

*How to Share Your Faith*

*Without*

*Losing Your Friends*

**The Rev. Canon B. W. Wait, III**

Canon for Evangelism  
Episcopal Diocese of Florida

*and*

**The Rev. Canon Harold Percy**

Rector, Trinity Anglican Church  
Ontario, Canada,  
and

Director, Institute of Evangelism,  
Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada

*A detailed, five-week, two-hours-once-a-week course intended to help the shy, the timid, and the tongue-tied develop skills and confidence in sharing their Christian faith with their un-Churched friends.*

*Many people who ought to be members of your congregation are still waiting to be asked!*

*The course includes: prayer, Bible study, personal introspection and reflection, home reading assignments and some memorization, class discussion, and practice sharing.*

This course material was developed by The Rev. Canon B. W. "Pete" Wait, III, Canon for Evangelism, Diocese of Florida, in part from an outline and book *Good News People* by The Rev. Canon Harold Percy, Rector, Trinity Anglican Church, Ontario, Canada, and Director, Institute of Evangelism, Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada. The text *Good News People* is not required for course participants, but the course leader is advised to become familiar with the text.

This Leader's Guide may be used for any Church purpose, except that copies may not be sold for a profit. Copies may be sold to course participants for the cost of reproduction only.

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**Trinity Anglican Church**  
69 Queen St. S.  
Mississauga, Ontario,  
Canada, L5M 5E3  
phone ... 905 826- 1901  
fax.... 905 826-8715  
E-mail: [shirley@gtta.igs.net](mailto:shirley@gtta.igs.net)

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# The Episcopal Network for Evangelism

A. Theodore Mollegen, Jr.  
Convener

July 18, 2001

The 2000 General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted the 20/20 Vision of transforming and revitalizing the Episcopal Church, including doubling its size by the year 2020. Being serious about implementation, the General Convention also authorized a "2020 Task Force" to develop a strategic plan for accomplishing the 20/20 Vision. Furthermore, the Convention not only funded the Task Force through October 2001, but also allocated seed money to be used throughout 2002 and 2003 for starting moving toward the vision.

The Episcopal Network for Evangelism (ENE) was created in 1998 to support the 20/20 Vision, and has a website of materials designed to be helpful to *individuals, congregations, dioceses, and the national church organization* in working toward the 20/20 Vision. There is no charge from the ENE for the materials on its website.

This course addresses one of the needs of a Church which has often neglected the evangelism part of the Christian heritage. As one wag has put it, "many Episcopalians seem to feel that they have an exemption from the Great Commission." Furthermore, in the Baptismal Service, *the whole congregation* promises to evangelize (BCP, page 305). In our history, the Anglican/Episcopal Church has had several periods of evangelistic emphasis, without losing the treasures of Anglicanism that we all hold so dear. It is time to do this again!

This course is a proven means for teaching present-day North Americans how they can effectively convey the faith to today's adults, in a manner that both the conveyers and the recipients can be comfortable with and thankful for.

The ENE expresses its most grateful thanks to Canon Harold Percy, the author of, and The Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, the publisher of ***Good News People***, as well as to Canon Pete Wait, the author and developer of this course documentation, for approving the making of this document a free download from the ENE website.

For additional background information, see the following websites:

- ENE: <http://members.aol.com/ENE2020>
- 2020 Task Force: <http://members.aol.com/TaskForce2020>

I ask your prayers for, and active support of, the 20/20 Vision.

# The Episcopal Diocese of Florida

325 Market Street  
 Jacksonville, FL 32202  
 904.356.1328  
 1.888.763.2602  
 diocese@diocesefl.org

## To the Users of this manual

In April 1998, the Evangelism Committee, St. Francis of Assisi Church, Tallahassee, Florida, provided reservations for two couples at the 'Evangelism 1998' conference in Atlanta. My wife and I were allowed to attend on behalf of St. Francis whose generosity is very gratefully acknowledged, and which resulted in this course of study and practice.

One of the conference workshops was led by Canon Harold Percy, Rector of Trinity Anglican Church, Streetsville, Ontario, Canada, and a director of the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College, Toronto. His workshop and his book, *Good News People*, provided most of the material used in this course on Evangelism.<sup>1</sup>

This five week course is billed as a way to help the shy, the timid, and the tongue-tied develop confidence in sharing their Christian faith with their un-churched friends. It is noted that many people who ought to be members of the church are still waiting to be asked. The course includes prayer, Bible study, personal introspection and reflection, home reading assignments and some memorization, class discussion, and practice sharing. Each session is two hours in length. Refreshments should be made available before, during and possibly after each session.

The course is intended to be part of an on-going effort in all congregations to promote evangelism and conversion "... more as processes than as events."<sup>2</sup> My intent is to help members understand themselves to be "disciples-in-the-making" and who, as their faith grows and deepens, would become eager to help others turn to Christ and follow him. The idea is to promote evangelism as the work of the entire congregational community.<sup>3</sup> The course is prepared in great detail, but some personalizing will be needed by the presenter(s). It should be readily presentable by most lay people, even the shy, the timid, and the tongue-tied.

There are three key players in this style of evangelism. The first is the senior pastor or leadership team. The second key player is the congregation as a whole, and the third is each individual member.<sup>4</sup> Everything leadership does in its preaching and teaching needs to stress one or more evangelical themes and should be directed especially at the second and third key players.

Blessings - may you be a blessing to others as God has blessed you!

The Rev. Canon B. W. "Pete" Wait, III  
 Canon for Evangelism  
 Episcopal Diocese of Florida  
 E-mail: [petewait@earthlink.net](mailto:petewait@earthlink.net)

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, (Toronto, Anglican Book Centre, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> Percy, *Good News*, 71.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

## **A Few Hints for a Successful Course**

By The Rev. Canon Harold Percy

- 1) Remember the importance of beginning and ending promptly. Tell people what time the course will end each evening, and then stick to it!
- 2) Don't overlook the weekly warm-up exercise. This will help people leave the day behind and to concentrate on the task at hand. It will also help to build up a sense of community among the participants.
- 3) I suggest the participants be seated at tables, preferably in groups of six. This facilitates group discussion.
- 4) It helps to create a hospitable environment for people as they arrive. Have a greeter to welcome them. Have some coffee/tea/juice ready for them. Depending on the size of your congregation and how well people know each other it might be a good idea to have name tags as well.
- 5) Remember that adults always want to know what is going to happen. Take a couple of minutes at the beginning of each meeting to share the evening's agendas with them
- 6) The first part of the suggested warm-up for the first evening is obviously inappropriate if you are in a congregation where the people all know each other well. If this is the case, substitute the question "What did you have to leave behind in order to be here tonight?" This can usually lead to some good-humored conversation.
- 7) This outline is offered simply as a model. It is one way that I have found effective in my own ministry setting, but it is certainly not "the" way. Feel free to add to it, subtract from it, or otherwise adjust it in any way you wish. Hopefully it will serve to stimulate and guide your thinking and planning, as you seek to equip your people to share their faith more confidently.

The Rev. Harold Percy  
69 Queen St. S.  
Mississauga,  
Canada, L5M 1K5

Telephone: 905-826-1901  
E-mail [harold@gta.igs.net](mailto:harold@gta.igs.net)  
Ontario

## **Episcopal and Anglican Evangelism**

The 64th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1973 defined evangelism as

“the presentation of Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in such ways that persons may be led to believe in him as Saviour and follow him as Lord within the fellowship of his Church.”

This definition was taken from the 1918 report of the Committee of Inquiry into Evangelism chaired by William Temple (1881-1944), later Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-1944). The only change was to substitute the word “Lord” for Temple’s word “King.”<sup>5</sup> Temple also said of the Church, that it is the only institution which exists for those who have not yet become its members.

The General Convention meeting in Detroit in 1988, designated the 1990s as a “Decade of Evangelism.” The next month, the bishops of the world wide Anglican Communion made the same declaration at their meeting in Lambeth, England. They recognized “that evangelism is the primary task given to the Church” and they called the churches “to make the closing years of this millennium a ‘Decade of Evangelism’ with renewed and united emphasis in making Christ known to the people of His world.” The end of the millennium was thought to be a suitable time to evaluate efforts on this important aspect of mission and give fresh impetus for a new century and millennium. Its special designation was to underline the urgency of the gospel message.<sup>6</sup>

The Book of Common Prayer describes the work of God the Son (849-850) in words which might be described as Jesus being the supreme evangelist and the work of the Church and its Ministers (854-856) being to follow in His footsteps for the spread of His Kingdom, i.e. evangelism!

