Negotiating the Potholes, Pitfalls and Phobias of Effective Evangelism
Evangelism

A Tough Road?

“On the street evangelism is equated with pressure. It means selling God as if God were vinyl siding, replacement windows, or a mortgage refinancing service. It means shoving your ideas down someone’s throat, threatening him with hell if he does not capitulate to your logic or Scripture-quoting. It means excluding everyone from God’s grace except those who agree with the evangelizer. When preceded by the word television, the word evangelism grows even darker, more sinister—sleazy even.”

Brian McLaren, More Ready than you Realize
A Tough Road?

When you hear the word evangelism or evangelist, what images come to mind?

How do you feel about the task of evangelism?
Power for the Journey
But I have never had much success at that…

But I just don’t think people today are interested…

This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:8
Wrong Paradigm

And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. 3Go your way;

...Do not go from house to house.

Luke 10:2-3, 7
Your life, held in the hand of God can make ripples in this world that you can hardly imagine.
Evangelism is more about the journey than about that the destination.
“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: “Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. **Go** rather to the lost sheep of Israel”.

Matthew 10:5
Pockets of People

Kingdom of God

Rich

YMCA

Bentwater

ABA

NCCS
Pockets of People

Kingdom of God

“Oikos”
Demonstrate the Practice of Prayer

“There’s nothing more precious to God than the prayer of a believer for someone who is seeking…”

Ed Silvoso
…and the **Power of Presence**

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, *drive out demons*. *Freely you have received, freely give.*

Matthew 10:8
The King’s Presence
Don’t Forget the Words!

“Far too many Christians think that if they simply live out their faith, the people around them will see it, want it, and somehow figure out how to get it for themselves.”

Mark Mittelberg,
Author, Becoming a Contagious Christian
Share your Journey!

Before Christ (BC)

Coming to Christ (†)

After conversion (AC)
Share your Journey!

(BC) Needs and examples

(†) How? Include the gospel!

(AC) Needs met, themes experienced.
"Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave."

Matthew 10:11
Pursue the Persons of Peace

“There are two kinds of lost people in the world, the moths and the cockroaches. In the darkness it’s impossible to tell them apart, so the best way to discover the difference is to turn the light on.”

Neil Cole, *Organic Church*
“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in \textit{n} the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And \textit{surely I am with you always}, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:19-20
Sharing the Journey

“On the street evangelism is equated with pressure. It means selling God as if God were vinyl siding, replacement windows, or a mortgage refinancing service. It means shoving your ideas down someone’s throat, threatening him with hell if he does not capitulate to your logic or Scripture-quoting. It means excluding everyone from God’s grace except those who agree with the evangelizer. When preceded by the word television, the word evangelism grows even darker, more sinister—sleazy even.”

Brian McLaren, More Ready than you Realize

- When you hear the word evangelism, or evangelist, what images come to your mind?

Possible Phobias

But I could never have the courage...

✓ I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

Romans 1:16

But I might fail...

✓ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

John 15:8

But I just don’t think people today are interested...

✓ Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest’? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.

John 4:35
Sharing the Journey

1. Discover ___________ of _______________

“These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel". MT. 10:5

Your “Oikos”

2. Demonstrate the ______________ of _______________.
What to Pray for Seekers

1. That God draws them to Himself
   Jn. 6:44 “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him....”

2. That they seek to know God
   Acts 17:27 “God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.”
   Dt. 4:29 “But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

3. That they believe the Scriptures
   1 Thess. 2:13 “And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, the word of God....”
   Ro. 10:17 “Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”

4. That Satan is bound from blinding them to the truth
   Mt. 13:19 “When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and “etches away what was sown in his heart...”
   2 Cor. 4:4 “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

5. That the Holy Spirit works in them
   Jn. 16:8-13 “When (the Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. . . . He will guide you into all truth....”

6. That God sends someone to lead them to Christ
   Mt. 9:37,38 “Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”

7. That they believe in Christ as Savior
   Jn. 1:12 “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”
   Jn. 5:24 “1 tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”
8. That they turn from sin

Acts 3:19 “Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.”

9. That they confess Christ as Lord

Ro. 10:9,10 “…if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

10. That they yield all to follow Christ

2 Cor. 5:15 “And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”

Phil. 3:7,8 “But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ…”

11. That they take root and grow in Christ

Col. 2:6,7 “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”

**My Top 10 List**

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3. And the ________________ of __________________.
Sharing Your Journey

When I was a little kid, I was determined to be perfect. Maybe I picked up the idea in church, but I understood that to get into heaven, I needed to be perfect. I figured, “Hey, I’m still young. If I am perfect starting today, God will surely let me into heaven.” After all, heaven sounded like a great place to me. Everybody there was happy – nobody was sad. So now I had my ticket – all I had to do was be perfect!

