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In This Issue

In scholarly circles, C. S. Lewis was best known for his work on medieval literature, but, for Christians, his work in apologetics, children's books, and science fiction trilogy have commanded the most attention. This issue begins with a fascinating piece on Lewis by John Bowen, who after providing a bit of background, takes us to the movies with the question, what ought we to have looked for in the recent cinematic presentation from Lewis' Narnia series. "My fear," he says, "is that on the one hand people went expecting the wrong thing and were disappointed, and that on the other hand they may have missed what Lewis the evangelist is actually trying to do, and thus failed to benefit from what the movie does have to offer."

Other articles in this issue include the plenary address given by John Nyquist to last year's gathering of the Academy. In it, he asks how seminary professors, using the conventions of the academy, can motivate students in evangelism.

In his contribution,, Robert E. Coleman, past president of the Academy for Evangelism, reminds us that while Christian colleges are most often begotten by a vision for the teaching and spread of the gospel, through neglect and attraction to other agendas, the vision is often lost. In a plea for prevention and recovery, he contends that the conviction that "all truth ultimately centers in the incarnate word of God . . . will be no more obvious than in the way we practice evangelism." He follows with a challenge to Christian colleges.

Bill Payne has been experimenting with a well-designed, six-step process to get seminary students comfortable with sharing their faith, as well as help them be more effective. He gives special attention to the art of persuasion and stresses both cognitive and affective dimensions of a person's coming to the Lord.

No contemporary scholar has given more thought to reaching upper-caste Hindus to Christ than H.L. Richard. But what about Hindus in our own neighborhoods? In an eminently practical article, Richard offers advice that is not only helpful in befriending and sharing with Hindus but with neighbors from many backgrounds and cultures.

Finally, the editor of this journal has come up with a list of priorities for those who teach evangelism in the academy.

Editor's Page: Hidden Leaven

As they spun their wheels of fortune, the old carnival barkers used to say, "Round and round she goes, and where she stops nobody knows." I tell my students that there is a sense in which that is true of Christian witness and our service in the name of Christ. As Jesus said of the woman who poured her precious ointment on his head, "I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her" (Mark 14:9).

Illustrations are endless. Hundreds of years after the apostle Paul wrote a letter to a handful of Roman believers, we find the Holy Spirit still using the letter to touch a Martin Luther and a John Wesley, through whom whole movements to Christ are launched..

A woman hands Richard Baxter a leaflet. It leads him to his salvation. Later, he writes *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*. Through it, countless others come to know the Savior, including Philip Doddridge, William Wilberforce, and Leigh Richmond. In turn, they bring thousands more to Christ.

A Christian worker in Nottingham finds a woman rejoicing in her newfound faith. When he asks how her conversion came about, she thrusts a clipping into his hand. It is a sermon by Spurgeon that had been published in an American newspaper. It came to her as wrapping paper for an item mailed from Australia.

Christianity Today once traced a chain of influence that went from Edward Kimball, a Boston Sunday school teacher, through D.L. Moody, F.B. Meyer, J. Wilbur Chapman, Billy Sunday, and Mordecai Ham to the Christian conversions of Grady Wilson and Billy Graham. Kimball's witness, a simple appeal to his student, D. L. Moody came to Christ in the back room of a shoe store.

It's astonishing to think that a single statement—in an ordinary conversation, classroom lecture, or even in print—can have such an impact for the kingdom, but it's true. As I tell my students, effective evangelism has more to do with availability than ability. The impulse to do something large for Christ reflects our age and temperaments, but as our Lord taught us, it is the leaven of faithful, everyday witness and service that makes the biggest contribution to the spread of the kingdom. One day, we'll wake up and find that it is, indeed, the "hidden" leaven that has taken over the flour bin (Matthew 13:33).

—Art McPhee

Are the Chronicles of Narnia an Evangelistic Text?

John P. Bowen

A previously unpublished letter of C.S. Lewis recently appeared on the website "nthposition.com." It was written in 1959 to BBC producer Lance Sieveking, who had apparently proposed that a movie be made of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. Here is part of Lewis' response:

> I am absolutely opposed—adamant isn't in it!—to a TV version. Anthropomorphic animals, when taken out of narrative into actual visibility, always turn into buffoonery or nightmare. At least, with photography. Cartoons (if only Disney did not combine so much vulgarity with his genius!) would be another matter. A human pantomime Aslan would be to me blasphemy.
>
> All the best,
> yours
> C. S. Lewis[1]

So was he turning in his grave at the release of the first of the movies last year? Personally, I thought the movie was wonderful—neither buffoonery nor nightmare—and I would like to think that, with the advances in movie making since 1959 and the co-direction of Lewis' stepson Douglas Gresham, he might have been pleased after all.

Most churches were excited about the movie, and various websites offered various ways to turn it into a great evangelistic opportunity. The website, "narniaoutreach," for example, had pages for youth groups, one for "Becoming a Parish Promoter," and one for starting a study group. Narniaweb invited us to find a Lion party nearby; and Tales of Narnia

John P. Bowen is Associate Professor of Evangelism and Director of the Institute of Evangelism at Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto. He is also Vice-President of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education.

introduced us to four "deeper truths" (which bore a suspicious resemblance to the Four Spiritual Laws) to be found in the Chronicles. This enthusiasm will probably continue for as long as the series is turned into movies.

Was this the right way to think about the movies, however? My fear is that on the one hand people went expecting the wrong thing and were disappointed, and that on the other hand they may have missed what Lewis the evangelist is actually trying to do, and thus failed to benefit from what the movie does have to offer.

Definitions of Evangelism

First, it would probably be useful to offer a definition of evangelism. In one sense I can't improve on J.I. Packer's 1961 definition of evangelism as "just preaching the Gospel." In teaching, however, I expand that definition in two directions: one is to say that "evangelism is those words which help people take steps towards faith in Jesus." In putting it that way, I am deliberately expanding Packer's definition of "preaching" to include all words whose intention is evangelistic, whether it's conversation, a Bible study, a word of testimony, or an evangelistic book—not just formal preaching. I also want to introduce the idea that evangelism is a process. There is some evidence, for example, that Canadians need to hear the gospel nine times before they respond (I'm sure Americans get it much more quickly), and that the process of moving to a response takes on average four years.

Secondly, it is helpful to know something of C.S.Lewis' background. He grew up as an Anglican in Northern Ireland, was alternately bored and terrified by church, and by the age of thirteen declared himself an atheist, which he remained for fifteen years. During those years, however, he had what he later came to recognize as spiritual experiences, flashes of what he called "joy" which spoke to him of something beyond present material experience. These experiences came to him through the beauty of nature and through ancient mythology, particularly Norse mythology.

For years, he made no connection between his experiences of joy and Christianity, until he made friends with J.R.R.Tolkien, who argued that mythology contained glimpses of God's truth, and that all mythology

pointed to Jesus Christ and was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. As Lewis wrote later:

> The heart of Christianity is a myth which is also a fact. The old myth of the Dying God, without ceasing to be myth, comes down from the heaven of legend and imagination to the earth of history. It happens—at a particular date, in a particular place, followed by definable historical consequences.[2]

Once he had acknowledged that Jesus Christ was the Son of God, he started going to church again, and began to explore and write about his newfound faith. From that time on, he published on average one book per year until his death in 1963, from the academic (such as *The Allegory of Love*) to popular theology (*The Screwtape Letters*) to the fictional (*Narnia* and the science fiction trilogy), every one demonstrating a deep integration of his faith with his learning and his life.

So what did Lewis think about evangelism? He was ambivalent in his attitude to conventional evangelism. In an interview with *Decision* magazine in 1963 (six months before his death), he said, "There are many different ways of bringing people into his kingdom, even some ways that I specially dislike."[3] Among other things, he clearly disliked evangelical jargon. When Sherwood Eliot Wirt asked him: "Would you say that the aim of Christian writing, including your own writing, is to bring about an encounter of the reader with Jesus Christ?" Lewis replied: "That is not my language, yet it is the purpose I have in mind."[4]

At Oxford, he was reluctant to identify with the OICCU, at that time the only evangelical student organization at Oxford, and instead started his own student society, The Socratic Club, where Christian faith could be debated.[5] He did once address the OICCU on the topic "What is Christianity?" Lady Elizabeth Catherwood (daughter of Martyn Lloyd-Jones) called it "a really splendid, perfect talk." Yet when a student, probably feeling that Lewis had failed to close the deal, asked "If everything you're saying is true, what should we do about it?" Lewis replied, "God forbid that I should intervene in such a personal matter. Go and talk to your priest about that."[6] That's hardly a standard evangelistic response.

Lewis' High View of Evangelism

Yet Lewis had a high view of evangelism itself. He wrote: "The glory of God, and, as our only means to glorying him, the salvation of human souls, is the real business of life."[7] And for him, this was not merely a theory. He wrote in a letter in 1949:

> I have two lists of names in my prayers, those for whose conversion I pray, and those for whose conversion I give thanks. The little trickle of transferences from List A to List B is a great comfort.[8]

He developed an understanding that different people with different gifts contribute different things to the process of evangelism. His contribution, he came to feel, was very specific. In a paper on apologetics, he said:

> I turn now to the question of the actual attack. This may be either emotional or intellectual. If I speak only of the intellectual kind, that is not because I undervalue the other but because, *not having been given the gifts necessary for carrying it out*, I cannot give advice about it.[9]

He came to believe therefore that evangelism was best done by a team:

> I am not sure that the ideal missionary team ought not to consist of one who argues and one who (in the fullest sense of the word) preaches. Put up your arguer first to undermine their intellectual prejudices; then let the evangelist proper launch his appeal. I have seen this done with great success.[10]

He had seen it done because in at least two instances he was the "arguer." When Lewis started doing lectures to the RAF during the Second World War, he worked with an English bishop, A.W.Goodwin-Hudson, to whom he said:

> I wish I could do the heart-stuff . . . I can't. . . I wish I could. . . . I wish I could press home to these boys how much they need Christ. . . . You do the heart stuff and I'll do the head stuff.[11]

They agreed that Lewis would first of all do a 20-minute lecture presenting the rational case for Christianity, and Goodwin-Hudson would then follow up with the evangelistic appeal. Lewis adopted the same approach by teaming up with Stephen Olford for a crusade at Westminster Chapel in London.

As far as I know, Lewis never wrote about evangelism as a process. But clearly he sees himself as playing a part in the work of evangelism, though not the only part or necessarily the most important part. The way he understood his role was as preparation for the gospel rather than the gospel itself, "*preparatio evangelica* rather than *evangelium*"[12]

If this is how Lewis sees his own role as an evangelist—as an intellectual John the Baptist—there are nevertheless two distinct ways in his writing in which he fulfils this role. I am thinking of *Mere Christianity* and the Narnia stories.

Mere Christianity began life as a series of radio broadcasts on the BBC in 1941; these were followed by two other similar series. They were finally published in 1952 in the form in which we know them. At the beginning of the series, he wrote to Dr. James Welch, the producer of the series, to explain what he was trying to do:

> It seems to me that the New Testament, by preaching repentance and forgiveness, always assumes an audience who already believe in the law of Nature and know they have disobeyed it. In modern England we cannot at present assume this, and therefore most apologetic begins a stage too far on. The first step is to create, or recover, the sense of guilt. Hence if I give a series of talks I should mention Christianity only at the end, and would prefer not to unmask my battery till then.[13]

His intention, then, was to start where people are at—with humankind's innate sense of right and wrong—and to work back from there to the necessity of a lawgiver, and thence to a sense of sin (our failed responsibility to the lawgiver), and to a savior from sin. It was a rational, logical, step by step approach, illustrated profusely with brilliant analogies and metaphors.

Although he said it was preparation for the gospel—what Francis Schaeffer would have called pre-evangelism—in fact, it has been the means

of countless people coming to faith—most famously, in our generation, Charles Colson.[14] Which is indicative, I think, of the fact that God is no respecter of our neat categories like evangelism and pre-evangelism. Some of what is intended as pre-evangelism actually brings people to faith; some that is intended to be directly evangelistic is for some people only early preparation for their conversion much later.

The Purpose of the Narnia Books

The *Narnia* series began in 1950 with the publication of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe . This was two years before *Mere Christianity*, but six years after the last of the radio broadcasts. Whether or not Lewis was aware of it at first, the Narnia stories demonstrate a quite different approach to evangelism. They do not begin with an attempt to establish a sense of sinfulness. They do not argue in a linear fashion for the truth of Christianity. In fact they do not argue at all. After all, they are children's fantasies.

Perhaps then we are wrong to think of them as evangelistic. But Lewis' own words confirm his evangelistic intention:

> I thought I saw how stories of this kind could steal past a certain inhibition which had paralyzed much of my own religion in childhood. . . . [S]upposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? I thought one could.[15]

Lewis is concerned for people like himself who thought they knew Christianity, but had never really known or experienced its true nature. In his life, his experience of church on the one hand and his experience of the things that touched him most deeply on the other were totally different. It took many years before he came to realize (through Tolkien) that the thrill he found in mythology was not an end in itself but merely (to use his own image) a signpost pointing him for its fulfillment toward faith in Christ.[16] The mythology of *Narnia*, he felt, might provide a similar kind of signpost to point people to Christ.

Lewis is the master of metaphor, and it is not surprising that he gives another image for what he was doing in *Narnia* to his friend and biographer, George Sayer:

> His idea, as he once explained to me, was to make it easier for children to accept Christianity when they met it later in life. He hoped they would be vaguely reminded of the somewhat similar stories that they had read and enjoyed years before. "I am aiming at a sort of pre-baptism of the child's imagination."[17]

The gospel may not yet have reached their minds or their wills, but if their imagination has been captured by Narnian images of redemption, then when they hear the gospel, it will resonate more readily because of that preparatory work done by *Narnia*.

Thus Lewis is still John the Baptist, preparing the ground for the hearing of the gospel, perhaps years later. Only now, unlike the Lewis of *Mere Christianity*, he is primarily trying to win the imagination, not the mind.

Not that evangelism was Lewis' initial motive for writing the Narnia stories. Indeed, he had no idea of even writing a series at first. He says that the images came first (the faun, the queen, the lion), then the fairy tale form, and only afterwards the theological realization of how the books might be helpful in evangelism.[18]

So what is there in the Chronicles that can be understood as evangelistic or pre-evangelistic? Barth says somewhere: "The best apologetics is a good dogmatics." If so, there is a wealth of good apologetics in the Chronicles, because behind Lewis the storyteller is Lewis the teacher, fleshing out almost every Christian doctrine. There are theologies of creation, the imago dei, the cultural mandate, and the fall; there is a Redeemer who dies because of sin and is raised again; there is a doctrine of the Spirit (the breath of Aslan); there are experiences of conversion, and lessons in repentance, faith, obedience and sanctification; there is an eschaton, an Armageddon, a heaven and a hell.

All that is lacking is an altar call—but Lewis has already told us he cannot do "the heart stuff." Yet it seems to me that, in spite of his words, Lewis is not simply baptizing readers' imaginations, preparing them for a

future response. He hopes that people will respond to Jesus, both immediately and in the future.

Why do I say this? There are several occasions in the Chronicles when Lewis comes close to giving away the identity of Aslan. One, for example, is in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, where Lucy visits the house of the magician Koriakin, reads through the book of spells, and comes across a story which takes up three pages and tells "about a cup and a sword and a tree and a green hill." She says, "That is the loveliest story I've read or ever shall read in my whole life." Yet as soon as the story is done, she can't remember it, and she can't turn the pages back. She asks Aslan, "Will you tell it to me, Aslan?" And he says, "Indeed, yes. I will tell it to you for years and years."

So we imagine Lucy back in our world, knowing only that she had once read the most wonderful story, wondering how Aslan will keep his promise, and then discovering in the most unlikely place in our world people who treasure a story about a cup and a sword and a tree and a green hill. And as she learns more about the story, she realizes that Aslan is keeping his promise.

Maybe the clearest clue, however, is at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. There the children meet Aslan in the form of a lamb, who has prepared breakfast for them on an open fire in a beach. The children are about to return to our world, and Lucy is upset because they will be leaving Aslan behind. Aslan, however, reassures her: "But you shall meet me, dear one":

> "Are—are you there too, sir?" said Edmund.
> "I am," said Aslan. "But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. That was the very reason you were brought into Narnia, that by knowing me for a little, you may know me better there."[19]

Lewis' intention is that readers, having gotten to know Aslan in Narnia, should try to discover Aslan's "other name" in our world, and indeed that what they have learned about Aslan will help them in getting to know him in our world. Thus he does not seem surprised when a girl called Hila wrote to him about this question. He comes close to giving the answer, but not quite:

> As to Aslan's other name, well I want you to guess. Has there never been anyone in this world who (1) Arrived at the same time as Father Christmas. (2) Said he was the son of the great Emperor. (3) Gave himself up for someone else's fault to be jeered at and killed by wicked people. (4) Came to life again. (5) Is sometimes spoke of as a Lamb . . . Don't you really know his name in this world. Think it over and let me know your answer![20]

Like the good teacher he is, Lewis does not spell things out for his students, but points them in the right direction, and lets them discover the truth for themselves. Most evangelists are reluctant to do this! Lewis however is content to sow seeds, nurturing curiosity that he trusts will lead people to consider or reconsider the stories of Jesus without the interference of the watchful dragons. Is this evangelistic? In the sense of calling for an immediate decision to follow Jesus, no. But if evangelism involves all kinds of words whose intention is help people take steps towards faith in Jesus, then the stories of Narnia certainly count.