### **Congregations<sup>7</sup>**

#### The Ones We Have (More Often Than Not)

The typical Churchgoer, if asked about the purpose of the Church and if the person replied truthfully, would likely reply with something like, “The Church is where I go to worship God and have my spiritual needs met.” “The priests (and possibly certain pastoral care committee members) look after the ministry, and I contribute my share of the financial costs and help out around the Church as I have time.” We know this is true, even if the typical member knows a better answer, because this is the attitude practiced by the typical Churchgoer. This practice results in the Church we experience today far too often. It is a Church which, by and large, is either declining or is not growing or increasing in influence in its communities.

#### The Ones We Need

The congregations we need are those where evangelism is firmly rooted in congregational life and where the congregation thinks of evangelism and conversion more in terms of processes rather than single events. The health of any congregation is suspect where the congregation does not seek to bring people into active participation into its life and worship, and have clear lines of accountability to help assure the congregation is effective in so doing. Significant growth opportunity events will be held, and significant events will occur in the lives of the people as they grow in commitment and holiness.

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<sup>5</sup> A. Wayne Schwab, *Handbook for Evangelism, Revised Edition*, Office of Evangelism Ministries, Episcopal Church Center, New York, 1984, 1.

<sup>6</sup> LaDonna M. Wing and Thomas J. McElligott, eds., *E Share 1, A Notebook for the Decade of Evangelism, 1990-2000 in the Episcopal Church*, Evangelism Ministries Office, The Episcopal Church Center, New York, 1990, 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

A healthy congregation is one whose members understand themselves to be “disciples-in-the-making” and who, as their faith grows and deepens, are eager to help others turn to Christ and follow Him. Evangelism is understood to be the ministry of the whole congregation. Its members speak naturally and confidently where ever they are about the faith and life of their Church. They continue to develop friendships and readily invite those in their spheres of influence to come and sample the life of their Church community.

The key task of leadership in the congregations we need is to hold this “vision of health” for the congregation continually before its members, and do all in its power to nurture the vision into the reality of the whole congregation becoming the primary evangelists. The senior member of the clergy must believe absolutely that God wants people to come to faith in Christ through the ministry of this Church community. Dynamic discipleship training and encouragement must be provided.

The key task of the congregation as a whole is to become in fact disciples who exhibit the grace-filled, welcoming, and healing community Christ intends. The individual members, away from the congregation assembled, witness and invite friends to the faith community to experience the joy of what the members have found. The congregation as a whole and as individual members and leaders work together to make disciples who make more disciples.

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## **Preparing to Lead the Course**

Each evening consists of group activities and one or two talks given by the course leader.

The texts of Canon Wait's own talks are given in this document, but the leader should be careful not to use Canon Wait's talks -- which contain some references to particular experiences that Canon Wait has had -- without considering whether to quote Canon Wait's experiences as Canon Wait's, or to substitute some of the leader's own experiences which raise the same issues and learnings for the course participants.

Also, at some points, handouts are used; these should of course be prepared ahead of time.

ANNOUNCING:

## *How to Share Your Faith*

### *Without*

### *Losing Your Friends*

A five week course intended to help the shy, the timid, and the tongue-tied develop confidence in sharing their Christian faith with their un-Churched friends.

Many people who ought to be members of this congregation, are still waiting to be asked!

\_\_\_\_\_ evenings at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. - \_\_\_\_\_ p.m.  
Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

The course includes prayer, Bible study, personal introspection and reflection, home reading assignments and some memorization, class discussion, and practice sharing.

Students who start the course will be expected to attend all sessions and finish the course.

Those who are unable to attend the first class must wait for a subsequent opportunity.

The class will be taught by \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

The course material was developed by The Rev. Canon B. W. Wait III, Canon for Evangelism, Diocese of Florida in part from an Outline and book *Good News People* by The Rev. Canon Harold Percy, Rector, Trinity Anglican Church, Ontario, Canada, and Director, Institute of Evangelism, Wycliffe College, Toronto, Canada. The text is not required for the course.

# Commitment and Sign-up Sheet to:

## *How to Share Your Faith*

### *Without*

### *Losing Your Friends*

A five week course intended to help the shy, the timid, and the tongue-tied develop confidence in sharing their Christian faith with their un-Churched friends.

Many people who ought to be members of our congregation, are still waiting to be asked!

\_\_\_\_\_ evenings at \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_:\_\_\_ p.m.  
Beginning \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

*The course includes prayer, Bible study, personal introspection and reflection, home reading assignments and some memorization, class discussion, and practice sharing. Students who start the course are expected to attend all sessions and finish the course. Those who are unable to attend the first class must wait for a subsequent opportunity.*

The class will be taught by \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Week # 1

### Key Point: **Introduction to Evangelism**

<u>Start</u>	<u>Mins.</u>	<u>Activity</u>
7:00	10	Gather, mingle, coffee +
7:10	5	Welcome, tonight's agenda, announcements, prayer Resources: Heart, Mind, Attention, Bible, BCP
7:15	20	Warm up (mixer): This can be done in groups or with one or two partners. Tell about household, job, family, etc. What keeps you busy? What is your interest in this course? What did you leave behind to be here tonight?
7:35	15	Bible reflection: Matt 9.35-38
7:50	15	<u>Introduction to Evangelism</u> ** (Talk 1a) What is it? Why is it important? What is the goal?
8:05	15	Table Discussion over coffee. What experiences have you had in sharing your faith? How did it go? How do you feel about the prospect of sharing your faith? What are some of the things you hope this course can help with?
8:20	10	List issues on flip chart - keep posted in class, refer back weekly.
8:30	15	<u>Understanding Intimidation</u> ** (Talk 1b)
8:45	10	Explain the concept of memory verses and assign this week's verses.  Encourage people to memorize some appropriate Bible passage each week. For many this is a new experience and an enjoyable challenge. Give them a few minutes each week at the tables to test one another, (light heartedly, of course) to see how they are doing with this.
8:55	1-5	Prayer/Dismissal.  Always end on or before the two-hour mark!

\*\* See supplementary notes for more information

## Supplementary Notes

### Week #1

**Introduction To Evangelism:** Chapter One in my book "Good News People: An Introduction To Evangelism for Tongue Tied Christians" (Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, 1996) deals in some detail with these questions of what evangelism is, why it is important and what its goal is.

**Listing Their Issues:** After people have shared some of the issues they hope this course can help them with, it is a good idea to list them on newsprint for everyone to see. This will give you a clearer insight into some of the issues they are struggling with, and you can refer back to it week by week to see how you are doing in addressing their concerns. (Realistically, you probably won't be able to deal with everything they mention.)

**Understanding Intimidation:** Chapter Four of "Good News People" deals with the issues of intimidation and reluctance.

## Questions To Help Guide The Biblical Reflection And Weekly Passages To Memorize

### Week #1: Matthew 9:35-38

i) As you read this passage, what makes the most striking impression on you?

ii) What do you think Jesus means when he says, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few"?

iii) Would Jesus say the same things if he walked through your parish neighborhood today? If so, what are some of the things he would see that would prompt this response? If not, what do you think he might say?

iv) What would it mean to send workers into the harvest?

**To Memorize:** John 3:16,17. Ephesians 2:8,9

## Talk 1A -- INTRODUCTION TO EVANGELISM<sup>8</sup>

### WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT EVANGELISM?

Western theology is facing a difficult hurdle in moving from a heavily Christian societal framework to a post Christian one. We seem to have arranged our theology to where pastoral care is the only practical manifestation of the faith. Such being the case, missions and evangelism are 'add-on' activities. They are therefore difficult to promote and fund. The essential nature of the Church is being neglected.<sup>9</sup> When evangelism is neglected, the Church will always be less than it is called to be.

### GOOD NEWS FOR A HURTING WORLD

We live in a hurting world. All we have to do to verify that statement is look at TV or read a few sentences of almost any newspaper - war, famine, sickness, violence, abuse, etc. Life is beautiful in many ways, but the world is racked with pain. Life for many is like "Old Man River."

The Gospel is God's answer. God's Good News is about His inexhaustible love for His world and His people. He sent Jesus to rescue us from all our evils. It takes place where God's heart and human needs meet. The sharing of God's Good News takes place when God's people understand they have been given the ministry of reconciliation and hope for all.

### SIX HUMAN NEEDS

People Are Lost - Luke 19.1-10, the story of Zacchaeus. Here was a man who was wealthy, successful, and comfortable. Who but Jesus would have described him as lost? Society tells us that life is about getting ahead, acquiring the most "toys." People who strive to be first according to the world's standards will find themselves last according to God's standards. They are lost despite appearances. They are climbing the wrong ladders.