You can probably guess what happened. I’d wake up one day determined to do everything right. By about midday, I’d forget all about being perfect. I’d come home, kick my brother, fuss at my mom – then I’d remember, “oh, I was going to be perfect today. Darn!” But stubborn, “I’m still young,” I’d say, “I can start tomorrow and still be perfect.”

Over and over I tried, with no success. I look back now and wonder why I was so determined to be perfect. I’m no psychologist, but at that young age I think I craved approval. Oldest kid, Type A personality and all that. Somehow, I figured heaven meant ultimate acceptance, and I would do anything if that big Father in the Sky accepted and loved me.

Without that acceptance, I got down on myself; I actually felt like God didn’t approve of me. That was when my family took my brother and me to a big meeting they called a crusade. A man named Bill Glass spoke each night from the Bible. He said something that grabbed my attention. He said that none of us could be perfect. “There is none righteous, no not one.” “That’s the truth,” I thought to myself. “And the reason we’re not perfect,” he continued, “is that each of us is a sinner. ‘All have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God.’”

The light went on. Oh! That’s why I can’t be perfect. I’m a sinner. So what do I do about it? “Admit you’re a sinner.” It seemed like he was talking just to me. “You’ll never be perfect on your own. God gives you His approval as a gift—it is free, it’s nothing you can earn. ‘The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.’"

I’ve got to tell you, when I heard that, I knew what I wanted to do. I was out of my seat like a shot —headed down to where everyone gathered. Right there I prayed and asked God for that free gift of living with Him forever in heaven. I felt such relief knowing God approved of me. I had no more need to please Him in this day after day struggle to be perfect.

In the years that have followed that night – I’ve found over and over again how meaningful God’s approval has been. When I was a teen, I desperately wanted approval from the “In” crowd. Often I didn’t get it. Of course, that hurt but I knew I had God’s approval. That made a huge difference in all those tempting teen activities: drinking, sex, drugs – my friends did crazy things for approval, even illegal things. But because God gave me the gift of His approval, I could endure rejection.

As an adult, I can follow God’s professional path for my life as a pastor. Though my peers may make more money, or gain more worldly influence, because I have God’s approval I can accept people as they are, because I know they aren’t perfect – just like me. Oh sure, I still slip up and think other people’s approval matters more than God’s. I find myself counting on my own effort to get me in to heaven. But even then, God loves me, and accepts me. I’m so glad that because of what Jesus did, God accepts me and I become perfect in Him.
Sharing Your Journey

BC

Needs

(†)

(AC)

Themes
Rewards for Sharing the Journey

**YOU WILL BE A BLESSING TO ALL THE PEOPLES ON THE EARTH.**

**GE 12:2** I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.

**1CH 16:8** Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. 24 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. 31 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"

**YOU CAN ENLARGE THE GUEST LIST FOR OUR FAMILY REUNION.**

**REV 5:9** And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

**1PE 1:3** Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you.

**EARTH WILL LOOK A LITTLE MORE LIKE HEAVEN**

**MT 6:10** your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

**YOU OFFER ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP TO GOD.**

**RO 15:16** ...to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

**JN 15:8** This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

**YOU WILL GROW IN YOUR FAITH.**

**PHM 1:6** I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.
For Further Study

Acts 10:19-23

19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Simon, three men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them.”

21 Peter went down and said to the men, “I’m the one you’re looking for. Why have you come?”

22 The men replied, “We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to have you come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say.” 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

• Why do you think the Spirit urged Peter not to hesitate to go with the men from Cornelius?

• How might you have felt if you were Peter in this situation?

• Peter may have been surprised that total strangers were interested in his spiritual input. Is it hard or easy for you to believe that the people around you may be interested in discussing spiritual matters with you? Why? Might people be more ready than you realize?

• Has anyone ever come to you and asked you spiritual questions? How did it feel? What did you say?

Acts 10:38-42

39 We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree. 40 but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen... 42 He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead.

Discussion Questions

• When Peter finally talked to Cornelius and his friends, he told the story of Jesus dying and rising again in Jerusalem. What word did he use to describe himself?

• What things has Jesus done in your life that you could be a witness to?

The Apostle Peter had to see a vision to wake him up to the spiritually hungry people around him; what do you think it will take for the people in our church?
Wrapping it up

Peter wrote later in a letter, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (I Pet. 3:15)

- Is there anyone in your life who is asking about the hope that is in you? Do you feel ready? How could you prepare to share that hope with them?

- How could we pray for you to be more ready to be a witness to Jesus’ work in your life?

- What difficulties do you experience as others seek your spiritual input? How can we pray for you in this area?