Does it work?

Some will want to ask, Does it work?—although people like Packer would say that is the wrong question to ask. However, for what it is worth, in the past six months, I have been in email communication with a woman in her 30's, in England, whom I have never met. She discovered my website, and emailed me with some questions. A couple of months ago, I suggested she needed to read the Narnia stories, and sent her the manuscript of a book I have been working on about the spirituality of *Narnia*. With her permission, I'm going to share some of the questions that reading *Narnia* (and my manuscript) has raised for her:

> What have I been created (designed) for? Who am I meant to be? I found the whole creation scene [in *The Magician's Nephew*] very moving. It has made me realize that rather than simply (!) being created, I've been called to life for a purpose.

> I've been questioning my work anyway regarding its moral validity [she works in the gambling industry]; reading about how the dwarfs loved making the crowns (as you put it, "it is what they were made to do and thus what they do well") has made me question it in another way - "Where does my passion lie?" "What is it that I have been made to do well?"
>
> How do logic and faith contribute to what I think is the truth? In the "We hear and obey" chapter, the "seeing is believing" / "believing is seeing" section has raised questions about my reliance on my own reason to understand/believe some things, but also helped me understand why and how I know the truth I know about other things.
>
> What are the things that stop me following Aslan even though I believe in him (like Susan in *Prince Caspian*)? This is one I *really* need to work on.
>
> The way Aslan accepts people and their failings has made me understand much better how God accepts us (and question how I accept myself and others).
>
> In your book, one phrase that really hits home is in the description of Uncle Andrew's reaction to the creation. "And Aslan will not force him to give in." It actually makes me feel the "wonder and a certain shrinking" sort of fear when I think about this.

I cannot imagine that (humanly speaking) any amount of preaching would have caused her to ask such questions. But *Narnia* has reached very deep into her soul, and is drawing her closer to Aslan almost by the day. The watchful dragons have been driven back.

Conclusion

Lewis leaves me with many questions about our evangelistic practices. Many people in our world are guarded by the watchful dragons—they can smell religiosity a mile off and they do not want it--how do we get around

the dragons? We know how to appeal to people's minds and wills in our evangelism, but how do we appeal to people's imaginations? Are we willing to trust the Holy Spirit enough to ask questions and let people figure out the answers themselves--without our spelling everything out? Do we feel the only way to explain the gospel is by beginning with sin? Or are we prepared to think there might be other starting points, such as people's longing for joy, which will lead them to the same conclusion? Are we prepared to make use of a wide range of gifts within the Body of Christ to nurture people's progress towards Christ, however slow it may seem?

And, most relevantly, are we prepared for the movie of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* simply to baptize people's imaginations, rather than producing actual conversions? I would argue that if the movie succeeds in disarming the watchful dragons, that is an essential contribution to the process we call evangelism. And unless such sowing and watering takes place, there will never be any reaping.

Notes

1. Lewis' collected letters have been published only up to1949; this one will presumably appear in Volume 3.
2. "Myth Became Fact" in *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1970), p. 166.
3. "Cross examination," in *God in the Dock*, p. 262.
4. Ibid.
5. Described in "The Founding of the Oxford Socratic Club," in God in the Dock, pp. 126-128.
6. Philip G. Ryken, "The Influence of C.S. Lewis" in *C.S. Lewis: Lightbearer in the Shadowlands*, Angus J.L Menuge, ed. (Wheaton: Cornerstone Books, 1997), p. 59. Ryken incorporates into his essay much unique testimony from those who knew Lewis personally. The original audio and video tapes are in the Marion Wade Center at Wheaton College.
7. "Christianity and Culture" in *Christian Reflections* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), p. 14.

8. Letter to Dom Bede Griffiths, June 27, 1949 Walter Hooper ed. *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis*, Volume 2 (New York: HarperCollins 2004), p. 948.
9. "Christian Apologetics" (1945) in *God in the Dock*, p. 99. Italics mine.
10. "Christian Apologetics," p. 99.
11. Ryken, p. 60.
12. W.H. Lewis ed. *Letters of C.S. Lewis* (New York: Harcourt Brace 1966), p. 359.
13. Cited in Green and Hooper, *C.S. Lewis: A Biography*, (New York: Harcourt Brace 1974), p. 202.
14. Charles Colson, *Born Again*, pp. 113, 121.
15. C.S. Lewis "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be Said," in *Of This and Other Worlds* (London: Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1984), p. 73.
16. C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of my Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles 1955; Collins Fontana 1960), p. 190.
17. George Sayer, *Jack: A Life of C.S. Lewis,* p. 318 (Wheaton IL: Crossway Books 1988)
18. "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to be Said," p. 73.
19. *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955; London: HarperCollins 1980), p. 209.
20. *C.S. Lewis, Letters to Children*, ed. Lyle Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead (Toronto: Simon and Schuster 1985), June 3, 1953.

Evangelism in the Public Square

John Nyquist

The following article is the keynote address given at the October 2005 gathering of the Academy for Evangelism in Theological Education in Washington, D.C.

When I was invited to address the Academy this fall, I was intrigued by the theme for the conference, "Evangelism in the Public Square." The big question is what ought we to be doing publicly in evangelism? Hal Poe added: "revivals have disappeared and crusades don't look the same, but the gospel is the power of God unto salvation."

The easiest way to begin might be to parse the invitation and inquire about the "we," the "ought," the "doing," the "publicly" and that ever increasingly controversial term "evangelism." Further, it might be profitable to look into the history of revivals and revival movements, crusades, and other outreach events that have marked the history of the growth of the Christian church from the first century until the present. Others, however, have undertaken such tasks, and it would be redundant to attempt to "reinvent the wheel"; we can use our time this evening more effectively.

Here's where we're headed in our time together tonight. I think it would be presumptuous of me to attempt to suggest what "we ought to be doing publicly in evangelism" in the way most of us would understand the term. In fact, I might qualify as one of the least among us to address this subject. After all, I'm not ordained, I've not been a pastor or an itinerant evangelist; I'm a seminary professor whose calling is defined institutionally by an accredited graduate school curriculum, statements of mission and purpose, as well as a list of values of our divinity school. In none of these areas have I had much, if any, input. What I understand to be my responsibility at Trinity is to teach courses in evangelism, discipleship, mission, Catholic theology, New Testament studies, and such other courses as are appropriate to the perceived needs of our school and, of course, our students.

I do want to address what I think is pertinent to each of us who teach, mentor, coach and counsel graduate students in the very special discipline of what it means to engage unbelievers, unchurched, under-churched, over-

John Nyquist is Professor of Mission and Evangelism at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois.

churched, seekers, inquirers, the curious and the hostile—with the precious and powerful gospel of Christ. Perhaps, we might think creatively about some implied outcomes resulting from these thoughts. How can we change the apathetic, indifferent, uninvolved—yet strategic—seminarians and church attenders to whom we've been called and commissioned? That is, what can we do—as seminary professors—regarding our teaching, research, writing, speaking, and consulting in the academy in which we are card-carrying members?

I've chosen to organize my thoughts along the following lines, hoping this will be the most helpful way to proceed:

1. The high and holy privilege of teaching and training future pastors, missionaries, evangelists and scholars; leaders, any way you look at it
2. The need to reconsider our calling to work with students and their families
3. The need to re-examine the Scriptures in light of both the privilege and the call
4. The need to revisit the gifts, abilities, and skills required to challenge and inflame the hearts and minds of our students
5. The need to step outside our "comfort zones" in serving as examples for our students
6. The need to learn from others about ministries and strategies which God seems to be using for his glory and the good of the global church
7. And finally, a New Testament example of powerful and persuasive speaking, along with a brief analysis of Paul's address in Athens

1. The High and Holy Privilege of Teaching and Training Future Pastors, Missionaries, Evangelists, and Scholars

When God calls and blesses his servants, he promises to honor his word in their respective ministries. Think for a moment of the speaking prophets of the Old Testament: Moses, Elijah and Elisha, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Their legacy is with us today, the legacy of bold (sometimes outrageous), fearless and courageous proclamation of God's message. And Moses mentored Joshua, Elijah passed the baton to Elisha, and the other prophets

set a high standard for being willing to obey their Master, knowing that the cost would be high and their popularity wouldn't register on anybody's "Richter scale." They were under no illusions about the need and the urgency of the proclamation. Underneath their public bravado lay a sometimes hesitant willingness to "get out and get to work" according to the word of the Lord.

John the Baptist, Saul of Tarsus, Peter and the other apostles picked up where the prophets left off. But let us not forget that it was Jesus himself who made it unambiguously clear that their ministry wouldn't simply be to speak a word for the Lord now and then. They were under orders to obey the Lord's Great Commission, the most familiar rendition being that in Matthew's gospel, chapter 28. And central to Matthew's narrative, we hear the clarion call to "make disciples." Pouring their lives into faithful men and women in the first century accounts for our presence here tonight.

We are privileged to receive outstanding students from around the world into our seminaries and into our courses. And we have been charged to do more than simply pass on some well-honed theology and doctrines. We are commanded to emulate the great apostle when he confessed to the Thessalonians that he "loved them so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our very lives as well, because you had become so dear to us" (l Thessalonians 2:8).

What can we do to work as catalysts in the worldwide movement of God's Spirit? We can thank our gracious God every day for the high and holy privilege of being enabled to teach, train and pour our very lives into the wonderful students God sends our way.

2. The Need to Reconsider Our Calling to Work with Students and Their Families

It is frequently the case that when students are questioned regarding their future ministries, they tend to frame their response in terms of an occupation, or a "job"; when they leave home they're going to "work." And, indeed, we are occupied with tasks that require us to work; Paul referred to his ministry in terms of "day and night with tears." But where do students learn to consider their ministry as a job? I believe we have—as Christian leaders -lost our way in terms of God's special calling to serve

him in "his field." Again the Old Testament prophets trembled in the presence of Almighty God when he would interrupt their routine as priests or farmers. He made it clear in no uncertain terms that although the ministry to which he was calling them was not going to be a picnic, he would certainly be with them and provide them with the words to speak and the rest of their daily needs. I am reminded often of the conversation in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia: Speaking of Aslan the powerful lion, as we listen in, we hear, "Is he safe? No, but he's good." God's call is never without the challenges of obedience and faith. But in his abundant grace, he rewards us with the sheer joy of serving "in his cabinet," ambassadors of reconciliation, elders-teachers about whom it was said, "If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task" (l Timothy 3:1). We are not called merely to "do a job." We have a divine call to spend our lives for those whom God places in our charge, and to "leave it all on the field" as they say in the world of sports these days. Those who are going to make an impact for God may be sitting in our classrooms, taking notes as we lecture and studying to pass our exams. But mark it well: they are watching to see if our lives are like Basil's whose "words were like thunder because his life was like lightening."

3. The Need to Re-examine the Scriptures in Light of the Privilege and the Call

The need for those of us in the academy to take the Bible seriously has never been more crucial. In a day when truth is reduced to our opinion and God's place in our culture is being eclipsed, we need to hear an authoritative word from God. Charles Colson has said, "I have some good news and bad news for you. The good news is that there are 50 million evangelical Christians in our country; the bad news is that it doesn't make any difference." I can only assume that the very existence of this Academy of Evangelism is good enough reason to think that what God says is important; and not relatively so. The latter chapters of Genesis record that Joseph's success and significance was entirely the result of God's presence in his life. In overcoming temptation, the repeated phrase is, ". . . and the Lord was with him." We read that "the Lord was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land" (Joshua 6:27). But after the conquest of Jericho

and the tragic revelation of Achan's sin, we read God's words, "Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep . . . That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. I will not be with you anymore . . ." (Joshua 7:10-12). We compromise God's word to our peril; when we ignore it, we empty the gospel of its power.

Theologically, we stand on the shoulders of prophets and evangelists whose faithfulness to God's calling leaves us with mighty big shoes to fill. In the presence of the omnipotent God, Isaiah could only attempt a strategic retreat from God's awesome presence. When he confessed his unclean lips, he admitted that his eyes had "seen the King, the Lord Almighty" (Isaiah 6:5). Likewise, God responded to Jeremiah's reticence: "Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you, and will rescue you" (Jeremiah 1:7,8). The great apostle's understanding of God's claim on his life was overwhelming: "When I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (l Corinthians 9:16).

But such hesitancy must be taken very seriously in light of two important factors: the weight and burden of the message they would bear, and the certain danger accompanying those who bear that message. The legacy of such "truth-tellers" throughout the history of the church is abundantly clear.

And we must remind ourselves that Jesus himself bore the burden of gospel ministry in a uniquely distinct way. "For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). And further, ". . . For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). These two ideas, articulated with bell-like clarity from our Lord, highlight the necessary core of the gospel we proclaim and the urgency with which we pass it on to our students. In the context of religious pluralism, the uniqueness of Jesus represents a particular stumbling-block to a "comfort zone" approach to gospel ministry. And not only that, Paul understood that his compulsion to "persuade men" originated from two sources: the fear of God and the love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:11,14). In a classroom lecture, one of my colleagues—a much quoted professor of church history—asked this question: "How many of you have heard a sermon on judgment or hell within the last five years?" None of the students raised their hands. He rephrased the question, thinking,

perhaps, he had not made himself clear. Only a scattering of students then raised their hands. The professor exclaimed: "I wonder if we're guilty of hiding closet universalists in our evangelical seminaries and churches?." And then this bombshell: "Maybe that's one of the reasons why we have such a difficult time getting Christians to share their faith." If the gospel is anything, it is an urgent call to those of us whose writing, research and instruction is vitally associated with this wonderful truth, it compels us to speak forthrightly in the classroom, within the academic halls of power, and in the public square, the life-changing truth of God's incarnation in the 'person of Jesus Christ. For Paul, that was sufficient motivation to carry out and carry on his own ministry. Do we carry this same burden?

4. The Need to Revisit the Gifts, Abilities and Skills Required to Challenge and Inflame the Hearts and Minds of Our Students

When I look back in the history of the church, I discover some amazing similarities among those chosen by God to bear his message. They were people who had "fire in their belly," they were bold, if humble, messengers of the King of Kings. They were students of the Scriptures, they loved God and people, and they were courageous in the face of disagreement, conflict and outright hostility. The Lord spoke to Jeremiah in no uncertain terms, "Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain? declares the Lord. Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces" (Jeremiah 23:28,29)? George Whitefield, John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, Charles Simeon, D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, Billy Graham, Luis Palau and hundreds of others. Among this imposing list of evangelists, Charles Simeon stands out because of his remarkable ministry in Cambridge as a pastor, evangelist and disciple maker. He was vicar of Holy Trinity Church, esteemed don at King's College, delivered the university sermon three times, and, as an unmarried man, trained men for the gospel ministry by taking the Great Commission very seriously indeed. Through his ministry, more than 300 men were sent out in various assignments as preachers, scholars, missionaries and evangelists. But their spiritual and theological formation took place—not only in the lecture

hall—but in company with Charles Simeon, who poured his life into his students, "for Christ's sake."

5. The Need to Step Outside Our "Comfort Zones" in Serving as Examples for Our Students

No one needs to tell this group of educators that the marginalizing influence of academic respectability continues to lurk at our doors. Ezekiel and Micah spoke strong words against the false prophets and compromising priests—Israel's religious and spiritual leaders—words and actions which failed to endear them to their listeners. The very ones who might have been counted on to supply encouragement and prayers were themselves the irritants and obstructions to the spiritual growth among God's people. And today, accrediting agencies and denominational structures exert powerful influence over the role and significance of our discipline within the institutional structure. I am familiar with the recent re-designing of our MDiv curriculum. And although I was not a member of the blue-ribbon committee charged with the revision, informal discussions with colleagues alerted me to the possibility of a "restructuring" effort of the core requirement of evangelism for all MDiv students. And recently, when one of my discipleship courses was "under-subscribed," the Associate Dean threatened pulling the plug on the course three weeks into the semester. The course (by the way) was a Simeon-like seminar for gifted students, teaching and encouraging them to bring their respective churches into the mainstream of biblical history and theology by leading the way in making disciples after the pattern of Jesus. And without institutional encouragement (other than my department chair), I re-doubled my efforts at recruiting students for the course, and at present we are "out of danger" as far as the administrative "hammer" is concerned.

How deeply rooted are our own convictions about the authority and truthfulness of the gospel of the kingdom? The apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome: "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. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written, 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Romans 1:16,17). That same apostle wrote to his young ministry colleague, Timothy: "So do not be ashamed to testify

about our Lord . . . Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day" (2 Timothy 1:8, 12). The bold and fearless example of the apostle from Tarsus finds him in full stride when pressed by political correctness in the presence of Agrippa. Festus interrupted Paul's defense: "You are out of your mind, Paul! Your great learning is driving you insane" (Acts 26:24). Paul's response is classic: "I am not insane . . . What I am saying is true and reasonable . . . I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do" (Acts 26:25-27).

But throughout, Paul's motives are pure, his message clear, and his goal is unmistakable: ". . . I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains" (Acts 26:29). Oh, that we could come close to the wonderful model of gospel proclamation: bold and timely; urgent and sensitive.