People Yearn for Wholeness - Did you ever look at the "Self Help" section of virtually any bookstore? The selection of topics is breathtaking. What about self-help groups? 12-step programs have been adapted to virtually every addiction. This is the societal context in which we are called to share the Good News, i.e. be evangelists. We share humbly what God has done.

People Are Lonely - Loneliness is one of our greatest societal problems. Ever read the "Personal" ads?

We do not even know our neighbors. Garage door openers have destroyed neighborhood life. As we

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<sup>8</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>9</sup> David Bosch, *Believing in the Future*,.....

think about evangelism, we are not to be deceived by appearances. We have better relationships with TV characters than real people.<sup>10</sup>

People Need Hope - In all human hearts is the desire for significance. Ever watch a new parent gazing at their new baby - you are the next \_\_\_\_\_! Many find society's answers are simply insufficient, not enough substance to satisfy. "Life has to be more than what I experience." In the context of people's wondering, searching, and questioning, evangelism is carried out.

People Need Forgiveness - People thinking about evangelism must remember there are depths of guilt, regret, and remorse in the hearts of many people. Many have very uneasy consciences, mostly justifiably so - dishonesty, infidelity, violence, etc. People want to start over with a fresh page in their book. People have lots of things they would like to forget. The Gospel speaks directly to all these issues! That is Good News!

People Fear Death - All of us know we are going to die. Somehow it doesn't make sense. Why should a lifetime of learning and accomplishment be snuffed out? Why should we be taken from all that is familiar and comforting? What does death hold for us? We worship youth and beauty. We spend exorbitant sums to hide the signs of aging, loss of vitality. The Gospel has the answer here as well! Christ has won the decisive battle over death. The power of death is only temporary! In a culture which is traumatized by its fear and denial of death, the work of evangelism is vital!

#### A GLIMPSE INTO THE HEART OF GOD

The Parable of the Prodigal (or Lost) Son, Luke 15.11-32, gives a glimpse into God's heart for mankind. The son had all the human characteristics we have just described.

The boy had never been a parent. He could not have imagined in his wildest dreams the anxieties and fears that his parents had for his safety, his health, his well being, his care, etc. Would they ever see him again? They had no idea. As time passed it seemed less and less likely. And so the father constantly scanned the horizon for some sign that his boy was coming home. Hope against hope that today would be the day.

One day the father saw a figure he recognized! It was too good to be true! Today was the day all his prayers were answered! It was his son! He was coming home! There was no speech. There was no scorn. No questions about the lost property. No "I told you so's." Only unspeakable joy, filled the father's heart. He embraced the boy, he wept, he sent word to all his friends, he organized a celebration! It was party time!

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<sup>10</sup> Personal observations of B. W. Wait III.

This parable describes God's heart, aching for a lost world, and rejoicing over every son and daughter who finds their way back home. Jesus invites all the lost and hurting to come home, to be welcomed back into the family.

What's all the fuss about evangelism? It is about a broken world and a loving God. A God who immerses Himself in our situations in order to heal our pain and rescue us from evil. It is about a God who invites those who have heard and responded to the good news, to share it with all others until the whole world knows.

## Talk 1B -- UNDERSTANDING INTIMIDATION<sup>11</sup>

Kids fight over who gets to tell Grandma something wonderful when she comes for a visit. If evangelism is sharing good news, why does the *call* to evangelism so frequently sound like *bad news*?

### FOUR SUSPICIONS AND STEREOTYPES

Charlatans Most of us have questions about people who are just too slick, whether they be car salesmen or evangelists. There seems to be a certain lack of authenticity. Artificiality comes across as highly questionable.

Unwelcome Intrusions Some of us think of evangelism as knocking on doors and confronting and embarrassing people (mostly ourselves). Some us have experienced ‘pit bull’ sensitivity and opt out immediately.

“Religious Fanatics” Some people have an amazing and annoying genius for turning every possible conversation topic into religion. Often they also have the gift of thinking they (and only they) know all the right answers.

Suspicious of Self-Interest and Empire Building Sometimes we get the feelings that some people are after us only for our participation, to up the Sunday count and the Monday count i.e. the attendance and bank deposit.

We cannot use our suspicions and our tendencies to stereotype evangelists to dismiss them out of hand. We must develop sensitive ways of evangelism which are true to the Gospel, honor Christ and let us be honest.

### FOUR SOCIETAL ISSUES

Pluralism, Tolerance, and Relativism Americans have always placed high value on independence of thought and action. We tolerate lots of diverse issues in the name of freedom. We ask ourselves why should we interfere with another’s right to believe as they see fit, or try to change their minds? Unfortunately we confuse pluralism with relativism. Pluralism has to do with allowing for diversity of lifestyles, beliefs, and rights to choose. Relativism goes beyond pluralism to assert that all choices and systems are equally valid. Truth therefore, is what works best for any given person.

Pluralism is wonderful in the sense that Christianity can be compared in the market place of peoples lives. Nothing can compare to what Christ offers. Relativism should be denied with equal passion as it cuts the heart out of vital Christian faith. Christianity centers on the particularity of Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection as the only answer to set us free from death and to reconcile us to God and with each other.

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<sup>11</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

We must be free to choose Christ or reject Him. But God wants all people everywhere to hear about Jesus so they can make their responses.

Cynicism We have been misled by authorities of diverse kinds so often, we have become cynical about authority in general and the Church in particular. Sales organizations spend huge amounts of resources on developing compelling pitches for their products. We know and they know and they know that we know that the salesmen are stretching the truth to, and sometimes beyond, its limits. We tend to dismiss evangelists as nothing more than salesmen trying to sell us on spending time and money in places which are dull, inept, and for the most part irrelevant.

#### THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH

The indiscretions of some Church leaders and, the more often than not, negative light in which the Church is cast in movies and TV, naturally makes us think more about remaining undercover than evangelism. Many feel embarrassed to invite friends to Church because they feel the service lifeless, music outdated, preaching irrelevant, building maintenance lacking, and the congregation superficial or even unfriendly. Where these conditions exist, change must occur.

Conversely, there is a wide spread spiritual hunger as people look for wholeness and meaning. They sense somehow in all the deception around them, there must be something somewhere which is solid and meaningful. Many are willing to consider Jesus even if not the Church.

Evangelism has to lead us to invite friends to come to Church with us and hear about Jesus.

#### TWO AREAS WHERE WE LACK CONFIDENCE

Sometimes Church leadership really is lacking, but mostly we just lack confidence in ourselves and we lack confidence in the Gospel.

Lack of Confidence in Ourselves Most of us are not like highly extroverted lobbyists. Mostly we like to simply blend in with the crowd, but as Christians we know we are called to stand apart. We feel we do not understand the Gospel well enough to share it adequately. Often we are not even sure we are Christians.

Lack of Confidence in the Gospel Many people doubt whether the basic tenets of the faith are true and whether the Gospel does in fact, have the power to change lives so that people will be reborn and develop a passion for God's reign. Reasons for this include, lack of serious teaching and study, unawareness of adult conversions, and confusion resulting from Church leaders who question and/or deny the core doctrine of the faith.

#### OUR CHALLENGE

Most of the American Church acts like the work of the Church is to hold worship services and provide pastoral care. We call that model 'Christendom' and that model is dead. The Church is in a missionary situation. It calls for a radical refocusing of what we are and what we do. If we choose to focus on all the reasons why evangelism will be difficult, we will easily be intimidated and shrink from the challenge. But if, like the two faithful spies,<sup>12</sup> we stay focused on our mission and remember that God is with us, we will experience God's goodness and His faithfulness.

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<sup>12</sup> Numbers 13 and 14.

## Week #2

Key Points: Where do I begin? **Praying for those we want to reach, and the “Three R’s” outline of the Good News.**

<u>Start</u>	<u>Mins.</u>	<u>Activity</u> _____
7:00	5	Gather, mingle, coffee +
7:05	5	Welcome, tonight’s agenda, announcements, prayer
7:10	15	Warm up (mixer): (Make sure you know everyone at your table) What’s your idea of a Really Good Day? - (If you could create a day to do anything you want, what would it include?) How did you do with the memory verses? Try them out with each other.
7:25	15	Bible reflection: Matt 4.18-22, Matt 28.16-20
7:40	20	<u>Where Do I Begin?</u> ** (Talk 2a) “Personal Spheres of Influence”/”Operation Andrew” After explaining the above, have students draw three circles on a piece of paper, indicating the three main spheres of influence and then list a couple of names in each circle. Have them share one or two of these names, in confidence, with others at the table.
8:00	5	Break with coffee, etc.
8:05	25	Praying for our non-Christian friends, (and for one another, and ourselves)**
8:30	15	<u>What Is The Good News? The Three R’s outline.</u> ** (Talk 2b)
8:45	10	Questions and Answers/How are we doing? Bible passage for next week. Spend some quality time this week reflecting on the various circumstances, processes, influences, and events which have led to your becoming the Christian you are today. List the key people, events, experiences, etc. You will need them for next class.
8:55	1-5	Prayer/Dismissal.

