

Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Leadership 1-Ecclesiology
Week 4 - Biblical Principles of Evangelism

Introduction

The 5 components of every communication event:

- Message
- Medium
- Sender
- Receiver
- Noise

Message: the content to be communicated

To "evangelize" ("gospelize") is to *verbally share the good news of God's reconciliation through Jesus Christ, and to invite people to receive this gift.* (Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:18-21).

- *Emphasize God's grace more than human sin and God's judgment (Jn. 16:8).*
- *Realize that you have not "evangelized" until you have verbally shared this message.*
- *Assume misconceptions concerning the gospel, identify them, and replace them with the complementary truth.*

5 Misconceptions of Christianity:

- 1. "We must earn God's acceptance"**
- 2. "God wants us to relate to him through ritual"**
- 3. "I must change morally before coming to God"**
- 4. "Becoming a Christian requires blind faith"**
- 5. "Once you are a Christian, you stop having fun and become weird"**

Trust God to work through this message to arrest people's attention, and to convict them of its truthfulness and of their need to believe it ((John 16:8; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Col. 1:5,6).

- *Communicate the gospel as soon as possible and come back to it as much as possible (1 Cor. 2:2-5).*
- *Clarify the gospel's meaning in various ways (passages, illustrations, personal testimony)*
- *Subordinate apologetics to evangelism.*
 - What apologetics can/cannot do
 - Respond to objections with apologetics; INITIATE the gospel!
 - Don't accept the burden to fully prove Christianity.
 - Try to use apologetics that include the gospel.

Medium: the context in which the message is heard – 4 Areas

1. YOUR LIFESTYLE - Your lifestyle should complement the message--not replace it!

How can your lifestyle complement the message?

- *It can adorn the message (Titus 2:9-14), making it even more attractive and credible (Philippians 2:14-16).*
- *It can expose by positive contrast the emptiness of the non-Christian lifestyle (Ephesians 5:8-11), and cause thirst for life with God (Matthew 5:13-16).*
- *It can make slander about us easy to refute (1 Peter 2:12,15; Titus 2:7,8) because what they observe about us is so different.*

2. THE SUBJECTIVE WITNESS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

DEFINITION: The loving unity that Christians express to each other is powerful evidence of the truthfulness of Christianity (Jn. 13:34,35; 17:21,23). Since this evidence is more subjective than objective, it must be experienced rather than merely explained.

- *Whenever possible, invite non-Christians to attend a meeting in which vital Christians predominate (1 Cor. 14:23-25).*
- *Provide social settings that expose your non-Christian friends to Christian community.*
- *NOTE: If someone is equally willing to come to either a meeting or a social gathering, it is usually preferable to bring him to a meeting.*

3. YOUR RELATIONSHIPS - “WARM” AND “COLD”

DEFINITION: Evangelism occurs more easily within existing ("warm") relationships than by talking to ("cold") strangers (Jn. 1:41-51; Acts 16:30-34; 1 Cor. 7:14; 2 Tim. 1:5).

- *Take advantage of the opportunity God has given you to share the gospel with your "warm" relationships.*
- *Help new Christians reach their “warm” relationships.*
- *"Warm up" existing "cold" relationships.*
- *Prayerfully look for opportunities to share Christ with strangers.*

4. CULTURAL IDENTIFICATION/CONTEXTUALIZATION

DEFINITION: We should identify as much as possible with the culture of the people we are seeking to reach--without compromising biblical doctrine or ethics (1 Cor. 9:19-23; Jn. 17:15-18; Acts 15:19-29).

GHETTO vs. MARKETPLACE: Which is more important--to make it as difficult as possible for us to sin, or to make it as easy as possible for people to come to Christ?

APPLICATION AREAS

- *Appropriate dress and atmosphere at meetings*
- *Modern Bible translations*
- *Culturally relevant music & entertainment*
- *“Christianese” vs. relevant terminology & illustrations*
- *Be a student of your culture!*

Sender: the one initiating the communication

Five lies (noise) we often buy into:

1. “People aren’t open to God.”

2. “People will initiate with you.”