6. The Need to Learn from Others about Ministries and Strategies Which God Seems to Be Using for His Glory and the Good of the Global Church

In the post-World War II period, parachurch organizations emerged to come alongside the church to enrich, encourage and assist what God had raised up in local churches. Some of these organizations began among military personnel, some among High School students, and some among university and college students. There have been understandable misunderstandings and from time to time the leaders of these organizations would meet together—sometimes with pastors and denominational leaders - to address the "uneasy truce" that had been struck. Wise parachurch leaders would make good efforts in good faith to recognize the authority of the church in local situations. Likewise, wise pastors would initiate conversations with parachurch leaders and invite them to contribute what they were learning in their respective spheres of influence. And there are remarkable examples of so-called "university/college churches" who consider their main function to serve the academic community. But most churches find so much on their plates that these overtures seem almost overwhelming and maybe not all that strategic. A recent publication shared

their part in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Shipping tons of food, sending thousands of college students to disaster zones and evacuation centers, providing over 2,000 Rapid Deployment Kits for National Guard troops, and donating tractor-trailer loads of relief supplies, including blankets and food. Perhaps one of the most remarkable features of such an operation is that it was done in cooperation and coordination with local churches. Networking is more than a clever, media-friendly catch-phrase; it takes a vision, some planning, resources and the will to put all of it together for the glory of God and the enrichment of all who participate. Many churches have embraced strategies involving the showing of the "Jesus" film or reaching unchurched neighbors and friends through the Alpha Course.

Churches and parachurch organizations are learning to think "outside the box" as they attempt to "do great things for God" in company with their respective communities. The fulfillment of the Great Commission was intended for the entire Body of Christ, not the exclusive domain of particular churches or parachurch groups. We are stronger working together than scrapping over somebody's turf. Church leaders around the world are reaping a harvest of fresh new believers as churches are planted, being stimulated by "Jesus" film teams from various countries around the globe. And one additional thought: many of our seminaries are enriched and enlarged by the steady influx of new students who have been led to Christ on university campuses, taught to love the Bible, and taught how to share the gospel with unbelievers. I can spot them right away as they resonate with my lectures, small group workshops, and the off-campus assignments. Let us be willing to learn from these dynamic groups and encourage them in the process.

7. Finally, We Want to Look at an Example of Powerful and Persuasive Speaking from the Early the Church

I'm speaking of Paul's address to the Greek polytheists in Athens (Acts 17:16-32). Most New Testament scholars understand this event as historical, but some go so far as to say that Paul was somewhat mistaken in his approach judging by the meager results. Using D.A. Carson's helpful

insights, I would like to join him in suggesting some useful thoughts for "evangelism in the public square."

1. Paul's approach was unlike any other of his public addresses because his listeners had never read the Old Testament and had never heard of Moses.
2. Paul wasn't particularly impressed with all that he had observed in that great city. We read, in fact, that he "was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols."
3. Paul begins with courtesy and sensitivity without approving of their religion as an alternative way of salvation.
4. Paul's bridge into their culture was his reference to the inscription "To an Unknown God." And even though it will alienate him from his listeners, he distances himself from philosophical ideas of both the Stoics and the Epicureans.
5. Paul presents a God who is actively involved in this world as its creator, providential ruler, judge, and self-disclosing savior.
6. Paul introduces God as separate from the universe.
7. Very important: The God of the Bible is so independent of human machinations that he does not need us; we cannot give him anything he lacks. He is Lord of the universe.
8. All of the human race has descended from one man, himself created by God-Jesus.
9. God's purpose in his ordering of history is to incite human beings to pursue him; otherwise they would not.
10. History is not going around in endless circles; it is teleological; it is pressing on in one direction, to the day of final judgment.
11. Paul presents Jesus as the God-appointed One who will judge on the last day—the One he raised from the dead.

Evangelists have always been "people of the Book," believing in the sheer power of the gospel of Christ, his atoning death and victorious resurrection. And Paul has a final request: "And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I would proclaim it clearly, as I should."

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Evangelism and the Christian College

Robert E. Coleman

Evangelism and liberal arts education belong together, and when properly directed, both fulfill their objectives: evangelism to make disciples of Christ, and education to teach disciples of Christ how to become ministers in their life work. One discipline, thus, assures the practice of the other, with the result that ultimately the gospel reaches the ends of the earth and disciples are made of all nations.

Going Back to Our Beginnings

To a remarkable degree, our first colleges in America began with this focus. Words etched above the gates to Harvard University speak of this origin.

> After God had carried us safe to New England and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity, dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.[1]

The purpose set forth in the founding of Harvard resounded variously in every other colonial ivy league institution, with one exception. Even that exception, the University of Pennsylvania, came into existence largely through the influence of the period's greatest evangelist, George Whitefield.

More than merely offering a liberal arts education with a Christian world view, these early colleges sought to make their scholars living witnesses of the Savior. The rules governing student life at Harvard in 1642 stated:

> Everyone shall consider the main end of his life and studies, to know God and Jesus Christ, which is eternal life.[2]

Out of this personal experience of salvation came the passion to proclaim the gospel to the lost.

One significant expression of this evangelism was a ministry to the Indians. Nathaniel Mather, in a letter to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay dated 1697, spoke of Harvard as a "Happy Nursery of many learned . . . persons . . . From them hath the blessed gospel been preached to the Poor Barbarious, Savage Heathens there."[3] Moreover, he said that their labors had produced 24 assemblies of believers. With deep respect for their ministry, he concluded:

> "I know your Excellency will . . . Countenance their University, and also the Propagating of the Gospel among the Natives; for the Interest of Christ in that Part of the Earth is much concerned in them."[4]

Take the founding of William and Mary College as another example. The Royal Charter granted in 1693 stated "various reasons" for the establishment of the school, one of which was "that the Christian faith may be propagated amongst the western Indians."[5] Implementing this design, the curriculum, in addition to "the simple rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic," included "the catechism and principles of Christian religion."[6]

Losing Direction

To be sure, not everyone was happy with the evangelistic vision. Concerning this Virginia "project for souls," as it was described, the British Attorney-General Seymour exclaimed to Commissary James Blair: "Souls? Damn your souls. Make tobacco."[7]

The crude comment of the materialistic-minded bureaucrat of that day, I'm afraid, still reflects the attitude of leaders who see education in humanistic and secular terms. And, let us admit, that all too quickly this sentiment captures the thinking and practice of liberal arts colleges.

Not surprisingly, then, in time our first Christian colleges drifted along the path of least resistance, a course usually associated with the acceptance of liberal theological presuppositions. As they turned away from their original purpose, other colleges were raised up to perpetuate the Christian mission in education. Yale represented a protest movement to the demise of Harvard's evangelical commitment, and when later Yale took the same turn, Princeton came into existence.

So the story goes. Christian colleges usually are born out of great vision and concern for the gospel, including the great commission mandate, but with the passing of years the old pattern of neglect, and eventually rejection, repeats itself.

Recurring Times of Renewal

Thankfully, there have been times of revival in many of these colleges—seasons of refreshing when the priorities of the kingdom have again come alive in the educational process.

The close of the nineteenth century was such a time. As the wave of rationalism swept across the ocean from France, and the country struggled to find moral and social stability after the long-fought revolution, colleges were hard-pressed to maintain their Christian commitment. Of Yale, for instance, Lyman Beecher said the College Church became "almost extinct." Most of the students were infidels, commonly calling each other Voltaire and Rousseau.[8]

When Timothy Dwight came to the Presidency of the College in 1795, he challenged the current skepticism found on campus, preaching a series of sermons in the chapel on such themes as "Is the Bible the Word of God?" and "The Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy."

The tide began to turn, coming to full flood in 1802, when one third of the student body professed conversion to Christ, and 30 of them went on to become ordained ministers of the gospel.

All across the nation, in college after college, the spirit of revival moved, inaugurating half a century of periodic awakenings. These revivals perpetuated themselves in a long period of vigorous activity of profound social and religious significance.

Most of our Christian colleges today have evolved out of this revival heritage. In their origins, and in recurring times of renewal, these institutions have powerfully impacted students and their society with the claims of Christ.

Confusion of Purpose Today

Without constant vigilance, however, as has happened so often before, our colleges can lose their distinctive Christian purpose. In so doing, rather than shaping society by our witness, we become conformed to it.

No wonder there is so much ambiguity today in higher education. Dr. Ernest Boyer in his book, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, states that colleges "are confused about their mission and how to impart shared values in which the vitality of both higher education and society depend."[9]

It reminds me of a college student going around the campus wearing a lapel button which had painted on it the letters BAIK. Someone asked him what that meant. He replied, "That means Boy Am I Confused."

"But don't you know," he was told, "you don't spell confused with a K?"

"Man," he explained, "you don't know how confused I am."

School leaders may feel the same way today as they face the bewildering pressures on Christian higher education—the secularization of society; governmental regulations; expectations of accrediting agencies; finance; cost of education; enrollment, quality of students, many of which came out of drugs, child abuse, and dysfunctional families—these conditions, and a host of others compound to disorient both college educators and students.

Yet we dare not let the mounting difficulties distract us from our Christian mission. Without evangelism the college has no controlling purpose of the gospel as its center.

Nor can we retreat into a sort of neoplatonic dualism, saying that evangelism is of a private nature, and must be taught at home or in the church. Indeed, sharing the gospel is a personal responsibility, but that witness reaches into the whole world of social discourse.

Centrality of Evangelism in Christian Colleges

Evangelism is no appendage to liberal arts education, something added onto an already overcrowded agenda. It is the heartbeat of Christian witness, the good news that God himself, the creator and lord of the universe, has intervened in human history, and through the mighty conquest of Jesus Christ, made a way whereby whoever believes on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

In making known this truth, the Christian college operates on a radically different premise from that of a secular university. We believe that all truth ultimately centers in the incarnate word of God in whom are all the treasures of wisdom. This conviction will be no more obvious than in the way we practice evangelism. That is where the claims of Christ most decisively challenge the egocentric wisdom of fallen humanity, imploring everyone to turn from darkness into light.

Soul wrenching as our task may be, in calling persons to believe the gospel, evangelism brings the church into existence, and thereby makes possible the wide Christian educational enterprise. Apart from evangelism, our Christian colleges, like the church, will become only monuments to a once vibrant faith.

The Christian college, then, true to its heritage, must do *more* than provide a quality liberal arts education; it must prepare men and women to minister the word of God as Christ's ambassadors in society.

How that is done, of course, will vary according to different institutional traditions and goals. Contrasted to the first American colleges, our task today is not primarily to train clergymen. However, in the larger sense of the priesthood of all believers, we have the same objective to train ministers of Christ.

Some graduates doubtless will become ordained clergy, others will go as cross-cultural missionaries overseas; but the vast majority of our students will fulfill their ministry at home and in the marketplace of the world. Whatever form that witness may take, however, college graduates should be prepared to make their life count in disciple-making.

Here is the challenge to a Christian college—to relate evangelism to the campus community, integrating it in the various academic disciplines and programs, so that students are confronted with the gospel. Not only to affect conversions, but to equip scholars to go into their world and win the lost to

Christ, teaching them to turn to make disciples, until through the process of multiplication the gospel reaches all creation.

Such a course will keep higher education on the wave length of eternity, where history is moving, when at last the great commission is fulfilled, the kingdom comes to fruition, and every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to the glory of God that Jesus Christ is lord.

Notes

1. Statement of Massachusetts Puritans in the founding of Harvard University in 1638, quoted by Mel Shoemaker, "Ministerial Education: Basis for Renewal," *Faculty Dialogue*, Winter Issue, No. 16, 1992, p. 95.
2. "The Laws, Liberties, and Orders of Harvard College, Confirmed by the Overseers and President of the College in the years 1642, 1643, 1644, 1645, and 1646 and Published by the Scholars for the Perpetual Preservation of Their Welfare and Government," included in Josiah Quincy, *The History of Harvard University*, Vol. I Boston: Crosby, Nichols, Lee & Co., 1860, p. 15.
3. Letter to Sir William Pheps in "Pretas in Patriam" (1967), quoted by Cotton Mather *Magnolia Christi Americana* (originally published 1702). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977, p. 274.
4. Ibid.
5. The Royal Charter for the Establishment at Williamsburg, Virginia "of a certain place of universal study," quoted by Irvin Lee Wright, "Piety, Politics, and Profit: American Indian Missions in the Colonial Colleges," Unpublished Ed. D. Thesis, Montana State University, 1985.
6. Ibid.
7. H.B. Adams, *The College of William and Mary*, pp. 11-12, quoted by J. Edwin Orr, *Campus Aflame*: Glendale: Glendale, CA, 1971, p. 5.
8. Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, quoted in J. Edwin Orr, op.cit., p. 19.
9. Ernest Boyer, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America*, quoted by Paul Alford, "Hope for Christian Education," *AABC Newsletter*, Vol XXXVII, No. 2, April 1993, p. 1.

Teaching Seminary Students to Do Personal Evangelism: A Six-Step Process

Bill Payne

It is easier to teach students about evangelism than to motivate them to do evangelism. For many students, doing personal evangelism causes anxiety. Anxiety produces resistance. However, when reluctant students learn a method and practice it in class, doing evangelism causes less anxiety. This enhances motivation, increases the incidence of faith-sharing, and improves competence. Furthermore, students who do personal evangelism are more likely to lead churches in robust evangelistic outreach ministries. This article presents a six-step method for teaching students how to do personal evangelism.

Some Assumptions

Before describing the process, some clarifying comments should be posited. First, seminary students need to be grounded in the biblical, theological, and historical foundations of evangelism. However, knowledge by itself does not produce effective practice. Second, personal evangelism cannot be reduced to a single formula, technique, or method. Some proponents of specific methods or formulas have taught people to use them without question or alteration. Third, evangelism must be receptor-oriented. An approach that works well with one person may not work well with another person. In doing evangelism, the evangelist should accommodate the personality, felt needs, and culture of the person being evangelized without compromising the message. Fourth, God is the evangelist and the

Bill Payne is an associate professor of evangelism and world mission at Ashland Theological Seminary in Ashland, Ohio. He is an elder in the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church.

force behind successful evangelism. When one effectively communicates the gospel, God causes conviction and infuses the person with grace so the person can receive Christ. No one can respond to the gospel unless God draws the person to himself. Fifth, evangelism is God's idea. God calls and empowers the church to do evangelism. Evangelism is a central task of the church and a defining quality of its being. Sixth, evangelists should not manipulate people or artificially produce receptivity so they can get them to make a commitment. In particular, the sales pitch approach may dominate when deductive methods are used outside the context of an ongoing relationship. "Soul winning" is an unfortunate metaphor. Seventh, an evangelist does not have to close the deal to be successful. Evangelism is a team activity. Over a period of years, multiple faith-sharers may participate in the evangelization of an individual. God orchestrates the total process. Faith-sharers succeed when they help people move forward in their faith journey. Eighth, evangelism is penultimate. It must participate in a process that makes disciples. People who accept Christ but do not get discipled are not evangelized. Ninth, through evangelism, God extends an invitation for lost people to participate in his kingdom. In this way, evangelism calls for repentance and self-surrender to God's will. Tenth, evangelism is an act of spiritual warfare. By means of it, God delivers people from the domain of Satan and sets the captives free. Eleventh, evangelism results in the adoption of "sons" and an intimate relationship with the Father.

The Teaching Context

The basic evangelism class at Ashland Theological Seminary has many learning objectives in addition to the mastery of personal evangelism. For example, students develop a working definition of evangelism that will guide them in the practice of evangelism.[1] To do this, they evaluate the ministry of evangelism from biblical, theological, historical, and practical perspectives. Additionally, on a weekly basis, the students engage each other and the required readings via threaded discussions on WebCT. Threaded discussions force the students to think critically in the context of a learning community. However, the most significant learning happens in small groups. Each student belongs to a small group of four. Students

present a personal testimony and three evangelistic encounters to their group.[2] The small group holds members accountable and pushes them to be clear about motives and theology. Also, the small group encourages participants as they do personal evangelism. Participants pray for each other and the people being evangelized. Finally, the small group uses an action-reflection format that helps the students coalesce the material. In the small group, theory and praxis inform each other.

The Six-Step Process

Each step begins with a biblical focus. A step may unite seemingly divergent concepts around a central theme. The teaching is group based and requires active participation. The students do not realize that the steps work together until the last step. Before the end of the term, students demonstrate proficiency with the model by means of case studies and real encounters. The final exam tests their ability to work the model. People of all theological persuasions can employ the model. However, a Wesleyan theology of evangelism undergirds its theory.