Always end on or before the two-hour mark!

\*\* See supplementary notes for more information

## Supplementary Notes

### Week #2

**Where Do I Begin?** For information on this section see chapter seven of *Good News People*.

**Praying Together:** Have the participants discuss and list at their tables some of the things that they think should be included in a prayer that will prepare the heart of someone with whom they would like to have a faith sharing conversation.

Go through the exercise again, this time listing the items they would like to be included in a prayer for them, as they think about sharing their faith with their friends.

When they have brainstormed and discussed this for several minutes, ask them to share with the whole group the elements they have listed. Write this up on newsprint or on an overhead, and use them in future sessions to guide their prayers.

**The Three R's Outline:** This outline provides a brief outline of the Gospel under three key words that begin with the letter R: Reign, Reconciliation, and Response. The Gospel is good news about the Reign or the kingdom of God, and it is good news about Reconciliation with God. This good news is an invitation which seeks a Response. This is discussed in chapters three and four of *Good News People*.

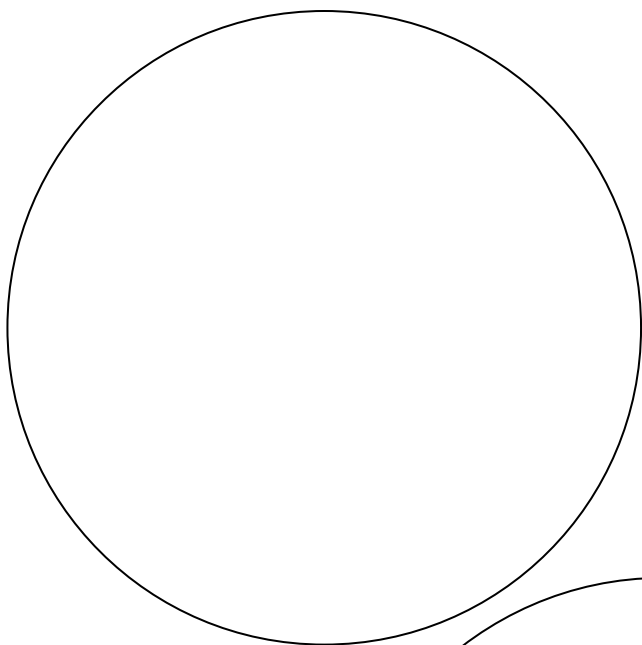
## Questions To Help Guide The Biblical Reflection And Weekly Passages To Memorize

### Week #2: Matthew 4:18-22 / Matthew 28:16-20

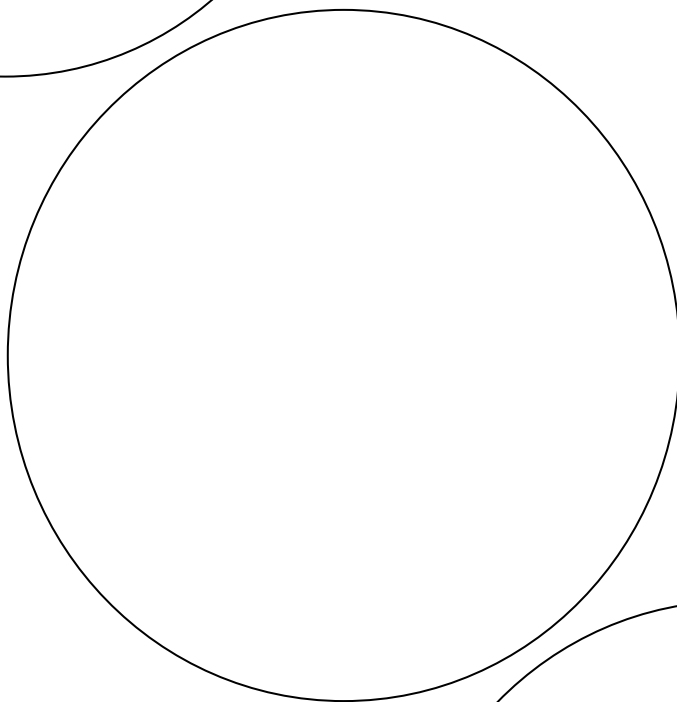
- i) Why do you think Jesus chose fisherman to be his first disciples? (Was there something more than coincidence at work here?)
- ii) What do you think it means to fish for people? Can you think of other appropriate metaphors for this activity?
- iii) What hope is offered in Matthew 28 for those who seek to share the gospel and help their friends become disciples?
- iv) Herb Miller describes these passages as the "book ends" of Jesus' ministry. What do they teach us, taken individually or together, about what it means to get involved with Jesus?... - -

**To Memorize:** 1 John 1:7-9      1 John 4:9-10

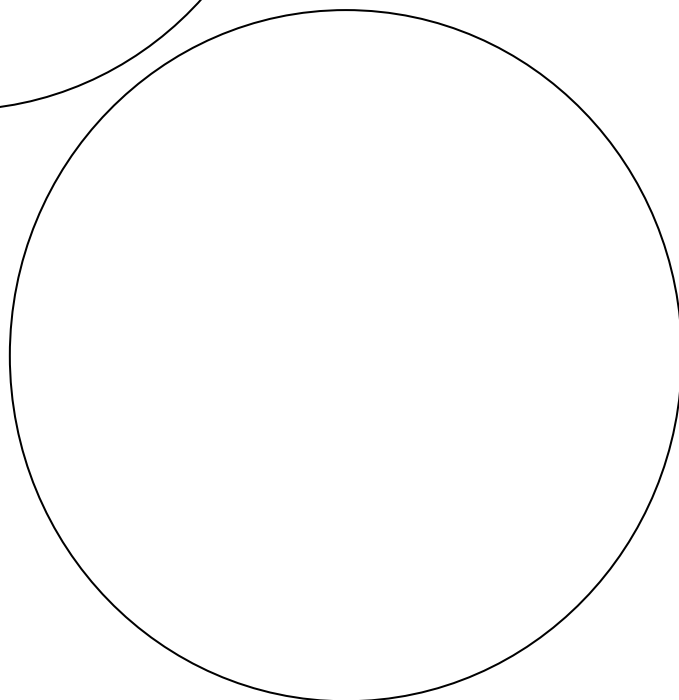
# Spheres of Influence



**Family**



**Work**



**Friends**

# My Friends, Colleagues and Neighbors

Name	Family Members	Church	Attend?	Date Invited
Friends				
Colleagues				
Neighbors				

## Talk 2a -- WHERE DO I BEGIN?<sup>13</sup>

### GETTING STARTED

First we must acknowledge that conversation about faith and spiritual issues is perfectly normal. We live in a time of intense spiritual hunger and curiosity. We are surrounded by a people who long for a deeper spiritual reality than they currently experience. The harvest is ripe!

### THREE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

We start within our natural spheres of influence, i.e. our existing relationships of (1) family, (2) work, and (3) friends. These are the areas where we live. We start where we are, not where we aren't. Which of the people in these spheres are currently outside any Church? With which ones could we share a faith-related conversation should the opportunity arise?

It can be helpful to draw three circles (or divide a sheet of paper in three parts) representing these three spheres. We list those with whom we have regular contact, i.e. those where we have some knowledge of their personal lives and issues; their interests, fears, and problems. We do this deliberately, thoughtfully, and prayerfully.

Next we spend a few days asking God to reveal which ones He has been preparing to make positive responses to the Good News. We pray every day for God to direct us to those who will be receptive. Then we pray for God to provide the opportunity and show us how to begin sharing.

### OPERATION ANDREW

Andrew was the brother of Simon Peter (Jn 1.40). Andrew brought Peter to meet Jesus. An Operation Andrew List is a list of people to whom you would like to introduce Jesus. The names in our spheres of influence which God has highlighted form the basis of our list. The names on this list may be there for long periods of time, i.e. years. Conversion is almost always a long process. It is almost always influenced by close friends.

