregation
 2. Such congregational efforts are worthwhile, however, for they can reach people with whom we might otherwise never come in contact
 3. The fact remains: The greatest potential lies with people who have some contact with members of the local congregation
 4. Two things are needed to utilize contacts made through members of the congregation.
 - a. Concern for the lost by those members - cf. Mt 9:36-38 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary

and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1

b. Knowledge of how to increase opportunities to share the gospel

Assuming the concern is there, this lesson contains seven simple steps to increase opportunities for sharing the gospel with relatives, friends, neighbors, and others. These steps are based upon observations of what has consistently proven fruitful in other places and are confirmed by the results of the afore mentioned survey.

I. DO THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR A CARING, EDIFYING CONGREGATION

A. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

1. It will help confirm our claim to be Disciples of Christ

- a. Correct doctrine, organization, worship, etc., are important
- b. Yet it is our love for one another that the Lord intended to convince the world that we are truly His disciples! - cf. Jn 13:35 "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

2. Our love makes us useful to the Lord

- a. From Re 3:7-8 we learn that the Lord knows the true condition of His churches, and that He will "open doors" for those that can be useful to Him.
 - b. I am persuaded that if we are a church that can be used by Him to...
 - 1) Reach others with the gospel
 - 2) Assimilate them into the family of God
 - 3) Nurture them in their spiritual growth
- c. Suppose we are not a place where new Christians can grow spiritually in an atmosphere of love?

- 1) Do we seriously think that the Lord will use His providence to lead us to souls who are seeking for the truth?
- 2) Even if we did reach souls for Christ, would they receive the spiritual nourishment necessary to remain faithful and strong in the Lord's service?

3. Hospitality towards Christians prepares us for the kind of personal work that is the most effective in leading others to Christ

- a. I am referring to "friendship" evangelism (also known as "relationship" or "lifestyle" evangelism)

- b. This requires a willingness to be hospitable toward those we are trying to reach.
- c. If we are unable (or unwilling) to practice hospitality towards our brethren, what makes us think we will practice it towards the lost?

B. SOME "ACTION STEPS" TO TAKE...

1. Make it a point to get to know ALL the members and regular visitors by name

- a. Look at the directory (online) and begin to place names with faces
- b. Try to learn someone new at each service until you know them all
- c. Make sure you attend the brothers keeper program

2. Practice "hospitality" towards the members and regular visitors - 1 Pe 4:8-9
And above all things have fervent love for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins." Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.

- a. Invite them into your home, or out to eat (set a goal of one new family or member per month)
- b. Visit (go, call, cards) other Christians each week (esp. the sick, shut-ins, new members, absent members)

3. Contribute your time, service, and resources to the local congregation

- a. Offer to help in whatever way you can (teach, give, serve)
- b. Do not make others beg for help in providing a caring, spiritual environment.

When a congregation is filled with loving members who care for and edify its own, then I believe it is ready to be used by the Lord to reach out and care for others! Where does one begin in trying to reach the lost? May I suggest that you...

II. MAKE A LIST OF THOSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE TAUGHT THE GOSPEL

A. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT.

1. It utilizes a technique used by people successful in all walks of life (i.e., having a "things to do" list)
2. For us, it helps to focus our attention upon those we hope to reach for the Lord, and not neglect them.

B. IN MAKING THE LIST.

1. Start with those who are close to you and work outwardly:

- a. Family, Friends, Co-workers ,Neighbors
 - b.. Relatives of fellow church members, Regular visitors to the services of the church,. Casual acquaintances (mailman, store clerk, etc.)
2. Limit this list to five to eight souls (a list with too many and you will not be able to focus your efforts effectively)
 3. Give priority to those who are the "unchurched"
 - a. I.e., who are not active members of any denomination or particular religion
 - b. Active members of a denomination or religion are often very satisfied with their human traditions and are not as receptive to the pure and simple gospel of Christ
 4. Husbands and wives should probably have one list may require joint cooperation)
 5. Keep this list where you will see it daily. With such a list, you will be constantly reminded of these people, and thereby more likely to do the things suggested next...

III. PRAY FOR THOSE ON YOUR LIST DAILY

A. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT.

1. It is God who gives the increase when it comes to evangelism - 1 Co 3:6-7 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.
2. We are servants whom God can use in His providential workings - 1 Co 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?
3. Work as though it all depends upon us, pray as though it all depends upon God!