Step 1

A lesson on 2 Kings 6:24-7:17, "Is There an Old Testament Basis for Evangelism?" introduces the topic of evangelism and lays out a biblical foundation for it. Afterward, students look at picture collages of people doing evangelism. The collages help students identify stereotypes and discuss anxieties. Next, students receive a short description of deductive evangelism.[3] In order to demonstrate a method of deductive evangelism, the class examines a few evangelistic tracts and the basic template that the American Tract Society utilizes.[4] After this, the class appraises material that contends for the use of tracts.[5] During the conversation, students consider the way tracts depict the vicarious atonement theory. At a later point, students consider evangelism from the perspectives of the Christus Victor and moral influence models. If students use tracts, they describe how they use them. Usually, some opine that tracts are too individualistic and overly focused on going to heaven. A few have had unpleasant experiences with people doing tract evangelism. Finally, the class discusses the cold turkey

use of the Roman Road presentation in a postmodern society that does not know the Christian scriptures or view them as authoritative.[6]

Step 2

This step considers conversion and teaches students how to present their testimony. In preparation for the step, students reflect on their conversion stories by using the time chart and steps of faith chart that Duncan McIntosh illustrates in his book.[7]

The step begins by evaluating Isaiah 6:1-9a. The pericope delineates the following sequence: an encounter with a holy God (1-4), conviction, awakening (5a), confession, repentance (5b), forgiveness (6-7), and calling to service (8-9). Afterward, the class reviews Michael Green's discussion on conversion as it relates to Paul's testimony.[8] The discussion is expanded to include a conversation on free will and the bondage of the will. Then the class looks at Charles Kraft's model of power encounter, truth encounter, and allegiance encounter as an alternative way to interpret Paul's testimony.[9]

Bill Hybels uses Paul's conversion story as recorded in Acts 26 to illustrate his model for writing a personal testimony.[10] The following is an expanded version of Hybels' model: 1. Where were you spiritually before you came to Christ? How did that affect your feelings, attitudes, actions and relationships? 2. What caused you to consider God as a solution to your problems? Or, what made you interested in God? Was there a specific issue? 3. What motivated you to receive Christ—a realization, a deep hunger for something more, an inner witness of God's Spirit? 4. Specifically, how did you receive Christ? 5. What changes began to happen in your life after you received Christ? 6. What other benefits have you experienced since becoming a Christian? Think of the benefits in terms of the person to whom you are talking. 7. Identify a central idea or issue that shows the contrast in your spiritual outlook before and after Christ. It could be a problem that you identified and have resolved through the grace of God. 8. Keep your conversion story simple, clear, and repeatable. 9. End your story with a question or an invitation.

When sharing a testimony, one should avoid clichés. Use feedback loops to ensure that the person understands what you are saying. Be flexible. You may have to alter the order of your testimony or the content

of it. Ask God to give you spiritual discernment so you can relate your story in an effective way. Your story is not about you. It is about God reaching out to you. When told correctly, it can become a bridge that connects the person to the gospel message.[11]

After going through Hybels' material, the instructor shares his or her testimony. The Wesleyan order of salvation has colored how I understand my faith journey. I emphasize prevenient grace and the progression aspects of my coming to faith. I also talk about the moment I received an assurance of salvation. Additionally, I emphasize that my testimony is still in progress. As I grow in faith and encounter God in new ways, I add events and insights to my story. My total Christian experience becomes a reservoir from which I can draw when attempting to connect a person to God. I never tell a person my entire story. Rather, I use the portions of it that are most appropriate and relevant to the person. Whenever I make a point from my story, I attempt to share a parallel point from the scriptures. Typically, I may share portions of my story with a person many times before I invite the person to receive Christ. Under certain circumstances, I encourage the person to receive Christ during our first encounter. Following this, students give their testimonies in their small group. The small groups share highlights with the class. Some patterns emerge. Students are amazed at the variety of ways in which people come to God. The activity pushes students outside of their boxes and allows them to explore new possibilities.[12]

Step 3

This step explains inductive evangelism. It begins by reviewing several gospel texts that demonstrate how Jesus engaged unlikely people in evangelistic conversations. His example highlights the implications of the incarnation for evangelistic outreach. Specifically, in Christ, God became the gospel within a particular socio-historical context. He sojourned with the people to whom he was sent for 30 years before he enacted the gospel. He used their culture as a medium to communicate the gospel. He demonstrated the gospel with deeds and signs. Not only did he connect with the people to whom he was sent, he loved them. In his evangelism, he embodied the kingdom of God as he invited people to enter into it. In so doing, he did battle against the kingdom of Satan. As he set the captives free, he ministered to the whole person (targeted felt needs). The messenger,

the message, and the method reinforced each other. He understood receptivity (see Jn 4:35-38). Jesus knew where the Father was working and worked in tandem with him. Following his example requires contextualization, identification, and spiritual acumen.[13]

Inductive approaches begin with people and their felt needs. From the basis of a relationship, one attempts to discern where God is active in a person's life so he or she can present the gospel in appropriate ways at opportune times. The relationship is the medium through which the faith-sharer gains access to the individual, garners credibility, and discerns where God is active in the person's life. God is the evangelist and is witnessing to himself through the life, words, and deeds of the faith-sharer. The friendship must be authentic and the message must be relevant.

Inductive approaches make room for progression. However, some people ripen faster than others. In fact, some are already ready to receive Christ when they encounter the faith-sharer. The faith-sharer must sense where the person is on the evangelism continuum and act in accordance with that. The sixth step expands on this concept.

McIntosh articulates an inductive strategy for doing personal evangelism.[14] It contains four components: cultural identity, emotional needs, spiritual beliefs, and approach. Spiritual discernment and follow-up are added. Cultural identity is a deep description of who the person is. Discovering a person's cultural identity helps the evangelist establish a rapport, uncover felt needs, and discern where God is at work in the person's life. McIntosh describes four types of emotional needs: security, affection, esteem, and growth. By the time one discerns the person's emotional needs and uncovers the person's spiritual beliefs, the faith-sharer is having spiritual conversations with the person. In identifying spiritual beliefs, one should distinguish between high religion and folk religion. Many people combine elements from various traditions. In short, how does the person picture God? What does the person believe about Jesus? In light of the person's cultural identity, emotional needs, and spiritual beliefs, the faith-sharer develops an approach. However, before the evangelist moves forward, he or she needs to listen to the Holy Spirit and wait for natural opportunities. When God opens the door, the faith-sharer should enter it. If the person receives Christ, the evangelist must do follow-up. How will the person be assimilated into a local church? Who will mentor the new believer?

At this point, the class practices the McIntosh's model with the biblical case studies that McIntosh lists in is book. After the class works through the Zacchaeus example (Lk 19:1-9), the small groups convene and work through several other examples.

3-P evangelism explains the relationship between inductive and deductive evangelism.[15]

P-1 (presence)

Many refer to this as pre-evangelism. Through a Christian presence, one witnesses to the gospel by deeds and lifestyle. P-1 may include random acts of kindness; living the gospel; ministries of love, justice and compassion; power ministry; and the like. No strings are attached. Technically, P-1 is not evangelism. However, it lays a foundation for it. When one purposely does P-1 activities with non-Christians for the purpose of establishing a relationship, P-1 becomes an evangelistic act.

P-2 (proclamation)

The faith-sharer communicates the gospel message and invites the person to become a follower of Christ. By itself, this is deductive evangelism. However, when done as a continuation of P-1, it becomes inductive evangelism because the proclamation is undertaken in the context of a relationship through which one discerns felt needs, levels of receptivity, and the moving of God in the person's life. Since it is a process, one may share portions of the gospel at appropriate times before the person extends an invitation to become a follower of Christ. Also, during this phase, the faith-sharer may connect the person to other believers and/or invite him or her to specialized ministry groups that target specific felt needs. For example, many people receive Christ through participation in recovery ministries. P-1 evangelism does not stop when P-2 begins.

P-3 (persuasion)

The church does evangelism so it can make disciples. The task is not completed until the person has personal faith in Christ and is living out the implications of the gospel in the context of a local church. As such, the

person who does not accept Christ or accepts Christ but does not associate with a local church is not evangelized. P-3 evangelism continues until the person becomes a disciple. It discovers the barriers that keep the person from being discipled as it nudges the person forward on his or her faith journey.[16]

This step closes with a Southern Baptist video clip in which an average Christian tells about her first forays into personal evangelism after receiving some basic training. In the clip, she shares her faith with a co-worker during a time of heightened receptivity. She illustrates the 3-Ps.

Step 4

This step teaches students to identify evangelism styles. It begins by contrasting Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-36 with Paul's approach in Acts 17:16-34. The discussion examines contextualization and adaptation to context. In relationship to the idol to the Unknown God, the concept of redemptive analogies is raised. If the concept is correct from the perspective of missionaries discovering redemptive analogies buried in a culture, can personal faith-sharers discover redemptive analogies in individuals?

Mark Mittelberg stumbled upon the idea of evangelism styles. At one point, he assumed that personal evangelism required that he do deductive evangelism in the guise of the confrontational approach. After a disappointing summer internship, he decided that he was not gifted to do evangelism and intended to leave it to others. However, while reading Acts, he discovered Paul's intellectual approach. It fit him well. When he used it, he had great success. Afterward, Willow Creek described additional styles and developed an evangelism style assessment tool to help people discover how they are wired to do evangelism. They assumed that people would do more evangelism and be more successful if they did it in a way that meshed with their personality. Mittelberg states,

> I'm convinced that one of the greatest barriers to Christians participating in personal evangelism is their misunderstanding of what it entails. So many of us are fearful of the dreaded "e-word" and view it as an unnatural activity. Well, here's great news that's both freeing and empowering*: God knew what he was doing when he made you*. He custom-designed you with your unique

> combination of personality, temperament, talents, and background, and he wants to use you to reach others in a fashion that fits your design. What might that look like in your life? For an answer, let's consider how God used six people in the New Testament to spread his love and truth. In the process, we'll discover six biblical styles of evangelism.[17]

The six evangelism styles are: the Confrontational Approach (deductive, preaching, prophetic); the Intellectual Approach (apologetics, dialogue); the Testimonial Approach (witnessing, faith-sharing); the Interpersonal Approach (friendship evangelism, conversational); the Invitational Approach (come with me); and the Service Approach (presence evangelism, love).[18] One could add the Signs and Wonders Approach (power evangelism).

It is helpful for students to work through this material and to take the assessment inventory. Nonetheless, some caution is needed. First, people should not identify their style and stick to it in every setting regardless of the personality or felt needs of the person being evangelized. Since evangelism is receptor-oriented, one should pick the style or styles that best suits the person being evangelized. In other words, to which combination of styles will the person be most likely to respond? Second, for that to happen, the evangelist needs to use multiple styles and be able to move between them as needed. Paul used the intellectual, confrontational, testimonial, and signs and wonders approaches. Third, if a person only uses one of the styles, that person needs to collaborate with other people in order to ensure that the person is evangelized. Actually, this is a plus. When members of the church collaborate in an intentional way to evangelize in accordance with spiritual gifting and temperament, they are more effective. Additionally, when the various styles are combined, they form a holistic approach to doing inductive evangelism.

Step 5

This step begins by examining Acts 9:19-31. In this text, Paul preaches the gospel, debates with those who reject the gospel, and proves to them that Jesus is the Messiah. The step explores apologetics as pre-evangelism. It follows the lead that Michael Green laid out in *How Shall We Reach*

Them?: Defending and Communicating the Christian Faith to Nonbelievers.[19] Additionally, this step uses material from Hybels as an outline to discuss barriers to faith.[20] The discussion helps students identify and circumvent barriers that predispose people to reject Christ. The step works through each of the barriers that Hybels identifies. However, the presentation is augmented with personal illustrations and material from other sources. Hybels tends to be too superficial for seminary students.

Next, the class looks at Hybels' classification of non-believers into cynics, skeptics, spectators and seekers.[21] Each type is analyzed in terms of its characterizations and includes a suggested way to evangelize the person. Following this, the class reads a cyber interview with a female college student.[22] The student is a typical American young adult who is attempting to establish her own identity. The article shows her spiritual alienation and her growing hostility toward organized Christianity. It also reveals places where God is working in her life. Students read the interview and analyze it in their small groups. They identify her as a cynic, skeptic, spectator, or seeker. They also discuss her barriers. Finally, they devise a plan to evangelize her. Usually, the small groups do not reach a consensus.

Step 6

This step explores Engel's receptivity model and Sogaard's communication model to demonstrate the conversion continuum.

The parable of the four soils presents a striking picture of evangelism (Matt 13). Originally, it described how people responded to Jesus' preaching. However, it has implication for personal evangelism. The sowing of the seed is proclamation evangelism. The soils represent types of people who hear the gospel. Some people are unable to understand the gospel. Satan hardens their hearts. Others respond to the gospel but suffered from truncated spiritual growth, i.e., they died before they produced fruit. Only those who receive the gospel and grow into spiritual maturity (become disciples) receive the approbation of Christ.[23] From a strategic perspective, before one sows the seed, the person should test the soil and prepare it to receive the seed (pre-evangelism). This will reduce the incidence of truncated spiritual growth and will increase the harvest. Different types of soils require different types of preparation. Regardless, one should sow the seed so people hear the gospel, grow in grace, and produce fruit.

One could argue that the farmer prepared a portion of the field and intentionally spread seeds on it. That equates to targeting a specific population. By chance, seeds fell on the path and around the periphery. The seeds in the field sprouted and produced fruit because they were nurtured. After people respond to the gospel they need to be nurtured in order to become disciples. Potentially, the plants that died could have been saved if the ground had been worked. However, that is not the point of the parable.

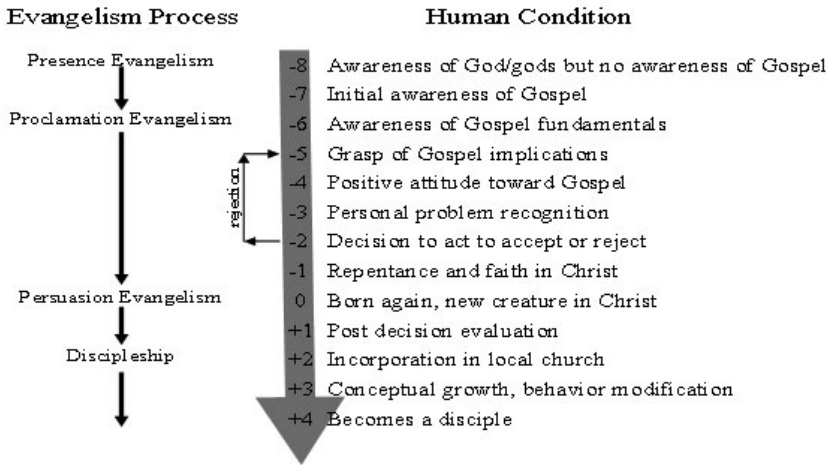

Figure 1 Engel's Receptivity Model[24]

Following this, the step describes the Engel Scale (Figure 1). The scale assumes that evangelism is a process and an event. It plots where a person is in terms of a conversion continuum and allows for strategic planning. The scale is divided into negative and positive sections. The negative section shows progress toward conversion. It combines increasing knowledge of the gospel with increasing receptivity to the gospel. The model assumes that increased knowledge about the gospel will increase a person's receptivity to Christ.

The positive section begins with post decision evaluation. A debate rages at this point. Those who define evangelism in terms of proclamation stop the evangelism process at -2. Regardless of the person's decision, at that point the person has been evangelized. Goal oriented proponents argue

that the person is not evangelized until he or she receives Christ and is incorporated into a local church where the ministry of discipleship takes over. As such, persuasion evangelism continues to +2. It includes post decision evaluation.[25]

Viggo Sogaard's conversion chart (see Figure 2) separates receptivity and knowledge of the gospel into affective and cognitive dimensions as it measures one's progress toward conversion.[26]

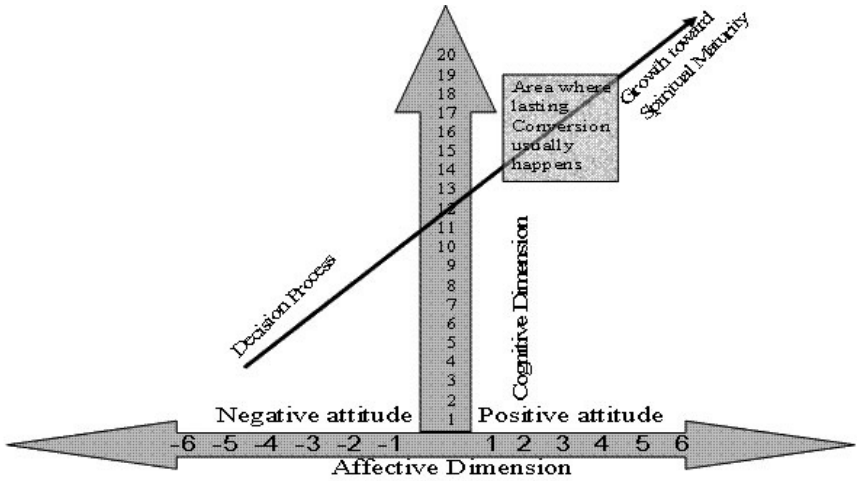

Figure 2 Conversion Chart[27]

The affective dimension measures receptivity in terms of attitude, i.e., the person's disposition to the proposed innovation. People will not receive Christ as long as they have a negative opinion about him. Even if they accept Christ, they may not become disciples if they have negative feelings toward the church.[28] As such, a component of personal evangelism needs to focus on changing a person's attitude. The cognitive dimension measures knowledge of the gospel. "Twelve" equals "understands the basic characteristics of the gospel." "Fifteen" equals "understands the gospel and the way of salvation." A positive correlation exists between the level of knowledge and the likelihood that a person will receive Christ. As such, a second component of evangelism needs to increase a person's knowledge of the gospel. The diagonal line shows where a person is on the conversion continuum. In actuality, the line will not be straight. Rather, it will be

jagged since the person will move forward in terms of changes in attitude and understanding. According to Figure 2, a lasting conversion typically happens when a person has a positive attitude about Christ and has an intermediate understanding of the gospel.