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**\*\*Break for “Personal Sphere of Influence/Operation Andrew” exercise\*\***

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### WHAT SHOULD I SAY?

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<sup>13</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

Our ultimate goal is for the person with whom we are speaking, to become a fully committed follower of Jesus and a mature disciple. Some will come to a Church where over time they are able to consider the Gospel and make a commitment. Others will refuse Church as a starting point, but will listen to the Gospel. Eventually they will come to Church.

### OUR CHURCH

Evangelism in its simplest form is “Come and see. See who we are. See what we do. Give us a try. I think you will like it as much as I do.” It is surprising how many are open to an invitation to go with us to Church.

Others are not so open. It is essential to have thought out in advance what it is about our Church that makes it special to us and why it would benefit the friend with whom we are talking. Basically, we try to show how the friend’s needs can be met through the body of believers (Church).

### OUR STORY

We must also be prepared to share our own personal faith stories. We must have spent time in reflecting on what God has done in our lives and practiced sharing it with mature Christians so that we can be effective when God opens the door for us to share with seekers.

Nothing equals the power of a personal witness from someone who came to faith and what that faith means to them. The basic question is this: “What is the Good News about Jesus from my personal experience, that I would like to share?” People find our stories exciting. We may think our stories are dull, but others find spiritual truth exciting. People are looking for something authentic in which to believe. They trust their friends.

### GOD’S STORY

At some point in a disciple’s maturing process, the disciple must be able to tell God’s story to interested companions. We will unlikely be able to share much of consequence with uninterested non-friends! We may be speaking, but that doesn’t mean the other person is listening. A lifetime of discovery will not enable a disciple to comprehend the fullness of God’s story - that is part of its beauty and freshness.

We can comprehend the basics. So can our un-Churched friends. We must know the basics.

Ten basic essentials can be listed which we can provide to help people have a reasonably clear grasp of what it means to follow Jesus. We do this so that they can give the matter serious and informed consideration:

1. God is revealed through Jesus who models life: thought, word, & deed.
2. Jesus came to set us free from evil and reconcile us with God & others.
3. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, He rescued all creation from evil and death and provided for forgiveness for the sins of the world.
4. Jesus rose from the dead, and He is alive forever more!
5. Jesus knows us intimately. He loves us totally, completely e.g. the cross.
6. Jesus offers all people complete forgiveness and totally new beginnings!
7. Jesus knows our flaws and our potential. His invitation offers the unlimited future for the inhibited past. It's for all people everywhere.
8. His offer of forgiveness and new life is for all. It cannot be earned.
9. His followers are known as the Church. That is where we learn together to be the people of God who carry the Gospel everywhere.
10. In trusting and following Jesus, we find eternal life. Death does not have the last word in God's Kingdom. Jesus leads us through death to resurrection in God's eternal Kingdom. This is Good News for all people!

Other good summaries are found in the Creeds and in the Eucharistic prayers in the Book of Common Prayer. Learn them!

## Talk 2b -- WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS?<sup>14</sup>

### THE THREE “R’s” OUTLINE

The Gospel is Good News about the **R**eign or Kingdom of God, and the Gospel is Good News about **R**econciliation with God. Further, the Gospel is Good News which demands a **R**esponse to its invitation.

### THE REIGN OF GOD

Participating in the Reign of God means becoming a part of the people of God. God’s purposes in this world go far beyond rescuing isolated individuals from their plight and initiating private and personal relationships with each of them. The Christian faith is a corporate faith. The Biblical story is the story of a people. In the beginning the people of God was the family of Abraham (God’s covenant was with Abraham and his descendants). In time it grew to embrace the entire nation of Israel. It began to achieve its worldwide objectives through the company of the followers of Jesus - the Church.

The common life of the community is concerned with public worship, reading of Scripture, corporate prayer, public proclamation of the Gospel, and the celebration of the Sacraments. Through these the community is nurtured and the witness of the Church is made to the world. The members love and care and encourage one another. What makes the community stand out is the love its members are learning to share. The community of the Church is proof that Christ has defeated evil. Evangelism clearly presents the invitation to join the people of God.

God’s purposes do not end with either the individual or the community. They extend into the life of the general public. We are called to serve in the public sphere. We are called to proclaim the Gospel and address social ills that the perfect reign of God might prevail in the world.

### RECONCILIATION WITH GOD

We do not earn a chance at reconciliation with God; we do not earn our way into God’s kingdom. These are offered freely to all who will accept. We are reconciled to God (saved from the wrath of God, saved from the unpayable debt of sin) by grace through faith (Eph.2.8). **GRACE: Great Riches At Christ’s Expense.** This whole new life of living in harmony with God starts by simply saying “yes.” We are accepted by God through His grace, not because of our merit. If a person says “yes” and means it, they are included.

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<sup>14</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

What does an authentically evangelized person look like? What has changed for the person who has said “yes” to Christ? Everything! The person who says “yes” to Christ becomes a new person, new perspectives, new purpose, new power, i.e. new everything! The new perspective is of God’s reign.

God wants reconciliation with each one of us and He wants all of us to be reconciled with each other. Jesus made it very clear that those who accept God’s forgiveness must be prepared to forgive one another and to live in peace with each other. The New Testament is filled with instructions on how to shape the community so that it models God’s reconciliation. And God gives the Holy Spirit to enable us to live the new reconciled life in Christ.

The Church is a community of people with a very special identity and calling. It is a people who have heard and accepted the Gospel invitation of reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. As such, it is also a people who have accepted the commission to reconcile the whole world to God. Our God is a missionary God. He will not be satisfied until His name is glorified in every place by people in every tribe, tongue, and nation.

#### RESPONSE TO GOD’S INVITATION

It is important to remember that the Good News is never simply an announcement. Its most natural form is an invitation to turn from lesser preoccupations (repent) and experience the richness and freedom of God’s reign (believe i.e. put into practice). The Gospel never merely informs, it always invites.

When someone (including God) gives an invitation, an answer is expected, and a response **is** made. Failure to accept an invitation constitutes rejection. At the most basic level, a simple “yes” is all that is necessary to be reconciled with God through Christ and to enter into God’s reign. Its simplicity can be deceptive since the intention and commitment it represents will eventually permeate every area of our lives. It has a profound effect on all we think and say and do for ever more.

The first dimension of our response is in our new identity. We are born anew. We become children of God. It is intensely intimate and individual. We begin to reconsider questions of character, personal ethics, and behavior. We begin to open ourselves to God’s transforming Spirit, becoming more like Jesus, i.e. becoming more like the person God intended for us to be. As the relationship deepens, we find our goals and aspirations for the future come into conflict with God less and less. We become true friends with God.

Authentic evangelism recognizes this personal dimension of the Gospel invitation. It includes the invitation for us to turn, personally and individually, to Christ, in order to be

reconciled to God, to enter God's reign, and begin learning how to live our personal lives and our corporate lives in His Marvelous Light.

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## Supplementary Notes

### Week #3

**Sharing Our Stories:** Be prepared for some "emotional" issues here, as some people might become quite "weepy" during this session. Assure them that this is quite all right.

**Helpful Hints:** Use the "Keeping Faith With Your Friends" handout for some suggestions on various pointers and reminders the participants might find helpful.

**Praying Together:** Towards the conclusion of this evening's session we want people to share, confidentially, some of the names on their "Operation Andrew" list, and to tell who these people are and what they mean to them. Then, using the prayer lists we developed last week, take some time praying for these various people, and for one another.

### Questions To Help Guide The Biblical Reflection And Weekly Passages To Memorize

#### Week #3. 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

- i) What stands out more than anything else for you as you read this passage?
- ii) What insights do you get into the heart and character of God from this passage?
- iii) What do you think it means to be an "ambassador for Christ?"
- iv) What are some of the ways in which our everyday lives might be affected as we seek to think of ourselves as ambassadors for Christ?