B. WHAT YOU SHOULD BE PRAYING FOR.

1. That God will work together with you:
 - a. To give you "opportunities" to do good for them - Co 4:3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains,
 - b. To give you "wisdom" to make the most of those opportunities - Co 4:4-6 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

c. To give you "boldness" to say what needs to be said - Ep 6:18-20
praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

2. That those on your list will have:

- a. Have the opportunity to hear the truth
- b. Have honest hearts to be open and receptive to the truth

The next step will take the most time in effective evangelism...

IV. DO THINGS WHICH DEMONSTRATE YOUR LOVE FOR THEM

A. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

1. It has been said: "People don't care how much we know until they know how much we care!"
2. A demonstration of love will make a person more likely to be receptive to the gospel of love when it is shared - 1 Pet. 2:12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.
 - a. By observing our "good works" they will more likely "glorify God" by obeying the gospel when they hear it
 - b. I.e., love and good works will help prepare the "soil" to be as receptive as possible when the "seed" is finally sown

B. SOME "ACTION STEPS" TO TAKE...

1. Invite them into your home for a dinner or snack
2. Visit them, especially in times of trial or sickness
3. Do things with them on a social level

"Hospitality" and "neighborliness" will go a long way to increase opportunities to share the gospel. When people see "the incarnation of the gospel" (the principles of the gospel lived out in the flesh), they will be more likely to believe in "the verbalization of the gospel" (the truth of the gospel in spoken or written word).

V. INVITE THEM TO SERVICES

A. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

1. There are several reasons for wanting people to attend church services:
 - a. They will have an opportunity to see a caring congregation in action
 - 1) Combined with your own demonstration of love as an individual.
 - 2) The demonstration of love by others should make a lasting impression!
 - b. They will have an opportunity to be presented with the gospel of Christ
 - c. If they are attending regularly before conversion to Christ, they will more likely continue to attend after their conversion.

B. INVITING PEOPLE TO SERVICES...

1. First spend time in prayer:
 - a. Asking for "wisdom" to invite them in the best manner
 - b. Asking for "boldness" to offer the invitation to attend
2. People will more likely accept your invitations:
 - a. If they are among the "unchurched"
 - b. If they are dissatisfied with where they are attending and are willing to investigate a different church.
 - c. If you feed them afterward. (Sunday pot-luck or brothers keepers)
3. Be persistent:
 - a. Invite time and again
 - b. Your perseverance will more likely be rewarded

VI. BE HOSPITABLE TO VISITORS

A. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

1. By their presence, people are expressing an interest and/or willingness to learn
2. By your love and acceptance, you are preparing the soil of their hearts for the seed of the gospel
3. The Lord has provided "an open door"; dare we not take it?

B. IN SHOWING HOSPITALITY TOWARD VISITORS...

1. Be friendly to all, whether they were invited by you, someone else, or are simply "walk-ins"
2. Arrive early for services
 - a. Visitors are more likely to arrive early, and leave early
 - b. If you come in late, you may not have an opportunity to visit
3. Give priority to visiting with guests over visiting with brethren
 - a. You can always visit with brethren later
 - b. This may be the only opportunity to make an impact with the visitors

Finally, we are ready for the most important step in all our efforts...

VII. PROVIDE THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR THE GOSPEL

A. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT...

1. Only the Gospel is God's power to save - Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.
2. While love and hospitality may help prepare the "soil", the "seed" must still be sown

B. IN PRESENTING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST...

1. Ideally, this will come AFTER witnessing a demonstration of the gospel in our lives
 - a. By our love, hospitality, etc.
 - b. Both as individuals and as a congregation
2. If you feel confident in discussing it with them, then approach them yourself and suggest some sort of Bible study.
 - a. A Bible study with them in their home (using aids like video tapes, charts, or simply an open Bible)
 - b. That they study on their own: We have tapes to show or loan.

CONCLUSION

1. These suggestions are offered
 - a. With a firm conviction that if they will be carried out, opportunities to share the gospel and save souls will be greatly increased!
 - b. Also, with the hope that you will accept the challenge to implement these suggestions

- 2, This approach is not only the most successful in saving and keeping souls, it is also one of the most natural and easiest ways to reach the lost for Christ.
 - a. Remember the survey by The Institute For American Church Growth?

 - b. One does not even have to be able to teach to be effective in leading others to Christ!

 - c. One simply has to be a FRIEND to Christians and to the lost!

3. And even if we do not convert a single soul...
 - a. We will have fulfilled our obligation to share Christ with others
 - b. We will have done it in such a way as to become:

Better Christians, a better congregation Better friends, better neighbors, better co-workers!