In actuality, this is a marketing model. A similar process holds true when one attempts to get people to buy new products or to adopt a proposed innovation. Mormonism is an example that demonstrates this model. Mormonism recognized that it had an image problem with the general public. Most people were not receptive of its missionaries when they attempted to get a hearing. Primarily, the LDS Church evangelizes through its missionary force of young adults. If people reject the missionaries, the church will not be able to share its message with them. To address this problem, the church attempted to redefine itself in the courts of public opinion. The Winter Olympics in Salt Lake showcased the church. Additionally, the church ran prime time commercials that appealed to the highest values of middle class, conservative America without being religious. They left a very warm feeling in the hearts of the viewers. Each was followed by "This was brought to you by your neighbors, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." Other efforts were made to change the public's negative opinion. Consequently, the missionaries were not met with as much resistance and they were able to get into more homes. By means of home visits and literature distribution, the church attempted to increase people's knowledge of the church. In time, as people accepted the LDS Church as a viable option, the missionaries would involve the people in a study or local congregation. This led to assimilation and conversion. In summary, the LDS Church focused on the affective dimension first. As people's attitudes changed, they were more open to the message of the church. An improved opinion and an increase in knowledge combined to cause more people to adopt the innovation that Mormonism advocated.

For evangelism purposes, in order to accurately plot a person, one must be conversant with the person's culture, felt needs, and spiritual beliefs. In terms of Christian evangelism, once a person is plotted on the chart, a strategy can be produced that will move the person toward the conversion box. The strategy will depend on the place where the person is plotted. For example, one who is plotted at -3, 8 will require a different strategy than one who is at -5, 2. In class, I demonstrate the model with three personal examples. The examples are of targeted populations and individuals.

Putting It All Together

After presenting the material in step 6, each small group receives an evangelism case study with the following instructions: Based on McIntosh's process (cultural identity, emotional needs, and spiritual beliefs); Hybels' classifications (cynic, skeptic, spectator, seeker); barriers (human and spiritual); the affective and cognitive model; your testimony; and the styles of evangelism: describe a personal strategy to evangelize the person in your case study.

In other words, go through each of the six steps. Work McIntosh's model. What are the person's felt needs? In what ways do you see receptivity? Is the person a cynic, skeptic, spectator, or seeker? Identify barriers and places where God is at work in the person's life. Plot the person on the graph and state why you plotted the person there. In terms of the affective/cognitive scale, state how you will move him or her into the conversion box. Remember the 3-Ps. When picking between approaches, to which combination will the person most likely respond in a positive way? Anticipate responses.

During the following class, each group explains its case study and works the six-step model in front of the class. Afterward, students ask questions and challenge assumptions. Typically, after processing the first two case studies, a general consensus emerges related to the process and the end results. More importantly, as the students apply the process to their personal evangelism encounters, they feel more confident. That increases motivation and effectiveness. During the following weeks of class, often excited students will spontaneously share their evangelism success stories at the beginning of the class to show how he or she used the process successfully.

Conclusion

In Mark 5, Jesus went into the Gentile region of the Gerasenes. Upon his arrival, a severely demonized man overcame internal barriers to come to Jesus. What demon would have gone to Jesus? Did Jesus go to that area because he had heard about the man? After Jesus healed him, the man

wanted to follow Jesus. However, Jesus sent him on his way with orders to evangelize his family. Instead, the grateful man shared his testimony with everyone he met throughout the Decapolis. In essence, he became an evangelist. In John 4:31ff, the disciples are perplexed that Jesus is talking to a Samaritan woman. It never occurred to them that Christ would evangelize her. Yet, Jesus had a vision and a strategy. Through a single woman, he gained access to the entire village. Before long, a people movement ensued. By the time that Phillip went to Samaria (Acts 8), the entire region was turning to Christ.

Jesus preached to the masses and he ministered to individuals. He knew that the world would not be discipled until individuals were evangelized. Much has been written about mass evangelism and targeting people groups. The material is helpful and serves as a necessary corrective to the overly individualistic approaches that have dominated western Christianity in recent times. Even still, in the context of the American church, congregations that do not equip their people to do personal evangelism will not remain viable in the long haul. Furthermore, pastors who do not know how to do personal evangelism will not be able to model it to their churches or train their people to engage in that critical ministry. For these and many more reasons, seminaries must teach and motivate students to do personal evangelism.

Notes

1. William Abraham says that one's definition of evangelism will determine how one practices it. See *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1989), 164.
2. Each report contains three components. (1) Background: Context of conversation: where, when, with whom? Describe the person. What is your connection to the person? How did it come about? What were your intentions, expectations, anxieties, etc.? (2) Description: What happened? How did the conversation begin, continue, and conclude? How did you transition the conversation to a topic or area that lent itself to a spiritual conversation? (3) Analysis: Identify issues, significant openings and closings of responses. Where was God at work in this encounter? In terms of evangelism, what happened? What is

happening? What did you do well? How could you have been more "effective?" How did this encounter inform or challenge your theology of evangelism? How will you follow-up?

3. Deductive evangelism begins with a method or a standardized presentation of the gospel. It assumes that God will work through the presentation to produce conviction and faith because the gospel has a divinely aided appeal associated with it when it is accurately proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit. One does not have to cajole or manipulate. One only has to present the gospel and leave the results to God. Obviously, it helps if the presenter flows with the Holy Spirit, empathizes with the other person, and communicates the gospel effectively.
4. See http://www.atstracts.org/information/message.php and http://bible tractfellowship.org/english.html.
5. See http://www.christiananswers.net/evangelism/methods/tracts.html and http://www.powernet.net/~scrnplay/bibletract.html.
6. Know the penalty of sin. The wages of sin is death (6:23). Know God's provision. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (5:8). Know how to respond. Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead and you will be saved (10:9). Bring to a decision. Pray the sinner's prayer. See http://www.yvn.com/users/whitmore/romansroad and http://stjohn-mychurch.com/ServiceMinistries/EvangelismMinistry/Evangelism.htm.
7. Duncan McIntosh, *The Everyday Evangelist* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1984), 20-21.
8. Michael Green, *Evangelism through the Local Church: A Comprehensive Guide to All Aspects of Evangelism*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1992).
9. C.H. Kraft. "What kind of encounter do we need in our Christian witness?" *Evangelical Missiological Quarterly*. 27 (July 1991): 258-261.
10. He illustrates a five part process from Paul's defense in Acts 26. In Acts 26, Paul tells of his life before Christ (BC). He then describes his conversion. Afterward, he tells how Christ changed his life (AD). He contrasts the old Paul to the converted Paul. In so doing, he tells the gospel via his own story. Finally, he gives an invitation. According to Hybels, zeal for serving God was a unifying theme that held his BC and

AD sections together. See Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel and Bill Hybels, *Becoming a Contagious Christian Leader's Guide* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 122-149.

11. Mittelberg, 137-149.
12. This step could be augmented by having students interview Christians about their faith story and how they were evangelized.
13. See Mark McCloskey, *Tell It Well, Tell It Often, Making the Most of Witnessing Opportunities*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1992, accessed 28 July 2006); available from http://www.greatcom.org/resources /tell it often tell it well/chap13/default.htm. McCloskey compares and contrasts the relational-incarnational approach to the comprehensive-incarnational approach. I do not agree with McCloskey's conclusions, but I am indebted to his thoughtful articulation and contrast of inductive and deductive evangelistic approaches.
14. McIntosh.
15. See C. Peter Wagner, *Strategies for Church Growth: Tools for Effective Mission and Evangelism* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1987), 117 ff.
16. For a good discussion on this topic, see Elmer L. Towns, "Evangelism: P-1, P-2 P-3" in *A Practical Encyclopedia Evangelism and Church Growth* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995), 212-216.
17. Mark Mittelberg, "Discovering Your Evangelism Style, You Can Win People to Christ by Being Yourself," *Discipleship Journal,* 95 (Sept/Oct 1995). Available [Online]: http://www.navpress.com/EPubs/PrinterFriendly/1/1.95.9.html [July 27, 2006].
18. Mark Mittelberg, Lee Strobel and Bill Hybels, 54-73.
19. Michael Green and Alister McGrath. *How Shall We Reach Them? : Defending and Communicating the Christian Faith to Nonbelievers.* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995).
20. Bill Hybels. *Becoming a Contagious Christian*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994). 165-180.
21. Mittelberg, 264.
22. Spectator.co.nz. "Molly." *Spectator Profiles*. (New Zealand, Multimedia Investments Limited, 2001). Available from http://www.spectator.co.nz/profiles/molly.htm; Internet. Accessed 28 July 2006.
23. The gospels use organic images of fruit-bearing to show discipleship. See Matt 3:7-10, Lk13:6-9, and Jn 15:1-17.

24. McCloskey,http://www.greatcom.org/resources/tell_it_often_tell_it_well /chap17/default.htm.
25. C. Peter Wagner, 124-127.
26. Viggo Sogaard, "Dimensions of Approach to Contextual Communication" In *The Word Among Us, Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today,* ed. Dean S. Gilliand (Dallas, TX: Word Publishers, 1989), 160-182.
27. Sogaard. 174.
28. Many non-Christians have a positive or neutral attitude about Christ but a negative attitude toward the gospel message or the church. This presents a problem for church based evangelism that seeks to make disciples.

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Good News for Hindus in the Neighborhood

H. L. Richard

Suburban America is now home to many friends from the most unreached of the Hindu people groups, the highest castes.[1] College campuses across America have more international students from India than from any other nation, and most of these Indian students are also from the unreached high castes of Hindus.[2]

An American magazine of Indian immigrants recently summarized some socioeconomic data from the US government:

> Indians are five times as likely to be in the computer/scientific sector and twice as likely to be in health services as the national population. Overall, almost 60 percent of all Indians are employed in professional occupations, substantially higher than the national average.
>
> As a result, Indians have the highest occupational prestige score, which is measured by the Socioeconomic Index (SEI) and reflects high skill professions. Business ownership among Indians is almost at par with the national average.[3]

The world of unreached high caste Hindu people groups is at the doorsteps of evangelicalism in America, yet few have noticed or responded to this striking development.

A Significant Challenge

It has become *geographically* easy to share the good news of Christ with high caste Hindus; they are in our neighborhoods and on our campuses. But massive challenges remain. There is a mountain of ignorance

H. L. Richard is a research scholar focused on issues in South Asian cultures and religions.

and prejudice on both sides of the Christian-Hindu encounter. Christians are uncomfortable in the presence of the idolatry that is visible in most Hindu homes. Hindus are in a foreign land and uncomfortable around loud and pushy Americans.

Yet the barriers to Christians befriending Hindus are fragile and easily surmounted; this article should at least demonstrate that point.[4] India is a deeply relational country, and Hindus welcome relational networks in their new country. Relationships, of course, take time and energy, and especially cross-cultural relationships. The cost must be counted, but the returns to cross-cultural friendships are many and varied. There is so much to learn from international friends!

Hindu Perceptions of Christianity

Friendship evangelism among Hindus needs to keep the emphasis on *friendship*. Hindus are very sensitive to Christian agendas to convert Hindus and "win" their country to the Christian religion. The general Hindu perception is that Christians are pushy propagandists, and too much "evangelistic" activity confirms this impression. A Hindu friend should be a true friend, and not a project to be dropped if "unsuccessful."[5]

This practical problem of Hindu perception is compounded by a profound theological perception problem, as defined by Hendrik Kraemer in 1938:

> The Hindu mind, by virtue of its historical background, easily hears in the claim for truth and exclusive revelation in Christ a contempt for other religions and a lack of modesty in the face of the great mystery of Ultimate Truth. Christians and missionaries almost as easily make the mistake of conveying the impression that they possess and dispense Ultimate Truth, which in this Indian atmosphere suggests coarse irreverence and vulgar mediocrity, and often is so. (1938:368)

The matter-of-factness of much Christian preaching and teaching is thus highly problematic in the Hindu world. The apostle Paul taught that "the man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 9:2), and this is a verse that should always govern the heart

of one who shares with Hindus. We do not possess God, he possesses us; we can perhaps say that we know God, but it is much more true to emphasize that he knows us (Gal. 4:9); God has truly revealed himself in Christ, yet "no one knows the Son except the Father" (Mt. 11:27, etc.).

The humble servant of Christ (which should be the only referent for "Christian"!) will not stumble in these areas. Doors of friendship will open with Hindus when followers of Christ reach across perceived boundaries and establish friendships. There will, of course, be some cultural mishaps along the way, but loving friendship will overcome such stumbles. Yet even in the long run of friendship there are still significant challenges in sharing the way of Christ.

The Problem of Religion

Despite the suspicions and prejudices against Christianity mentioned above, most Hindus have a positive perception of the Christian religion. For many this is just part of the simplistic position that all religions are the same, and so all are fine. It is a truism among Hindus that if all Christians were good Christians and all Hindus good Hindus and all Muslims good Muslims, etc. etc., the world would be a much happier place. And that is not a sentiment to disagree with! Related to this paradigm, however, is the corollary that your religion is for you and mine is for me, and no one should think of changing their religion, or of trying to change someone else's religion.

The whole concept of "religion" is problematic, especially with Hindus. Religion is a Western concept, closely related to sacred scriptures and doctrinal statements. Hinduism does not have a single sacred book, or even an accepted canon of various books.[6] And there are multiple doctrinal (philosophical) perspectives under the Hindu umbrella (monism, theism, polytheism and animism all appear). Still more problematic is the inevitable confusion between culture and religion. Christians struggle to make this distinction, but many Hindus are unconcerned about such hair-splitting.

Conversion to Christianity is not viewed by Hindus as a change of spirituality or theology, but as a change of culture and civilization. It is the abandonment of the ways of the Hindu family in favor of foreign ways. Missiologically minded Christians might consider this a misunderstanding,

but it is in fact the way conversion has been practiced among Hindus by Christians historically, with very few exceptions.

Timothy Paul points out another striking aspect of the doctrine versus culture problem in Hindu contexts:

> Culture is absolute for Hindu people. Everything, including spiritual ideas, is evaluated on the basis of how it will affect their present way of life, or culture. In our western culture, ideas are absolute. They stand alone and are evaluated according to their own intrinsic truth. Understanding that culture is more powerful than ideas to Hindu people is a significant clue why gospel ministry among Hindu people is frequently difficult. Most American-style gospel ministry is carried out all over the world on the basis of the conviction that the gospel is a superior idea that stands alone, apart from any culture. This is why many Hindu people who are fully aware of the gospel do not follow Christ. To Hindus, the gospel as an idea does not stand apart from culture. Hindu people will not judge the gospel on its own merits. It will be evaluated according to the culture of its proponents, and most importantly, on the basis of the changes that "gospel culture" will bring to Hindu culture. (n.d.:9-10)

This is the greatest challenge in gospel communication with Hindus, particularly in the United States. If Hindu (mis)perceptions were right, it would be easy to communicate "our religion/civilization is preferable to yours." But this is not the good news of Christ. Yet this is what Hindus are likely to hear even when the sensitive Christian is attempting to communicate that Christ is for all people and his Way can/must be incarnated in all civilizations.[7]

Practical Suggestions

The best "evangelism" that many Christians know to attempt is inviting a friend to church. This is generally not helpful among Hindus. There is no greater problem than the Hindu perception that Christianity is a foreign

religion. A visit to church generally confirms the Hindu that indeed Christianity is for foreigners and not for Hindus.[8]

Hindus are generally less inhibited in talking about religion and spirituality than modern Americans are. Take the opportunity to learn about Hinduism from your Hindu friend. Be careful not to take their statements too seriously, as many do not have deep knowledge of Hinduism (as most Christians do not have deep knowledge of Christianity). It can be very helpful to make distinctions between official beliefs and practices and personal convictions, both in your own life and faith and for your Hindu friend.

A good way to begin with a Hindu neighbor is with an invitation to a Christian festival. Hindus are familiar with Christmas, as it is a national holiday in India. But of course the real meaning is easily lost in commercialization. To invite a neighboring Hindu family to your home during the Christmas season and share something about various ways Christmas is celebrated and what it really means is not offensive. Tell simply the Christmas story; Hindu values and beliefs are powerfully communicated by stories, and we should always be ready to tell a parable or incident from the life of Jesus.[9]

Festivals and food open many doors for sharing with Hindu neighbors. Learn about Indian food, and even serve it (let your guests help cook it after they have become friends).[10] This of course is just part of hospitality, which is always a large part of friendship. You will certainly need to learn to make Indian tea (chai)! The internet will teach you how until you have a friend to help do it right. Another useful contact point with Hindus is Indian films. Watching a film together is a great learning experience and opens all kinds of interesting conversation.

There are two keys to effective witness to Hindus. The first is your own testimony of experiencing the grace of God. When Hindu friends can see the peace and joy of Christ in your life, your testimony of that experience will be very powerful. Do not rush to tell your story; wait on God for the appropriate time to share this most holy aspect of your life, and only share with a friend who will respect what you share.

The second key is intercessory prayer. In some of the many traditions of Hinduism there is the reality of prayer, but generally (due to no clear revelation in Hinduism) there are rather foggy views of God and no sense of the privilege of praying to a God who hears. Do not be afraid, once there

is a basic friendship, to speak of prayer and mention that you pray for your friend. When there are tensions and trials, offer to lead in prayer with your friend. The reality of answered prayer is powerful evidence of the truth of God in Christ.