To Memorize: Galatians 2:20

Philippians 2:14,15

# Friendship Evangelism

## *Keeping Faith with Your Friends*

- 1. Remember that a conversion is usually a process.** Think of yourself as influencing another person towards faith in Jesus Christ. Think of yourself as one link in the chain of conversion sometimes you will be one of the first links in the chain, sometimes one of the last. You don't always have to be the final link in order to be an effective friend and witness!
- 2. Begin with those who are closest to you:** family, friends, and business associates. It is always easier to understand and to be understood by those with whom we already have credibility, than with total strangers. In this way, we will be able to have an influence on others not only by what we say, but also by who we are.
- 3. Pray continually.** Genuine conversion is always the work of God's Spirit at work in someone's life. Pray that you will always know who God is leading you to, that God will graciously enable your own words and the other person's understanding, and that you will recognize the opportunities God provides. Pray for the courage to speak.
- 4. Be yourself.** Don't take on a different personality or tone of voice in a faith-sharing conversation. Sharing Jesus does not mean that you are preaching; you are simply introducing one Friend to another. Let your conversation be a natural part of who you are.
- 5. Ask leading questions that will take the conversation deeper.** Ask your friend what he or she thinks about God, about what they think is wrong with the world and human nature, how they find the resources to deal with crises or manage their stress, or what they see as their purpose in life. Talk about the sources and origin of their convictions.
- 6. Listen for openings and possible contact points with the Gospel.** Remember that people develop an interest in Christian faith for a variety of reasons. Some are looking for truth, for meaning in life, or a way to cope with personal pain; still others, because they fear death. All such issues, when sensitively explored, can open the door to faith.
- 7. Ask for permission to speak about your faith.** No one likes to be cornered, or forced into a conversation they really don't want to have. When the time seems right, you might say something like, "I would love to have chance to share with you what my Christian faith means to me; would you be interested in that?"
- 8. Don't start the conversation by trying to convince someone of their sin.** The Christian perspective on guilt and sin is one of the most misunderstood topics in the world. Since most people have more than enough guilt to deal with already, talk instead about the specific issues they are facing. Besides, conviction of sin is God's job, not yours.
- 9. Invite your friend to a social event.** If someone is not ready for an invitation to church, invite them to a party or barbecue where meeting your other Christian friends will go a long way toward easing their fears. Or if it seems appropriate, invite them to a course or special church event at which the Gospel will be presented.
- 10. Remember to stress the relational aspect of Christian faith.** Christianity is about a relationship before it is about dogma or creeds. It is about turning to follow Jesus, about enjoying friendship with God. Don't let the conversation turn into a theological debate for which neither of you are equipped. Far more people are loved into God's kingdom than are argued in. If the conversation begins to turn into an argument, draw it to a close until a more opportune moment arises.

*Harold Percy*

### Talk 3 -- SHARING OUR STORIES - MY PART<sup>15</sup>

#### MY ROLE AS EVANGELIST AND WITNESS

The work of evangelism is not the exclusive preserve of those who have been gifted and called as evangelists. All of us are to show mercy, give money, pray, etc. All are also to be evangelists. Some are naturally very good in evangelism. But most of us sense that our primary gifts lie in other areas.

Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that all of us have roles in sharing the Good News of what God has done in Jesus and to the reality of God's Reign. We can share that Good News by witnessing to what God has done in our own lives. A major underlying theme of the New Testament is that all followers of Jesus are witnesses to what they have seen, heard, and experienced. Others are then able to draw their own conclusions from the testimony. The most effective witness is one who is able to describe accurately and confidently what has happened from their point of view.

#### MY ABILITY VS. MY AVAILABILITY

Without a high degree of motivation and desire, the question of how to witness is not even an issue. All of you have committed to the entire five weeks, so we can all assume a certain amount of motivation exists. As with so many things in life, showing up is a major part of success. After all, God is really the one who will convict, forgive, heal, inspire, save, fill, etc. Three major considerations in developing a healthy motivation to evangelism are astonishment, confidence, and faithfulness.

Astonishment at God's grace to us in Jesus Christ is an absolute key in motivating us to evangelism. Astonishment jumps out in passage after passage throughout the NT: the Annunciation, the shepherds, Jesus' parents, the crowds who observed Jesus, the disciples at the tomb. How some of us can take the most astonishing story of all time and make it boring, is what is truly astonishing!

Confidence in the Gospel itself is another critical key to healthy motivation. If we do not have confidence in the Gospel's message to change lives, then nothing much will ever happen through us. Surely we know how God has changed our lives and we have seen God change the lives of others we know personally. He can and will change the lives of others if they let Him.

We need to have thought deeply and know how our professed beliefs make significant differences in our lives. If we are hoping to enrich the lives of our friends, we must believe the Gospel is truly Good News.

The fear that sharing our faith implies a perceived moral defect is a residue of Christendom thinking. Good Christian, good citizen, and good person are not synonymous. It

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<sup>15</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

takes Jesus for both the moral and the immoral to be reconciled, i.e. saved, and live in God's presence. There is only one way to know the joy of God's presence and His fullness, Jesus! Faithfulness to Jesus whom we profess to be following, means first and foremost, being an evangelist. He came to seek out and save the lost. So must we. He left us with a mission to go to all nations. So, we must. It really boils down to two questions: Do we have a faith worth sharing? Do we have a friend worth sharing it with?

#### ME AS AN INFLUENCER

Suppose in thinking in terms of getting to know God, everyone is on a continuum of 1 to 100. No one being created in His image, is zero, and no one knows God fully. Real evangelism is helping a person move along the scale to a higher number. If a person is at 17, our job is to help them move to 18, then 19, etc. Level 67 makes no sense to a person at 17. We must begin where people are, and help them mature. This can be a long process. It doesn't have to be, but it usually is.

#### ON MY BECOMING A GOOD WITNESS

The key to improvement and developing confidence is preparation and practice. Athletes, comics, singers, preachers, you name the activity, all of them prepare and practice, whether they are beginners or professionals. We can all become effective witnesses. All of us should want to.

#### MY SHARING OF GOD'S STORY AND OF MY OWN STORY

Effective witnesses must know the Biblical story and their own story. God's story is first of His proactive involvement in this world beginning with creation and reaching its peak in Jesus. It is succinctly outlined in the creeds and Eucharistic prayers. Mostly it is the story of God's unstoppable love. He seeks to rescue us even when we do not want to be rescued! We need to know this story and spend time daily reading and reflecting on it.

Our story tells of our own faith development and experience of God's grace. You have something to share or you wouldn't be in the 5th hour of an Evangelism class! What has cause you to come? Who are the key people or events in your development? Who are the role models and encouragers? What about seemingly chance encounters, casual conversations, apparently insignificant choices and decisions which have later turned out to be pivotal events?

How did you eventually make the decision to follow Jesus? Can you describe the process? Did you rehearse the Baptismal covenant enough times for it to finally take hold of your life? What does this choice and direction mean to you? What were you like before? How have you changed?

No matter what shape and outline a person's story takes, it is worth sharing. People will be interested in hearing your story, and many will delight in it. Isn't it worth the try to move from meaningless, superficial chatter to meaningful, deep, rich, life-changing conversations? Try it!

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## Week #4

Key Point: The five elements of a faith sharing conversation.

<u>Start</u>	<u>Mins.</u>	<u>Activity</u> _____
7:00	5	Gather, mingle, coffee +
7:05	15	Welcome, tonight's agenda, announcements, prayer Warm up (mixer): Share a pleasant moment or experience of this past week. Share memory verses. How are you doing with the memory verses?
7:20	15	Bible reflection: 1 Cor. 9.19-23.
7:35	5	<u>The Two Sides of the Story</u> ** (Talk 4a)
7:40	10	Individual work, in 4-5 sentences each, write the Good News you would like to share with a friend about: What you have experienced about Jesus What you have experienced about your Church
7.50	10	Share your sentences with another student (5 minutes each).
8.00	10	Break with coffee, etc.
8.10	25	<u>The Five Elements of the Conversation</u> ** (Talk 4b)  Handouts: Commitment prayer, Four Spiritual Laws, etc.
8.35	5	Questions?
8:40	10	Prayer for each other.
8:50	5	Bible passage for next week.
8:55	1-5	Prayer/Dismissal.

Always end on or before the two-hour mark.   \*\*See supplementary notes.

## Supplementary Notes

Week #4

### **Questions To Help Guide The Biblical Reflection And Weekly Passages To Memorize**

#### **Week #4: 1 Corinthians 9:19-23**

- i) What stands out for you more than anything else as you read this passage?
- ii) How would you summarize the main thought of this passage in one sentence?
- iii) Why do you think St. Paul is so passionate about wanting to share the Gospel?
- iv) What insights does this passage offer to people who want to be able to share their faith with others?