“For most Christians, developing meaningful, authentic relationships with non-Christians will be an act of intent, not an act of chance. We probably will have to look for or creatively make opportunities to encounter and interact with non-believers. Jesus did not wait for people to come to Him. The biblical model we have is one of believers actively pursuing chances to engage with non-believers.” George Barna, *“Evangelism that Works”* p.149-150.

3. “Evangelism will go smoothly and quickly.”

4. “Only certain types of Christians can reach people.”

5. “It’s all up to me!” Instead, we need to remember God’s role, their role and our role.

- Remember scriptures that show that God is at work (John 12:32; John 16:8; Matthew 9:37; Acts 1:8).
- How will remembering God’s part affect your outreach?
- Remember people have free will.
- Our role is to “take the initiative to share Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, leaving the results to God... Failure in witnessing is failing to witness.” (Bill Bright, *Witnessing Without Fear*)

Develop a “Lifestyle” of Evangelism:

1. Pray evangelistically!

- *Why prayer is important (1 Corinthians 3:6,7; James 4:2b)*
- *What we should pray for*
Colossians 4:3,4
Ephesians 6:19,20
Colossians 4:5,6
John 16:8
- *The importance of Corporate Prayer*

2. Cultivate the habit of talking with people about spiritual things.

- *Assume openness to the gospel until proven otherwise.*
- *“The most interesting person is the most interested person.”*
- *Ask questions that can open up spiritual conversations.*

- *Talk about your involvement with Christ as openly and naturally as you would any other important part of your life.*
- *Share--don't declare.*
- *Read interest level and respond accordingly.*
- *Pick your disagreements carefully.*
- *Respond to questions and objections with non-defensive honesty.*

3. Focus on the responsive field (Luke 10:8-11; Acts 13:44-47; 18:4-11).

Receiver: the one receiving the communication

DECISION CONTINUUM

DEFINITION: People usually make big decisions by going through a process rather than all at once.

Qualification:

See Paul's application of this principle in Acts 17:1-4,11.

Why is this principle important in evangelism?

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In order to effectively apply this principle, we need to be able to do three things:

1. Discern where the person is in the decision-making process
2. Discern the appropriate next step
3. Give him what he needs to enable him to make the next step

	SYMPTOMS	GOAL	ACTION
HOSTILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • verbal or non-verbal dislike 		
DISINTEREST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • doesn't ask questions; • doesn't initiate or join in discussions • changes the subject • ignores invitations 		
CURIOSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • asks serious questions & is satisfied by good answers; • willing to talk more about Christianity 		
ACTIVE INTEREST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freely discusses Christianity; • reads Bible & books alone; • more personal questions about Christianity; • speaks of Christians & Christianity favorably 		
EXCITEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • admits Christianity is true; • identifies self with Christian community; • tells others they need Christ; • admits something holds him back 		
DECISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • articulates the decision he made; • questions about how to live as a Christian 		

PERCEIVED NEEDS

Jesus' Example

Common perceived needs:

Transitional periods

The "More Needy" Tendency

The Moral Issue

The main problem for non-Christians is not intellectual or evidential, but rather moral.

When a person decides to humble himself before God, the evidence for God and Christianity is clear and sufficient.

Romans 1:18-23, 28, 32; John 3:19-21; John 7:17; Matthew 7:6; Mark 11:27-33;

- Remember to subordinate apologetics to evangelism (see "Message").
- Apologetics will only be effective when the person is willing to humble himself.
- When we invite people to come to Christ, we should emphasize God's grace and love. But we also need to explain that they need to personally humble themselves before God.

Conclusion

Memory Verses

None

Assignment

Read Master Plan of Evangelism Chap 4 & 5 ("Impartation" & "Demonstration") and write a paragraph summary of content and a paragraph of personal application.

Share your testimony with a non-believer.

Write a one-page summary of someone you are reaching out to, answering the following questions:

Where are they on the decision continuum & why do you think this? What can you do to help them take the next step? What is the most difficult part of evangelism for you and what steps can you take to overcome this difficulty?

Key Points to Know for Exam

1. Know the 5 components of a communication event (Sender, Receiver, Message, Medium and Noise) in relation to evangelism.
2. Know the 5 common misconceptions of Christianity discussed in class.
3. Know the 6 stages of the decision continuum and how to apply it.