As your friend is drawn to Christ you also need to be drawn to a deeper understanding of Indian cultures and attitudes. From early in your friendship there should be strong emphasis that the American way of following Jesus is not the only way; there is a Chinese way, an African way, and a Hindu way.[11] One of the simple ways you can begin to express your own devotion to Jesus in a Hindu way is by learning some Hindu-style devotional songs (*bhajans*).[12] This will feel a bit uncomfortable at first, but in time you will become familiar with this simple song style. Rather this than a Hindu learning to become comfortable with a Western style of worship![13]

Conclusion

There is no higher privilege in life than being a co-worker with God in the spread of his kingdom. Some of the priority challenges of kingdom ministry have come to suburban America, and God is moving people into important friendship ministries with international immigrants. There is a cost to ministry, but there are surpassing joys and rewards; the cross hurts, but the fellowship of sharing his suffering entails also the sharing in his resurrection.

Here are a few words from a friendship evangelist among Hindus in her neighborhood:

> Wednesdays after school I go to Anju's home, which is a windowless, basement, two-room apartment in a local motel where she and her husband are house-keepers; on call 24/7.[14] We drink sweet chai (tea), then go shopping.… Is this ministry? It doesn't feel much like it; I am having such a good time. Anju has become a dear friend. And because of that, I want so much to share the love of Jesus with her. Yet because of her limited English I am unable to do that. Pray for me and pray for her.…

What I am learning:

- That I don't know what I am doing. I need to trust God, and do what seems to be the next thing.
- It takes time to build trust, but Hindus are warm, loving, wonderful people.

- There is a dying to self. It is costly in time, gas money, and diet! Their needs are not always convenient. Sometimes I feel taken advantage of. But God supplies strength and grace in my weakness and weariness.

- I am called to be faithful whether or not it seems as if anything is happening in their lives spiritually.

- There is joy in serving Jesus by serving the needs of others.

- Hindus are lost without Christ and desperately need to know him.

- Prayer is so important.[15]

The Old Testament call to welcome the stranger (Lev. 19:33-34) must carry over still more strongly to the New Testament era where the love of Christ constrains his people to live in love. A vast host of loving friends reaching out to Hindu neighbors needs to arise if the church in America is to be faithful to a God-given opportunity.

Notes

1. The caste system has evolved over centuries and is in a rapid transition phase currently, so is very difficult to describe briefly. It is a social system based on birth, traditionally (but never absolutely in practice) linking status and occupation in relation to purity concerns. The high castes are the beneficiaries of the system and the prime guardians of the many noble aspects of Hindu civilization.

2. See http://www.isoa.org/newsletter_february2006.aspx for a table on the country of origin of international students for 2005.
3. From *Little India*, June 2006, pg. 33, online at http://www.littleindia.com/news/132/ARTICLE/1131/2006-06-12.html.
4. The barriers to a Hindu confessing Christ are much more complex, as also to be addressed in this article.
5. Generally speaking, Asians take relationship far more seriously than Westerners do. The casual moving in and out of friendships that seems natural in the West is scandalous in Asia. To be a friend to a Hindu is not something that can be discarded when inconvenient. The "cost" of friendship is such that those engaged with many Hindus, as in a campus ministry, really need to have a network of co-workers as one person will inevitably fail to keep up with multiple friends.
6. It is commonly affirmed that the Vedas are the sacred books that all Hindus accept as final authority, but this is one of many statements regarding Hinduism that has more emotive value than practical meaning. Cf. Lipner, "Except for outposts of Vedic chanting in various parts of India, and for specialist study of the *sruti* [Vedas] in scattered contexts, and indeed, for the generally undiminished status of the Vedas as *the* scriptural authority symbol, the Vedas had ceased to be a source of religious inspiration for the majority of Hindus by the beginning of the nineteenth century" (1999:63; italics original).
7. It can be argued that Hindus are right to see Christianity as a Western religion; the creeds are all European as are worship and architectural styles. Whether they are right or not, however, it is best to avoid "Christian" terminology, using "spirituality" and "discipleship" related terminologies instead.
8. There are spiritual gatherings of many kinds in the variegated aspects of Hindu religious practice, but there are very few similarities between anything in those meetings and what happens in a church service.
9. Expect a return invitation for a Hindu festival, and take the opportunity to learn about their traditions and practices. Don't react or be defensive if a Hindu responds to a story with a story from their tradition with a similar application; there are many similarities, and generally Hindus are drawn to Christ along such a route rather than by being confronted with areas of difference.

10. One must be careful about dietary restrictions. Many high caste Hindus are strict vegetarians, not even eating anything with eggs in it. There is no sensitivity in speaking about this topic (caste can be sensitive, so don't ask too much!), so just ask if they are vegetarian. Some Hindus would be offended even by vegetarian food cooked in a pot that is regularly used for meat; refusals to visit for food might raise this suspicion, which then could be discussed. There are numerous lesser taboos and habits related to serving and eating food that can/should be discussed; these are best learned in friendly discussion with your neighbor.
11. "Hindu" here obviously refers to following Christ within Hindu civilization, not confusing the way of Christ with Hindu deities and theologies.
12. On *bhajans* see Hale 2001 and www.aradhnamusic.com. The web site has lyrics and translations and a few song tracts to introduce this musical style.
13. While it is not morally wrong for a Hindu to learn familiarity with a foreign style of worship, it drastically hinders the further communication of the gospel to other Hindus.
14. The name has been changed. Clearly, this particular family is not in the high socio-economic bracket that is mentioned in the first paragraph of this paper.
15. From personal communication and a seminar address.

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Rehabilitating Evangelism in the Academy: Ten Priorities

Art McPhee

Introduction

In 1979, Michael Green wrote a little book called, *First Things Last: Whatever Happened to Evangelism?* His question is still apropos. On the church's roster of first concerns, evangelism is too often a no-show and, if it is, it is customarily near the bottom.

In one of his books, Brian McLaren wonders if future tourists to the U.S. will visit Colorado Springs or, maybe, Wheaton to see the evangelicals, just like they visit Lancaster, Pennsylvania to see the Amish.

In *Live to Tell*, Brad Kallenberg depicts evangelists as dispirited Willie Lomans, sweating away to sell their product to a generation that will have nothing to do with it.

Is the gospel passé? Is evangelism?

Recently, a seminary student told me, "I would never take a class in evangelism. The very notion of it turns my stomach."

So, whatever *did* happen to evangelism?

Some see the dereliction of our evangelistic duty as attributable to a general malaise in the church. Others point the finger at a dearth of teaching on the church's missionary character and call. Still others impute culpability to our equipping centers for church leaders, including theological seminaries where evangelism courses are low priority.

That is why groups like the Foundation for Evangelism formed to partner with schools to raise up leaders with a passion for evangelism. Like the motto from the 2006 Methodist Congress on Evangelism, the word for future leaders of the church must be an apostolic one: "Let the Good News Roll!"

Art McPhee teaches evangelism at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

What will it take to let the Good News roll again in the contemporary Western church? What can be done to remove the perceived stigma evangelism bears for many? What obstacles to evangelistic effectiveness are we unmindful of that need attention? Whom should we be listening to and learning from and aren't? What have we forgotten that we need to learn again?

As one response, I offer my top ten list of priorities for rehabilitating evangelism in the academy and the church—with this caveat: it is not, in my mind, a fixed list but a representative one pointing to the fact that we need to establish such priorities to keep God's church on track with God's purposes.

1. Giving Good Weight to the Theology of Evangelism

> *The kindest compliment you can make to a green grocer in a farmer's market is that he "gives good weight." What it means is that, when weighing out your peaches, or tomatoes, or beans, he gives you your full pound plus a little more.*

I think it is fair to say that few contemporary theologians have given good weight to evangelism. In this heyday of religious pluralism and relativism, that is decidedly regrettable. There can be no doubt that this silence is a key contributor to evangelization's abysmal status and reputation in the academy and the church. Look, for example, at some of the standard theologies next time you go to the library. Inspect the tables of contents. Look for the section on evangelism. Don't be surprised if you don't find one. Last year, I went through the theologies on my shelves at home. Each had a thousand pages or more. With one exception, they contained not a single entry on evangelism in their *indexes*, let alone a chapter in their tables of contents. Walter Klaiber has observed that an examination of standard works on ecclesiology reveals the same exclusion (1997:19-20). One can make the same observation about seminary catalogues. Browsing one a few weeks ago, I turned to a section called, "Church Administration, Evangelism, and Spiritual Formation Courses." But, despite the heading, no evangelism courses were enumerated—not one. Why the brush-off? Why—except for a handful of evangelism specialists

like William Abraham, Scott Jones, and James Logan—have our theologians balked at giving evangelism good weight?

There are, no doubt, numerous reasons. But I wonder if one isn't simply that many of them see evangelism as a practical concern instead of a theological one. The goal of evangelism is seeing persons turn in faith to Jesus Christ and becoming his disciples. To that end we employ various strategies. Perhaps the theologians who have relegated evangelism to the theological breadline have done so because, in their minds, it is about programs and techniques, or some secondary purpose like filling pews or making Christianity relevant—something less than leading people to the trailhead of discipleship.

If that is why they do not give evangelism good weight, it makes some sense, for it is true that, at least since the days of R.A. Torrey, many evangelicals have reduced evangelism to programs and techniques. Torrey's big book, *How to Work for Christ* (1898), carried the subtitle: "A Compendium of Effective Methods." As a topic, there was nothing wrong with that. Predecessors in evangelism, like Charles Grandison Finney in his *Revival Lectures*, had gone down that path too. Wesley and Asbury's focus on process earned them the label, "Methodists." But Wesley and Asbury—and Finney too—didn't stop with conversion. For them, conversion was the gateway to holiness and perfection. The problem has been with those, in the post-Torrey era, who represented conversion as the finish line instead of the starting blocks. For them, the eight-minute plan of salvation on a napkin became everything.

Evangelism is bigger than strategies and techniques. Evangelism (evangelization) not only helps people know how to receive God's saving grace but points the way to God's sanctifying grace. It offers them the motive (God's love in Christ), the gateway (salvation by grace through faith), and the support they need (a community of God's people) to become learners at Christ's feet and servants in God's kingdom. As such, evangelism is what sets things in motion. As such, it is, in David Bosch's words, "the heart of mission." Indeed, as Dana Robert has written, "Mission *without evangelism* has neither heart nor life."

Without attention to the theological underpinnings beneath the means and methods of evangelism, we will continue to undervalue it. Without a commitment to theological reflection on evangelism, we will never give it good weight. Only then will we move beyond seeing it as a mere device for

delivering people into the church. And only then will we be in a position to know if the evangelistic programs and techniques we do employ are consistent with the powerful good news of God's salvific intention—born of *agape* (John 3:16; Romans 5:8) and fixed on uniting all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10).

2. The Recovery in Practice of a Missional Ecclesiology

> *Today we are rediscovering that mission is not one thing among many the church does but is at the heart of the church's identity and raison d'être.*

Though most church historians trace the recovery of missional ecclesiology from Karl Barth through the Willingen IMC Conference and Lesslie Newbigin's writings, Roland Allen wrote the following in his *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church* in the 1920s:

> If we compare our modern missionary work with the missionary work of the Early Church, this is what differentiates them: *with us* missions are the *special* work of a *special* organization . . . (1962:96-97)

In contrast, Allen described the *early church* as *a "missionary body,"* and he was right. The early church's missionary identity, with the proclamation of the gospel at its core, was marked by a lay apostolate who thought of themselves as ambassadors, fishers, letters, salt, and light—called to be sent on God's errand to the world. There is no doubt that they eminently fit Emil Brunner's assertion that "the church exists by mission as fire exists by burning." And it was no time until they were "turning the world upside down."

One of the best biblical word pictures of the missionary nature of the church comes from Peter, who evokes the continuity of purpose between God's people under the old covenant and God's people now:

> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, *in order that* you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. (1 Peter 2:9)

The contemporary church in the West still regards itself as God's own people. But how do we recover the early church's ethos and behavior? We are beginning to have conversations about the missional nature of the church, but how do we move from the ideal to what must become the reality? In the West, our theologies, liturgies, structures, and patterns of outreach all predate the recovery of this missionary character of the church. That portends the need for an enormous emotional, behavioral, and structural shift in our churches. Practically speaking, this means church leaders must face the challenge of helping congregations understand—as John Wesley and Francis Asbury once did—that it is *not the church* that has a mission so much as the mission (God's mission) that has a church. That means that every program and activity of every congregation will need to be continually evaluated on how well it lines up with God's salvific mission to the world. It means that not only will a church's Alpha Course or Evangelism Explosion programs be associated with evangelism, but its worship, its small group life, its Sunday school, its fellowship events, its prayer meetings—even its budget. It is not yet clear how this will come about, but the conversation is no longer just among missiologists. We need to keep it going, and we need to find a way.

3. Holistic Evangelism

> *Jesus came preaching the kingdom (or reign) of God. The credentials of citizens of God's kingdom are more than decision cards in their pocket. As Jesus put it: By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)*

While there is good reason to accentuate evangelism as proclamation, there is also good reason for concern over leaving it at that. We communicate with more than words. Our body language, our acts of

service, our availability, our acceptance of people, our sense of fairness, our generosity, our acts of healing, the symbols we wear, and much more—all of these say a great deal about us.

How astounding that, after 80-plus years, we are still haunted by the polarizing ghosts of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. As Carl F.H. Henry, John Stott, Harvie Conn, and others have pointed out, evangelicals have a rich heritage of social concern that goes all the way back to the Evangelical Awakening and the Wesleyan Movement that followed. Read, for example, J. Wesley Bready's unforgettable account of *England Before and After Wesley*, subtitled "The Evangelical Revival and Social Reform." Read the lives of William Wilberforce, Francis Asbury, and Charles Grandison Finney.

Or go all the way back to the church in Jerusalem, as it is described in Acts 2:45-47:

> They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

When John the Baptist sent messengers to ask, "Are you really the one?," Jesus' confirmation came in the form of a litany that pointed beyond words. As Peter would summarize it: "he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed" (Acts 10:38). Holistic evangelism is demanded by the example of our Lord's own ministry, which always and everywhere integrated verbal proclamation with healing and deliverance.

Holistic evangelism is also modeled in Jesus' sending mandate to the disciples:

> Proclaim the good news, "The kingdom of heaven has come near." Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. (Matthew 10:7-8)

Take note, as well, of Peter, James, and John's commissioning of Paul and Barnabas as evangelists. They laid down one condition: *that they remember the poor* (Galatians 2:9).

We need to embrace the inner unity of word and deed. Word and deed go together like the two wings of an airplane.

4. A Christocentric Message

The best way to help church members overcome their reluctance to share their faith verbally is to help them be sure of their message, which, for the Christian, is always and everywhere, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is hard—very hard—these days to persuade people to share their faith verbally. I cannot count the times I've heard St. Francis of Assisi quoted in defense of Christian witness as *service alone*. "Preach the gospel wherever you go," he is supposed to have said, "and, if necessary, use words." But it is always necessary to use words! Ironically, even Assisi is best remembered for his words.

My wife and I volunteered at one of Mother Teresa's Calcutta hospices. Among our assignments was dressing those too weak to dress themselves—some of whom would die the day we dressed them. Afterwards, we spent time with them. We held them, smiled and spoke warmly to them, did all we could to make them comfortable in their pain and let them know we loved them. Yet we were frustrated. Because we knew no Bengali, we could not point to the origin of our compassion in the Savior's compassion for us—and them. Without words, all our kindness could only point to us. We wanted desperately to point to someone beyond ourselves but could not. Paul's words haunt you in a position like that: "How are they to call on one . . . of whom they have never heard?"(Romans 10:14).

Notice that the question of Paul I just quoted does not focus on Christianity or the church. ("How are they to call on one . . . of whom they have never heard?") In the New Testament, the predicate of Christian witness is always Jesus. John the Baptist, God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the apostles all bear witness to Jesus (cf. John 5:31ff and Acts 5:31-32). According to the Bible, we, with them, are *his* witnesses (Isaiah 43:12; Luke 24:48; Acts 1:8). That means we give verbal testimony to him.

By definition, a witness has firsthand knowledge. As John puts it:

> We declare to you . . . what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes . . . and touched with our hands. (1 John1:1)

With the same confidence, Peter writes:

> We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. (2 Peter 1:16)

To affirm the grace of God in Jesus Christ and assert his lordship and authority, then, we must know the reality of what we affirm in our own experience. An Appalachian quip underscores the importance of this "knowing": "You can't give what you ain't got any more than you can come from where you ain't been." As the apostle Paul insists, plenty of well-intentioned people "are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge" (Romans 10:2). As the Lord Jesus will say to those whose apologia is their activism, "I never *knew* you" (Matthew 7:22-23).

So, what we witness to is not a religion. It is not a corpus of truths left behind by some dead person or series of dead people. It is, instead, a relationship with a living person who lived and died and rose from the dead . . . who embodies the truth . . . in whom truth has come:

> For the law was given through Moses [that is how we get a religion], but grace and truth *came* in Jesus Christ. (John 1:17)

Moses was a messenger—-God's FedEx person. He was given a package—the law—and delivered it to the people. But the risen Lord Jesus Christ <u>*is*</u> the message. He didn't *deliver* truths; in him, truth "*came*."

This Christocentric message must again become the keynote of evangelism. After all, it is not Christianity—another religion—that we have given our allegiance to, but the living Christ.