**To Memorize:** 1 Peter 2:24,25      Revelation 3:20

A Sample Prayer of Commitment :

“Jesus, I have come to realize that you already know me and love me. Now I want to know and love you too. I want to become one of your followers, and learn to live the new life of God’s Kingdom. Please forgive me for everything in my life that has come between us, and help me to renounce it so that I can follow you faithfully and consistently from today on. Help me grow deeply into you, and love you more and more. *Amen*”

A Sample Prayer of Commitment :

“Jesus, I have come to realize that you already know me and love me. Now I want to know and love you too. I want to become one of your followers, and learn to live the new life of God’s Kingdom. Please forgive me for everything in my life that has come between us, and help me to renounce it so that I can follow you faithfully and consistently from today on. Help me grow deeply into you, and love you more and more. *Amen*”

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### Talk 4a -- TWO SIDES OF THE STORY<sup>16</sup>

There are two sides of the Gospel story. We have shared and talked about both sides during the last two weeks.

Effective witnesses must know the Biblical story and their own story. Mostly the Biblical story is of God's unstoppable love. Our story tells of our own faith development and experience of God's grace.

There are always significant events, people, circumstances, decisions, etc. which demonstrate how God's story intertwines with our story and through which we experienced (and continue to experience) Christian development. There is great power where these two stories meet. We have something to share! People want to hear!

Summarize each of the following in a few (4-5) sentences each:

1. The Good News about Jesus (God's story) you have experienced (your story) which you want to share with a friend. (3 R's)
2. The Good News about your Church (where God and His people come together) which you would like to share with a friend. (healing, forgiveness, acceptance)

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 Note: A small note pad is useful - one sheet for each question, or a larger pad divided in two parts, the upper portion for Question 1 and the lower for Question 2.

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<sup>16</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

## Talk 4b -- FIVE ELEMENTS OF THE CONVERSATION<sup>17</sup>

### HOW SHOULD I SAY IT?

Many people have a certain apprehension and reluctance about initiating evangelizing conversations. Accept your reservations and proceed to be a faithful witness!

It may be helpful to recall that we have had many previous conversations with this friend before, some of which have been pretty deep. We also recall we have been praying for guidance, discernment, and courage to have this particular conversation. We have been praying for this particular friend. We have been asking God to prepare their hearts and provide the proper opportunity. We have offered God our mouths if He will bring the words through them. The greatest act of friendship in which we can participate is sharing the deepest, most important truths we know with someone about whom we care. This is not a cold call on a stranger about a stranger.

We want this conversation to be as natural as possible. There is nothing contrived about our relationship with Jesus or this friend. Jesus seeks us out because He genuinely wants to be our friend, and we do the same for others. We enrich each other. Nevertheless, it is helpful to have a broad outline of our proposed conversation to help keep us focused and increase our level of confidence. All important conversations are preceded by thought and planning, certainly my marriage proposal was!

I rehearsed my last job interview in my mind for days.

There are five essential elements of a well focused evangelistic conversation. Not all of these elements may occur in every evangelizing conversation. Some may be postponed for future conversations. Keeping these elements in mind will help with focus and confidence.

1. Bridging is the act of moving from some other conversation or activity to the evangelizing conversation. Most of us should just stop intentionally avoiding the natural opportunities that regularly come our way! We often pass up clear, unintentional opportunities to start evangelistic conversations. If our faith is important to us, chances are our friend already knows it. It is perfectly natural for people to talk about what is important to them. Perhaps your faith is why the other person allowed the friendship to develop. Friendships are two-way relationships.

Often news events, or comments the friend might make about some other person's faith (e.g. a sports figure) may provide an opening or a follow up comment about your own faith. Then you can wait for a response. A wonderful conversation might follow immediately.

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<sup>17</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

Sometimes a friend might ask a question, e.g. “How are you managing with so little time off?” which you can turn into an opportunity to share the sustaining power of Christ, or prayer, or your Church family support, etc.

Ask a friend what they did or what kind of weekend they had, and when they inquire about yours, you can share about the great fellowship (meal, miracle, music, other special program, motorcycle rally, etc.) at Church.

Building bridges is probably more an art than a science. If Christ is in the forefront of your mind and heart, it will be difficult not to talk about what is on your mind! The goal is to get to the point where we can build bridges naturally, sensitively, and unobtrusively.

2. Diagnosis or listening is an essential part of evangelism. It shows we are taking the other person seriously, i.e. we are truly interested. When we listen to the stories of others, we can almost always have an opportunity to share our story (which of course is intertwined with God’s story).

Listening is how we discover what others know about the claims of Christ. An unchurched person or one with Jewish background may take a different starting point than a backslider. We need to diagnose the friend’s openness to conversation about Jesus. Some may be sitting on ready, some may be very hostile and we may need to have many conversations about other things before much spiritual truth can be discussed. Hurts need to be probed lovingly so God’s healing can be brought to bear on them. Even agnostics may let you pray to your God about some problem in their life.

3. Permission to share your faith with another person can open the door to fruitful conversations, and the lack of asking, is one of the reasons evangelism frequently suffers from a bad reputation. If a person is clearly not open to receiving any words of faith from you, proceeding to share them without knowing the state of openness, is unlikely to bear anything but lessened future opportunities. Asking sets a more gracious climate, disarms possible resentment, and lends dignity to the conversation. Forcing a witness on someone before they can object is not helpful.

Usually only a sentence or two is required to ask permission. Where a person has had a bad experience, you might say something like, “I felt just like that too. We only changed our mind after we tried going to St. Francis. I’d love to tell you about what happened if you are interested.” Or perhaps responding to a different issue, “I’m no theologian, but my faith is very important to me. May I share with you what I understand Jesus (the Bible, the Church, my pastor) says about the issue?”

Asking permission is better than asking forgiveness. Jesus doesn’t come by forced entry. He knocks on the doors of our hearts. He is the perfect gentleman. We don’t get second chances to make first impressions.

4. Making Your Case is what you do with the opportunity you get to present your case or make your point about what Jesus has done in your life. It will more likely take six months than six minutes to get the opportunity to make your case for following Christ. Remember that the Christian life is a marathon not a sprint. Conversion usually takes lots of time. Pray, stay alert, and see what happens. This stage may take several sessions over an extended period. We are trying to start a process which, we pray, will influence the person to follow Christ.

At some point it will seem appropriate to invite the person to Church. It may come sooner or later. Lots of time is usually spent in listening and answering questions. This is the element in which the story is shared, i.e. the place Jesus (Church, faith, etc.) holds in our lives (witness).

After you have spent much time in prayer, made the friend through bridging, diagnosed the situation, and asked permission, you should be in position to know what aspect of the Good News might be most profound and appropriate for the friend to hear. You must know God's story to be able to do that. For some it may be God's forgiveness, others His promise of eternal life, or it may justice, or mercy, or the meaning of life, or structure, etc.

5. Closure done properly, will assure that as each conversation episode concludes, the groundwork for future conversations at appropriate times is laid. The goal is to bring closure to the current conversation while keeping the door open to future conversations. An example might be, "Thanks for being so open with me ..... Let's get together for a bagel ... next week and talk some more about ....?"

#### WHAT IF IT WORKS? - INTRODUCING PEOPLE TO JESUS

At some point in the relationship and conversations, the friend is likely to show readiness and openness to turn to Christ. This is what you have been praying and waiting for! Now what are we to do?

Evangelism can be described as the ministry of introductions. When someone understands that Jesus is inviting them to follow Him and the person has come to the point of sincerely wishing to do so, the simple word **yes** is a perfectly adequate response. It does not even have to be spoken aloud. A nod of the head or a raised hand will certainly do! A one word prayer or motion, particularly when someone is overcome with emotion is quite in order.

Some will want to know in advance precisely what they will pray and the nature of the commitment to accept Jesus as Savior and make Him their Lord. The Baptismal vows, BCP 302-5, provide a comprehensive prayer. A simpler, less imposing commitment prayer is: (Hand out)

*“Jesus, I have come to realize that you already know me and love me (God’s initiative and pursuit). Now I want to know and love you too. I want to become one of your followers, and learn to live the new life of God’s Kingdom. Please forgive me for everything in my life that has come between us, and help me to renounce it (exorcism) so that I can follow you faithfully and consistently from today on. Help me grow deeply into you, and love you more and more (commitment and in-filling). **Amen**”*

Some may not feel comfortable with a prayer of total commitment to God forever. That is OK. I believe that once a person gets a taste of Jesus, becomes aware of just how real He is, and senses His real presence in their life and activities, it won’t be long before a deeper commitment is made. Both in my marriage and with God, I was too broken to be able to make more than superficial commitments. Shirleen did not know it, but God did. Both honored me by accepting me as I was. Over time my commitments to both God and my wife grew and deepened marvelously.