That was the corrective so often accented by the missionary, E. Stanley Jones. He underscored it repeatedly in his roundtable discussions. It served him well. For example, because he held up Christ instead of Christianity, he could agree without defensiveness when his hearers highlighted disgraceful moments in Christian history. Further, this insight gave him a handle on the knotty problems of the Old Testament. If Christ was the

fullest expression of the self-disclosure of God (Luke 16:16; Hebrews 1:1-4), God's self-disclosure in the Old Testament must be regarded as partial and progressive. Thus, Jones was fond of echoing God's word to Moses and Elijah as they met with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration: "This is my Son . . . Listen to Him!" (Mark 9:7).

5. Incarnational Witness

> *I find the fact that our Lord spent his whole life among sinners and died between two thieves breathtaking. If he is our exemplar, the narrow road of our earthly sojourn cannot be some woodland byway but must go right up the middle of the crowded broad road, only in the opposite direction.*

In the opening statement of Hebrews—which William Barclay called "the most sonorous piece of Greek in the whole New Testament"—the writer recalls how, in the past, God spoke to humanity through the prophets, and how, in these last days, God has spoken through "a Son." At first glance, God's model of communication to humans through Jesus seems parallel to God's communication through the prophets. In fact, the process seems little different from the communication models we were introduced to in our college textbooks—most of them based on a description developed by Bell Labs in 1941. But, if we look more closely, there is more.

To talk about that "more," let me remind you of a name you may have all but forgotten: Marshall McLuhan. In *The Medium is the Massage* (1967) and other quirky writings, McLuhan, who was a Canadian philosopher of communication, shifted attention from messenger and message in communication theory to the means of delivery, which is also what happens in Hebrews. The prophets spoke a message, but Jesus *was* the message.

Many of McLuhan's ideas were prophetic. For example, he identified the beginnings of a shift from "precept" to "percept," which foresaw and explained the postmodern attraction to a faith grounded in experience more than doctrine. He also predicted the eclipse of Christianity in the midst of a rise of religiosity. But look at what is happening around us. It seems to be tracking spot on as he foresaw it.

Especially helpful, I think, was his notion that the delivery system

greatly affects the sender's message, facilitating or frustrating clarity. Regarding mass media as a delivery system, McLuhan thought mainly the latter. Why? Because he regarded media such as radio and television, even though extensions of ourselves, as essentially impersonal. "We shape our tools," he said, but "thereafter, our tools shape us."

Now, if McLuhan was right and the medium does tend to overtake and overwhelm the message—if, as he claimed, our delivery systems depersonalize the message—we do well to remember that God's approach to humanity in Christ was—and continues to be—eminently personal. Jesus is "Emanuel . . . God with us" (Matthew 1:23). And, in sending us out to evangelize and make disciples, Jesus reminds us of that, assuring us that he will be with us even to the end of the age.

Putting the opening verses of Hebrews in the framework of the Bell model, the Encoder (God the Father) has chosen, of all the possibilities, a Son as the medium (embodiment) of the gospel to humanity. If we choose—as I believe we should—to follow God's lead (and McLuhan's intuition), we will, to the fullest extent possible, embrace God's Incarnational model and affirm the primacy of persons and relationships in evangelization. Technique has its place, but the Messenger (God), the Message (the Son), the medium (those who know the Son and are led by the Spirit) and the means (redemptive, reconciling relationships) rule.

6. Intelligent Attention to the Role of Media in Evangelism

> *We live in a technological age. It is not going away. Though it is undisputedly intimidating, we must, nonetheless, do our best to use technology well.*

Religious broadcasting, which made its debut in the early 1920s, was thought to be nothing less than a gift from God for the rapid winning of the world to Christ. "The wave of the future," radio could reach unheard-of numbers tuning in from such diverse settings as the high-rises of Hong Kong, the Highlands of Scotland, and the highways of America. It could penetrate closed countries where missionaries were not allowed. Though the numbers touted reflected potential, not actual, listeners, there was great optimism that the actual numbers would be substantial.

Though access was more restricted, the medium of television seemed to promise even greater results. As it turned out, radio and television were better tools for reinforcing faith than bringing people to faith. But there was another, more troubling, problem. The arrival of these electronic delivery systems resulted in a big adjustment of attention from the message of the gospel to media tools and techniques.

Not everyone bought the hype about mass media. Eugene Nida, for instance, warned that we imagine "the wider the audience, the more valuable the message." However, as the audience grows, he said, we tend to "adopt a principle of saying less and less to more and more" (1960:115). In other words, Nida was convinced that the allure of the "bigger is better" fascination with mass media's potential to reach more people only led to a more generalized message.

The opening statement in Hebrews about God speaking, first of all, through the prophets and then by his Son. gives weight to Nida's concerns. Had he chosen to, God easily could have taken up a celestial megaphone to communicate the Good News—in the manner of Joseph Bayly's *Gospel Blimp* parable. Instead, we read about the Incarnation. Instead, we read about Jesus calling a group of twelve to himself and being "with them" (John 17:12). Instead, we read about conversations with corrupt tax collectors, and demoniacs, and soldiers, and women with tainted reputations. The Bible does show us crowds seeking Jesus, but never Jesus seeking crowds.

This gives me some hope for the Internet. Though the Internet is regularly used by Gutenberg types as an electronic print medium or as a broadcast-like medium—both with impersonal limitations—its best potential is facilitating person-to-person and small group conversations without getting in the way too much. Still, I wonder. Because technological culture is the marrow of modernity, the modern mind has difficulty keeping technique in perspective. As Wilbert Shenk has written:

> Technique has been woven into the very fabric of our lives. The ways we communicate and relate to others are shaped by technique . . . Technical culture results in anomie and alienation (1995:97).

For us who give expression to a relational faith and invite people into that same relationship with Christ, Shenk's pessimistic note cannot be lightly

dismissed. Nevertheless, the Internet is with us and we will need to thoughtfully make the most of it.

7. An Ethical Evangelism

> *Unfortunately, there are those who seem to think that Paul's "by all means" gives carte blanche to those engaged in evangelism. Such is not the case. The end does not justify the means. A polluted stream contaminates the lake into which it flows every time.*

Let's zero in on personal faith sharing, though this certainly applies to congregations too. We would all agree, I hope, that the aim of evangelism is to invite people to turn to Jesus, not to build personal reputations. We would all agree, I think, that sheep stealing is as undesirable in the church as it is in someone's pasture. We would all agree that the Good News should be proclaimed without regard to race, gender, class, position, or any of the other labels that so easily become libels in human society. These things we know; they are clear-cut and obvious. However, there are other ethical concerns in evangelization that are more illusory and elusive.

For instance, although we are to share our faith with our friends, we must resist the temptation to make friends as a contrivance for faith-sharing. When it comes to the Great Commandment and Great Commission, the Great Commandment always comes first. The Great Commission is not a stand-alone duty but an expression—arguably the greatest expression—of the Great Commandment to love our neighbor. Otherwise, our evangelism inevitably falls into manipulation of some kind—browbeating, badgering, brainwashing, bait and switch, and other such abuses.

With regard to our message, ethical evangelism tells "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." As servants of the kingdom, we represent the king as honestly, accurately, and fully as we can. We are, as he was, honest about the cost of discipleship. We do not present the trailhead of discipleship as the top of the mountain. We do not represent Jesus as offering cheap grace. Nor do we foster the notion that he is Santa without the red suit.

Again, ethical evangelism requires that we be ever alert to keep our motives pure when offering social services, acts of kindness, and the like.

This is a subtle thing, and not easy to get hold of. But while it is true that "people don't care how much we know until they know how much we care," we must not allow that knowledge to tempt us into some shameless charade. The very notion of orchestrating masquerades of caring as setup devices for proclaiming the Good News ought to make us flush with embarrassment.

8. Research on Church Growth

Learning from demographics, church data, community surveys, interviews, and historical documents is not passé. Changes in church and community demand that our attention to research, even in individual locations, be ongoing and cumulative.

In the 1920s, Christian visionaries like John R. Mott and J. Waskom Pickett began to call for serious research to help the church in its mission at home and abroad. With Mott's help and encouragement, Pickett led a survey of people movements in India. Out of that survey and its call for research came the emphasis on research in McGavran's Church Growth Movement.

We need to continue our research into how churches grow domestically. We also need to identify why and how some churches manage the enormous shift in ethos and practice from an inward to and outward focus. And we need to focus, especially, on how, with very limited resources, churches are growing in international settings—because that is where the most growth is happening. We need more research and reflection on the cell and house church movements in Asia. We need to pay more attention to the tens of thousands of African youth who are being baptized and coming into churches through campaigns run, not by adults, but Christian young people. We need to look at what is happening in a place like Singapore where there are now Christian cells on practically every street and every high-rise block. The task of research has hardly begun.

9. Observing Creativity

I suppose this is really an extension of the previous priority, but I have found it incredibly illuminating to focus on the creativity of churches that think outside the box.

Since the late 1970s, I have taken every opportunity to visit what I call exemplar churches—i.e. churches that are doing evangelism well. In the days when you could buy a 21-day ticket on one airline and fly to as many of its destinations as you wanted, my wife and I would spend the whole 21 days (our vacation) visiting pastors and churches. On Sundays we would go to as many different worship services as possible. In greater Los Angeles, we once visited five services in one day.

We figured out early on that, while it's unwise to try to clone any congregation or leader, you can still learn a lot—especially if you lock in on innovations, vision, artistry of all kinds, resourcefulness, ingenuity—in other words, the creative edges. For example, a few years ago, as I was landing in Dallas, I noticed on the rooftop of the main building of a church campus the words, FELLOWSHIP CHURCH.COM. Before I ever stepped off the plane, I knew several things about that church: (1) its location and rooftop placard told me that it catered especially to business people; (2) the .com told me that it was a technologically hip church; (3) the size of the campus and a construction project in the works told me that it was growing—probably growing fast. That weekend, I visited T.D. Jakes' Potter's House and, of course, my new discovery, Fellowship Church, which turned out to be patterned somewhat after Willow Creek near Chicago. The church was then nine years old and had grown from 90 to 9,000. I discovered that it really was a businessperson friendly church. For example, those who were not able to be there on Sunday—who had to be in San Franciso or Singapore that week—could go online at their convenience and see the service they missed. Via a live webcam, they could even watch the construction that was going on if they wanted to. The sermon that week was based on James 1:5:

> If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.

So, appropriately enough, the service began with a clip from the old TV program, "Get Smart" and went from there. Sitting beside me were two little boys, maybe 12 years old. When the sermon was finished, one of them turned to the other and said, "We've got to talk about that in our small group this week!" From that church alone, I learned the value of videotaping baptismal testimonies, how to supplement pastoral care through the Internet, and, from two 12-year-olds, how not to waste a sermon. By the way, if you are a 12-year-old at Fellowship Church this month, At MERGE, on Wednesday nights, you can expect to learn about God's promises with the help of favorite candy bars. *"O, taste and see that the Lord is good.!"*

We also need to look at churches overseas. In the 1970s, my seminary evangelism professor, George W. Peters, shared what he was learning about saturation evangelism programs like "New Life for All" and "Evangelism in Depth." We also got our first glimpse of cell-based churches through his experiences in South Korea. Today, there is even more potential to weigh what is happening in evangelism in the two-thirds world because the churches have now come into their own.

An Episcopalian woman hearing Philip Jenkins in Florida came to him afterwards.

She asked, "Is what you said really true, that the churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are experiencing huge growth?"

Jenkins answered that it was, indeed, true, to which the woman responded, "Well, how can we stop it?" The answer, of course, is that if this is God's doing, then nothing will stop it. The apposite question is not, "How can we stop it, but what can we learn from it?"

10. Reliance on the Holy Spirit

> *Except for those written from a Pentecostal or Charismatic viewpoint, few of even the best books on evangelism say much about the Holy Spirit—surprising when you remember that the church couldn't begin its mission until the Spirit had come.*

When writers on evangelism do mention the Spirit, their focus is usually on the Spirit's empowerment. Seldom is the Spirit's superintendency mentioned, even though the mission is God's, not ours. In

Acts, though, the thrust is different:

> 8:29—Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it."
>
> 10:19-20—While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Look, three men are searching for you. Now get up, go down, and go with them without hesitation; for I have sent them."
>
> 13:2—The Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."
>
> 13:4—So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia; and from there they sailed to Cyprus.
>
> 16:7—They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

The picture is clear. Wherever the apostles of the early church evangelized, they did so under the marching orders of the Spirit. That, of course, was the pattern in Jesus' ministry too. And with God's people in the Old Testament (in the Wilderness, the crossing of the Jordan, and so on).

The Holy Spirit *prepares* us; the Holy Spirit *sends* us; the Holy Spirit *guides* us; the Holy Spirit *empowers* us; and the Holy Spirit *works through* us—individually and collectively to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in the world. We are on God's errand, not our own. That means that all our efforts must begin and end in prayer, for it is through prayer that discernment comes, along with the strength and wisdom to carry out the specifics of what, in our setting, the Spirit wants us to do.

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Book Reviews

***Evangelism in the Early Church*, Revised ed.**
By Michael Green
Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, [1970] 2004. 474pp.

The revised edition of Michel Green's, *Evangelism in the Early Church*, is the unique product of a scholar who is deeply committed to both theology and evangelism. Fundamentally, this is a book about the unwavering efficacy of the gospel in the first two-hundred years of the Christian movement. This movement prevailed despite challenges posed by Jewish monotheists, Greek and Roman unbelievers and the inadequacies of the first disciples.

Green selectively highlights contextual challenges encountered by the early Christians from the Apostle Paul to Origen. The book answers many of our classic questions: What were the pathways for evangelism and what were the obstacles to evangelism? How was the evangel described and what were the accompanying challenges of sharing the evangel to Jews and Gentiles? Who were the early evangelists? What were their motives, methods and strategies?

The book, originally published in 1970, now appears in its revised 2003 form because of the many academic and cultural changes that have occurred over the past three decades. Green states that while there have been advancements in New Testament and patristic scholarship, the status of these disciplines has diminished in our increasingly secularized Western universities. He further asserts that culturally, existentialism developed into post-modernism and deconstructionism. Last, Green points out the contemporary diversion from the basic tenets of modernity, radical doubt, rejection of the supernatural, elevation of rationalism, empiricism and conviction that human nature is basically good.

In response to these prevailing contemporary beliefs, Green has painted an insightful picture of the first century Jewish and Graeco-Roman cultures that the early church engaged evangelistically. The images painted on his canvas serve as catalysts that should cause readers to consider how to apply

the tactics and strategies used by the early disciples in our pluralistic twenty-first century culture.

Green's updated scholarship offers thoughtful insights about early evangelism constructs and efforts that can counterbalance the widely held assumptions above. An examination of Green's analysis should also quiet protests about the difficulty of spreading the gospel in today's' society as if our obstacles are more difficult those presented by the Jewish and Graeco-Roman cultures.

Green pulls us back into the first century to remind us that the early disciples were unlearned laity, nobodies frowned upon by Jewish clerics. They faced obstacles in the Jewish culture that posed formidable challenges to the early spread of Christianity such as abandoning Jewish customs, Jesus "the a-political Messiah" and the cross being a sign of a curse.

The Graeco-Roman world posed no less a challenge. People then were used to belonging to a state religion without engaging in personal belief or spiritual transformation. There was a tolerance of other religions, which stood in opposition to Christianity's demand for sole allegiance to Christ. Christianity, unlike the prevailing religions, also challenged the stability of the state order.

Green's thorough description of what constitutes the evangel is most helpful. Three Greek terms provide a well-rounded understanding of the evangel: *euaggelizesthai, marturein* and *kērussein*. Translated, these three words mean: to tell good news, to bear witness and to proclaim. Green provides detailed explanations for the above terms and outlines the ways that the early disciples shared the good news, witnessed and proclaimed the gospel in their environments.

The solid scholarship contained in Green's work is not just for academic musing. The fundamental concepts of evangelism and its praxis in the early church are useful to readers today because of the renewed interest in discovering God, the supernatural and the gospel today. This renewed openness to the gospel and evangelism became apparent during what Green refers to as a decade of evangelism (1990-2000). The Alpha course, with its emphasis on discovering God, food and fellowship is one example of the heightened interest in evangelism today.

In writing this book, Michael Green dipped his scholarly pen into the historic well of early Christianity and painted a vivid picture of evangelism, its practice, obstacles and methodologies. Readers will profit from this

fascinating book for many years. I highly recommend this book to evangelism professors and seminarians desiring a fundamental grasp of the evangelistic task faced by the first disciples and for discussion about the contemporary application of the strategies employed. This book is also useful to pastors and denominational staff with evangelism responsibilities.

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Kwasi Kena is Director of Evangelism Ministries at the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

The Disciple-Making Church: From Dry Bones to Spiritual Vitality
By Glenn McDonald
Grand Haven, MI: FaithWalk Publishing, 2004. 258 pp.

The author, an experienced pastor, writes to help churches move from standard, program-driven activities to intentional, discipleship-oriented relationships. The aim of the book is to grow "churches characterized by *disciples who make disciples*," (p. xi).

The book divides into two parts: (1) Discipling Relationships and (2) The Six Marks of a Disciple. Part I uses relationships that Paul had with individuals and churches, for example, Timothy and Barnabas and the church in Antioch.