It is OK for you to have a prayer written out, or write one out on the spot for the friend to take home and pray later. Ask them to call you when they have prayed it. You will want to rejoice with them.

Don’t make it too complex. We are not trying to help them understand every jot and tittle of the faith. There is plenty of time ahead for learning and growth. Let’s help people get started first! Good Luck!

## Week # 5

Key Points: Anticipating common difficulties, various helpful hints, and introducing a friend to Jesus

<u>Start</u>	<u>Mins.</u>	<u>Activity</u>
7:00	5	Gather, mingle, coffee +
7:05	10	Welcome, tonight's agenda, announcements, prayer Warm up (mixer): How has your participation in this course over the past few weeks affected your understanding of and feelings about evangelism? Share memory verses. No Bible reflection tonight. No memory verses: No next session.
7:15	25	Look at sheet of Issues (See Week 1)
7:40	25	<u>Introducing a Friend to Jesus**</u> (Talk 5)
8:05	5	Break with coffee, etc.
8:10	15	Anticipating some common difficulties and sharing some helpful hints. Handout: Dealing with Difficulties
8:25	5	Schedule for Commissioning per Book of Occasional Services Who is at which service? Dates.
8:30	10	Evaluation
8:40	10	Prayer for each other - Good-byes
8:50	1-5	Prayer/Dismissal.

Always end on or before the two-hour mark. \*\*See supplementary notes.

## Supplementary Notes

### Week #5

**The Sheet Of Issues:** Take time to look over these issues beforehand, noting which ones have been a) dealt with, b) touched upon, c) not mentioned yet. Can you give some suggestions as to how people could continue to work on these issues once the course is finished?

**Introducing A Friend To Jesus:** Pages 127-130 of *Good News People* deals with the issue of introducing someone to Christ and helping them pray and prayer of commitment.

### ABCD

There is something to Admit.

There is something to Believe.

There is something to Consider.

There is something to Decide.

### A Sample Prayer of Commitment

"Jesus, I have come to realize that you already know me and that you love me'. Now I want to get to know you too. I want to become one of your followers, and to learn to live the new life of God's Kingdom. Please forgive me for everything in my life that has come between us, and help me to renounce it so that I can follow you faithfully and consistently from today on. Help me to grow deeply into you, and to love you more and more."

Amen.

## Dealing With Difficulties

(facing the question you hope you are never asked!)

*Almost everyone who begins to think seriously about sharing their faith is a little apprehensive (or downright frightened) about being asked a question they can't answer. The bad news is that this will probably happen. The good news is that it doesn't have to be a conversation stopper. Remember that the chances of your friend asking the one question that has never been thought of by anybody before, and that is going to bring 2,000 of Christian faith crashing to its knees, are very slim. Here then are a few tips for dealing with the difficulties that are almost sure to arise.*

1. Always be gracious and inviting. Never hostile or demeaning. In faith sharing conversations your graciousness and your demonstrated friendship are always more important than your answers. If the conversation becomes antagonistic you have already lost!
2. Acknowledge the validity of the question.
3. Freely admit your limitations in this area. Don't try to pass yourself off as a theologian. Always emphasize the relational aspect of Christianity. Avoid making rationalistic arguments. Remember the witness of the blind man in John 9 who simply repeated what Jesus had done for him. "I can't answer all your questions", he said, "What I do know is that once I was blind but now I can see." Use this man as your model.
4. Remember that the question might not be THE QUESTION. Try to discern whether this question is really a block to your friend being able to make a commitment to Christ, or if it is simply an avoidance mechanism.
5. Remember that this question has been asked, and answered, before! (Tell your friend you will try to find something for them to read on this issue, or that you will talk with a pastor or friend who might be able to offer some insight.)
6. \*\*\* Remember that everyone has some world view and basis for making ethical and moral choices and decisions. Ask them, where did you get that from? How did you arrive at those conclusions?
7. Remember that confidence in faith sharing does not come from knowing all the answers! It comes from knowing the Saviour!
8. Pray! Pray! Pray!

## Talk 5a -- INTRODUCING A FRIEND TO JESUS<sup>18</sup>

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHRISTIAN?

To be a Christian means that someone has responded positively to THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST. OK, what's THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST? Remember that all good news is not THE GOOD NEWS. We do lots of "good things" in our Churches: we visit the sick, help the elderly, clothe the poor, feed the hungry, comfort the lonely, tend the grieving, i.e. we stand with others through difficult times. To people in want, this is good news. These are important activities and we are called to do them as Christians, but THE GOOD NEWS is much more than doing or responding in "good activities." Responding to THE GOOD NEWS is about being a new person in a new life, not about being a comforted person, or comforting others, in the same old life. People who comfort people or people who are comforted, aren't necessarily Christian. People who know about Christ and even teach or learn about Christ aren't necessarily Christian.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST deals with reconciliation and God's reign. Reconciliation deals with God's eagerness to forgive sins and welcome us into a new relationship of friendship and intimacy. Jesus came in the fullness of time to make reconciliation possible and announce the coming of God's reign. The coming of God's reign assures us that in the fullness of time, evil will be abolished, and God's perfect will for all creation will become the eternal reality. We cannot, and in fact we do not want to, embrace God's reign until we are reconciled to God. Trying to live in God's presence without being reconciled to Him would be Hell. (Been there, done that, don't work)

I always thought that just by going to Church I was reconciled, but I knew I wasn't living a Godly life. I did not want to live one, and I did not want to know more of Jesus than the minimum. I knew however that honesty demanded that I ought to. I knew I couldn't change myself. I wasn't even sure I wanted to. So I gave God permission to change me. It took Him a year. He began to change me inside out, and upside down, i.e. he totally changed me in many areas. We still have more work to do.

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<sup>18</sup> Harold Percy, *Good News People*, Anglican Book Centre, Toronto, Canada, 1996, unless otherwise noted.

THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST is about His death and resurrection. We cannot comprehend fully what happened at Calvary or at the tomb two mornings later. However there are two main strands of interpretation which run through the New Testament: reconciliation and God's reign. Our lack of concern for, even opposition to, God's purposes for creation is called sin, and sin is what we do in our unreconciled state. Sin does not allow us to live in God's reign. It takes supernatural power or energy to pry sin out of us, i.e. transform us. Jesus gave Himself to be the perfect fuel, or energy, or power (which we call sacrifice) so our sins could be pried, burned, forced out of us (which we call repentance and forgiveness) so we can start all over again with God, be refined into His likeness. Jesus let His life be pulled out of His body so we could have new life put into our bodies. His resurrection shows that death's power is only temporary. When we let Him liberate us from sin, we can welcome God's presence into our lives and begin to live for God's purposes forever, i.e. in His reign. We are dead to the power of sin and alive to the presence of God forevermore!

THE GOOD NEWS that we are commissioned to share is that God offers to remake us into whole new people in whole new lives! This is THE GOOD NEWS to which we are to respond positively and which we are to take to the uttermost parts of creation. Being a Christian means we have been remade into a new person and are living a whole new life in God's reign.

#### WHAT ARE WE ASKING PEOPLE TO DO?

We have already looked at the nature of responses in the second week of class. We said we are asking people "... to turn, personally and individually, to Christ, in order to be reconciled to God, to enter God's reign, and begin learning how to live (their) personal lives and (their) corporate lives in His Marvelous Light." (BCP 302-5)

We are asking people to give God a chance at running their lives. We are asking them to risk relinquishing control over their lives in favor of letting God be in charge. This can be a very scary request for some people. Some will jump at the chance to let go and let God. Many will not be so ready at first opportunity to be sealed as Christ's own forever.

Personally, I was only ready to commit myself to allowing God to be first in my life for a 30 day trial period. I was willing to give Him my full attention for the first 15 minutes of each day. In

that period, I would pray, listen, and read Scripture. I planned to re-evaluate my situation after a month. It only took me about two or three days to realize this new life was what I had always dreamed of, but never able to articulate or accomplish. I then knew that I was His. He had me for better or worse, forever. He was at last **Number One!**

I think we are really asking people to commit as much of themselves as they can to as much of God as they understand. To do that we find:

There is something to **Admit**, (sin, fall short, need help)

There is something to **Believe**, (Jesus is Son, Raised/dead)

There is something to **Consider**, and, (change me, take charge)

There is something to **Decide**. (repent, forgive, accept)

A prayer of Commitment (from week four, i.e. last week).

EVALUATION FORM

*How to Share Your Faith Without Losing Your Friends*

What part(s) was (were) the most helpful?

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What would you change to make the course more helpful?

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Other comments:

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(signature optional)