The antidote for the stagnating and stifling pseudo-ministries of the ABC church (attendance, building, cash) which is to focus on relationships constitutes the substance of part I. Chapter 2 asks: "Who is your Lord?" It addresses the accommodation of Christians to popular culture and the tendency to mold Christ's lordship into manageable terms. Chapter 3, "Who Are You?" deals with the challenge of identifying ourselves fully with our Lord, rather than with people who can bring us, at some level, worldly honor (pp. 48-49). Chapter 4 asks the question, "Who is Your Barnabas?" meaning who provides mentoring, discipling input into one's life. McDonald reflects on how Barnabas acted as a mentor to Paul in Paul's early Christian life and goes on to explain some core characteristics of mentoring.

A disciple-making church will include Timothys as well as Barnabases. As church members grow in maturity, there comes a point in time in which they become a Barnabas to a Paul, a Paul to a Timothy (chapter 5). This is

a key chapter. The preacher's skill at alliteration shines here: discipline is relational, intentional, transformational, and reproducible (pp. 81-87). McDonald then uses the question, "Where is Your Antioch?" to expound on the importance of Christian community, particularly small groups. Every effective discipler surrounds him/herself with like-minded people to hear God's voice and to receive grace to do God's will. Finally, "Where is Your Macedonia?" asks readers to consider their location for ministry. It's not a place, but among a people and, McDonald says, it will probably be outside the church (p. 110).

Part II describes the marks of a discipling church. The first is "A Heart for Christ Alone" (chapter 8). Pretty standard fare here: a call for single-minded devotion and the discernment to recognize incipient idolatry and practical atheism. It is followed by a chapter (9) on meditation on and "living" in the scriptural Word. Chapter 10 ("Arms for Love") explains *agape* and challenges believers to accept the cost of loving others as Christ loves us. A chapter on prayer follows and then the book turns to explicitly practical matters. In chapter 12 we get to personal evangelism, which is essentially and necessarily relational. Chapter 13 turns again to the practices necessary to develop a servant heart. The last chapter (14) deals with the habits of a disciple-making church. Other than the exercises at the back of each chapter, only this final chapter focuses on congregational practices that support evangelism and discipleship.

Each chapter ends with questions for further exploration as well as a category called "Getting Started" that focuses one practice at the individual level and one at the small group or congregational level. For example, to help get started with discipling relationships within the congregation, McDonald suggests that the church could publicly present several "spiritual generations" which brings four or five individuals together who have "sequentially helped each other follow Christ," (p. 89). This exercise follows the pattern found in 2 Timothy 2:2, which provides the central scriptural concept for the chapter, "Who is Your Timothy?"

The book is mostly descriptive of the right attitudes and quality of relationships associated with discipleship. It has some nice analytical touches (e.g. four quadrants to help locate people in terms of level of connection to God and the church), but does not dig very deeply. For example, the chapter entitled "A Voice to Speak the Good News" offers some telling statistics (from George Barna) regarding the abysmal rate of

conversion growth and how few Christians actually actively share the gospel with non-believers. It predictably exegetes the Great Commission (even though the theme of the chapter derives from Luke 15) and describes some of the standard hindrances to personal evangelism.

I think the book is a bit naive about the causes of the deep inertia immobilizing the church. Furthermore, as one reads through the book, one begins to conclude that the title is a bit misleading. The book is not so much about the disciple-making church as it is about personal evangelism and discipleship. Certainly, one hopes that a pastor/church leader will develop these gifts among a number of people in the church, but the book stays at pretty much an individual level.

McDonald is a good communicator and the book is well-written and accessible. The core principles are clearly-stated. This book breaks no new ground but certainly does a good job of covering the terrain. People familiar with discipling literature will find nothing new here. The strength of the book lies in its accessibility and its practical exercises at the end of each chapter. It would make a good text in a variety of evangelism or pastoral leadership classes.

Stephen W. Rankin is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Campus Minister at Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas.

Renewing the City: Reflections on Community Development and Urban Renewal
By Robert D. Lupton
Foreword by Ray Bakke
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005. 240 pp.

Robert D. Lupton is founder and president of Family Consultation Service (FCS) Urban Ministries, established in 1976 in inner-city Atlanta as a nonprofit counseling agency for low-income clients. Originally serving children and families referred by Atlanta area juvenile courts, FCS Urban Ministries eventually broadened its mission to pursue lasting solutions to some of the underlying causes of poverty. With a staff of sixty, FCS constructs housing, operates businesses and education programs for at-risk children and offers other human services. It works closely with churches to

mobilize people and resources that bring hope and creative new options to the city.

Drawing on thirty years of experience Lupton turns to Nehemiah as a role model for those involved in urban renewal and in empowering community leaders. In Part One Lupton re-tells Nehemiah's story as the memoirs of an urban strategist and community developer. In Part Two Lupton interweaves his own story—told in the format of journal entries—with that of Nehemiah as a springboard to reflecting on crucial issues such as serving or leading? gentrification and justice; purity; vision; the difficulty with doing good; where your treasure is; conflict of interest; church and community; Biblical economics; and making a home in the city.

What is happening in cities of the United States—for example Louisville, Kentucky; Memphis, Tennessee; and New Orleans or other communities along the Gulf Coast decimated by a succession of hurricanes in late August 2005—is not encouraging. The wealthy are returning to the great urban centers while the poor are being pushed to the peripheries. In the context of this great demographic reversal, this book is a prophetic tract for our times. There are no facile "God loves the city" statements. Lupton rejects all panaceas and challenges popular concepts such as "servanthood" or "relocation." "Mega church" has little appeal in his world. His goal is to create in the midst of urban blight wholesome places for families to flourish with integrity, justice and on a sustainable basis. As Ray Bakke summarized in his foreword, "The God of the Bible is about restoring people and rebuilding communities."

As was true when I read previous books by Lupton, including *Theirs Is the Kingdom: Celebrating the Gospel in Urban America* (Harper, 1989) and *Return Flight: Community Development through Reneighboring Our Cities* (FCS Urban Ministries, 1993), the words "creative," "moving," "challenging" and "practical" came to mind as I read *Renewing the City*. As a text in courses offered by my seminary on "Church Ministry in the City" and "Engaging the City: Urban Theology," as well as a good read for pastors, lay study groups and those involved in denominational leadership, I can name no finer contemporary resource on the subject than this fine book.

Paul R. Dekar is Niswonger Professor of Evangelism and Missions, Memphis Theological Seminary, Memphis, Tennessee.

The Anonymous God: The Church Confronts Civil Religion and American Society
Edited by David L. Adams and Ken Schurb
St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2004. 287 pp.

The Anonymous God is a collection of eight scholarly essays on American civil religion. Though written from an academic perspective, the book is easily readable and the footnotes are placed at the end of each chapter, so readers can ignore them if they wish. The book is produced by Concordia Publishing House, publishing arm of the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church, and the authors write first of all to a Lutheran audience. The book is premised on the Lutheran understanding of a two kingdom theology, and an appendix explains that theology for any interested or uninformed reader.

The thesis is that there is a truly religious dimension in American life and that religious element transcends all other religions. The purpose of the book is to encourage believers, especially pastors, to take into account the existence of American civil religion, its impact on American culture and on the church. In an interesting twist, the introduction recommends that, if the reader has not read the essay on "The Church in the Public Square in a Pluralistic Society," by David Adams, which is the final essay in the book, they should begin with that essay and read the book in reverse, from back to front! That essay is devoted to explaining what sorts of public functions a Christian minister can participate in, and which ones need to be avoided because the faith of the believer will be compromised. This is the most parochial of the chapters, highlighting the conviction which led the Missouri Synod to question the participation of one of its clergy in an interfaith service at Yankee Stadium following the events of September 11, 2001.

The recommendation of this reviewer is that one begin at the front of the book, because it gets off to a very strong start. The first essay, by the same David Adams who wrote the last chapter, is the strongest in the book. It traces the history of civil religion in the last three hundred years, since the term was coined by Rousseau. Adams summarizes the development of American civil religion, identifying Thomas Jefferson as the American Moses, Abraham Lincoln as the American Jesus, and Ronald Reagan as the

American Paul. He uses the Ten Commandments as a basis for demonstrating how civil religion is contrary to the teachings of scripture.

The essays that follow are roughly chronological, tracing the beginning of syncretism to Athenagoras of Athens (a very fine chapter); and moving up to the religious pluralism that has emerged in the United States and was strengthened by the events of September 11 and after. Several essays seem to appeal most directly to Missouri Synod Lutherans, including one which outlines the writings of the first president of the Synod, and another which highlights the work of two prominent historians, Martin Marty and Sidney Mead.

This book is most helpful for believers of a Lutheran persuasion, but several chapters give a very good and more general understanding of the American form of civil religion. The book is useful for evangelism in that it gives an explanation of the context in which reaching lost people takes place in the US today. It issues a stern warning to avoid compromise of the faith.

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Jim Holm is President of Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, Fresno, California.

Here I am: Now What on Earth Should I be Doing?
By Quentin Schultze
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005. 109 pp.

A recurrent question hounds the new Christian, "What am I supposed to do?" Quentin Schultze attempts to answer this question in his book, *Here I am: Now What on Earth Should I be Doing?*

Schultze helps readers explore ways to live faithfully in their *vocation* and in their *stations* in life. The author states that Christians share the same vocation, i.e. being "caring followers of Jesus Christ who faithfully love God, neighbor and self." The overarching message of the book is that Christians should respond to God's call to be faithful followers of Jesus Christ in all aspects of daily life. The book asserts that our calling is a lifelong process of connecting our shared vocation with our individual stations.

In the early chapters, Schultze introduces the concept of ones station in life. This is most helpful. Our station is, "Where one keeps watch." A person occupies many stations in life: work, relationships, situations, etc. From the everyday vantage point of ones station, Christians can spread hope, strive for excellence, or cultivate a legacy. Thus, individual Christians can work out their salvation practically through their stations in life.

Schultze builds his message through the use of biblical examples, personal experience and others' life stories. He writes in an unassuming manner that would not intimidate any new believer. There are no complicated theological terms. The text is not sprinkled with Greek, Hebrew or Latin terms. This is a down to earth approach to practical Christian living.

The book guides Christian neophytes along a spiritual journey of discovery. Throughout this journey, Schultze appears to respond to the common "now what" questions expressed by new believers.

A tacit, "now what," seems to precede each topic in the book. *Now what?* God calls us. *Now what?* Respond faithfully. *Now what?* Declare availability to God. *Now what?* Avoid the love of prestige and wealth. *Now what?* Work in community to improve the life of others. And so the book continues punctuated with personal explanations and anecdotes.

As a denominational director of evangelism, I recognize that this book fills an important ministry niche. Local churches frequently ask me to suggest resources for new Christians. The requests stem from the apparent dearth of "next step" resources available for new believers. Beyond assurance of salvation and intellectual studies on discipleship people are looking for clear guidance in practicing everyday Christianity. *Here I am: Now What on Earth Should I be Doing?* provides the practical help that many people seek.

Local churches could use this book as a resource for a "seeker" population, a new members class or an older confirmation class or new believer's class. For churches that observe the liturgical year, this book could be used as primer for new Christians or those called to evangelism/discipleship ministries.

Consider doing a book study leading up to these times in the Christian year: 1). Pentecost Sunday is the traditional time that some churches commission those who feel called to evangelism. 2). The First Sunday of Advent. Churches often present new converts to the church on the first

Sunday of Advent. As part of this preparation, new converts could read this book. 3). Lent/Easter. On the first Sunday of Lent new disciples enter a period of spiritual formation. These new disciples could read this book and highlight some practical ways in which they will live out their Christian faith.

The book offers a survey style treatment of Christian practice. Unfortunately the quality of the anecdotal information lacks a compelling poignancy to inspire readers to read on with excited anticipation. Also missing is a persuasive invitation to practice what is presented. At times the book reads like a laundry list of options that presumes that the readers, new believers, are thoroughly convinced to actively practice their Christian faith. The insertion of Christian accountability would be helpful.

At the end of the book, the author provides a suggested reading list for each chapter topic. This provides readers with the opportunity to explore the writings of classic and contemporary Christian thinkers.

In summary, *Here I am: Now What on Earth Should I be Doing?* fills a gap in ministry resources. In survey fashion, it provides tangible options for persons who desire to practice their Christian faith in everyday situations.

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Kwasi Kena is Director of Evangelism Ministries at the General Board of Discipleship of the United Methodist Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

Christianity and the Postmodern Turn: Six Views
Edited by Myron B. Penner
Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2005. 240 pp.

This book's aim is to give readers food for thought in sorting out the nature and "fit" of postmodern thought to Christian theology. In other words, can Christians think "postmodernly" and still be faithful Christians? Well, yes and no. That is the nature of this work. Four philosophers (R. Douglas Geivett, James, K.A. Smith, R. Scott Smith and Merold Westphal) and two theologians (Kevin Van Hoozer and John Franke) make up the group of conversants. The editor, Myron Penner is professor of both philosophy and theology. His introduction sets up the book well.

The book shows the complexities of even having a conversation about postmodernism. It takes some doing just to define it. A standard definition: postmodernism is essentially a deconstructive enterprise, arguing that there is no "universal reason" giving us unbiased access to truth. There is no interpretive scheme that is free of the biases of a particular language and culture. All truth is perspectival. Postmodernists (in this work, John Franke, James K.A. Smith and Merold Westphal) are thus anti-foundationalist.

"Anti-postmodernists" or "foundationalists" (Geveitt and R. Scott Smith) argue that postmodern thought is inimical to Christianity, that we do have means to connect with the external world and we can make claims about it that can be tested. They agree with the postmodernists that no one person or system of thought manifests exhaustive truth, but they claim to be considerably more confident about finding adequate grounding for truth. They argue that to say that the world is "constructed," as the postmodernists do, is effectively to *give up* on the quest for universal truth.

With these basic positions established, let the games begin. The structure of the book divides in two parts. In Part I each author gets a crack at the basic question of whether or not postmodern thought is anti-Christian. In Part II the authors respond to each other's substantive claims in Part I. The writing is lively, for the most part, sticks close to its task. Often collections of essays are loose and inchoate. This book holds together.

As representative, I offer two viewpoints to the reader to give a taste of how the book goes. R. Douglas Geivett argues that human nature searches for "true beliefs" that correspond (i.e. correspondence theory) with the way the world actually is. Furthermore, these beliefs can be rendered in the form of propositions and that propositions entail some form of foundationalism. On the other hand, postmodern (post- or anti-foundationalists) thinkers adhere to some form of coherentism that "suffers fatally from the isolation problem" (p. 49). The critique focuses on the perceived problems of constructivism so characteristic of postmodern thought.

John Franke defends postmodern Christian thinkers against this critique of epistemic relativism: "Numerous thinkers who would describe themselves as postmodern have not abandoned the truth project and are not so preoccupied with the situated self that they cannot get beyond it. Rather, they are attempting to rethink the quest for truth in light of the contextual nature of human thought and the plurality of human cultural expression," (p. 204).

As might be expected in a work of this sort, in which authors read and respond to each other's papers, the product is uneven. Most of the content is truly dialogic and conversational. The authors take each other seriously and try to understand each other clearly (e.g., R. Scott's Smith's response) before agreeing or rebutting. In a few instances (e.g., James K.A. Smith's response to Geivett) one notices the tendency in places toward straw man arguments. On the whole, however, the writers stay close to their given task.

We have in this book, then, a nice collection of essays from authors situating themselves within evangelical Protestantism. They are indirectly dealing with a basic philosophical question: by what means do we have access to the world? Both foundationalists and nonfoundationalists in these essays agree that we have such access, even though it may be limited like that of (by comparison to color high density) a black and white TV, as Merold Wesphal says (p. 232). They disagree as to how and on what terms we can assert our knowledge claims. Most of them take a clear position on one side or the other. One of them (Kevin Van Hoozer) is a kind of "middle-of-the-roader," "disputing" (to use his term) with postmodernism but willing in pretty unabashed way to learn from its critique. To be fair, in the end he makes clear that he is not in the postmodern camp.

Readers with no background in the related philosophical subjects and the seminal thinkers to which the authors refer will find it frustratingly heavy going, I think. The ones with at least some basic understanding of terms like "foundationalism" and "nonfoundationalism," of "externalism" and "internalism," and of writers such as Derrida, Lyotard and Heidegger, will find this book stimulating and rewarding.

Stephen W. Rankin is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and Campus Minister at Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas.

Is Jesus the Only Savior?
by James R. Edwards
Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005. 250 pp.

Any reader exposed to publications over the last three decades wrestling with the cross-currents in Christology and soteriology in an age of raging

religious pluralism and postmodernism would welcome this book. Scholars like Craig L. Blomberg, Darrel L. Bock, Daniel B. Clendenin, John B. Cobb, Gavin D. Costa, William Lane Craig, John Dominic Crossan, Gerald R. McDermott, Millard J. Erickson, Gabriel Fackre, Ajith Fernando, Robert Funk, Craig Evans, Douglas Geirett, Ken R. Gnanakan, Michael Green, Gary Habemmas, Richard Hayes, John Hick, Larry Hurtado, Paul F. Knitter, Howard I. Marshall, Alister McGrath, Scot McKnight, J.P. Moreland, Richard J. Mouw, Lesslie Newbigin, Ronald Nash, Dennis L. Okholm, W. Gary Phillips, Timothy R. Phillips, Raimunido Panikkar, Clark Pinnock, Karl Rahner, Ramesh Richard, Robert L. Reymond, Stanley J. Samartha, John Stott, Francis A. Sullivan, Timothy C. Tennet, T.F. Torrance, Michael J. Wilkins, Ben Witherington III, N.T. Wright and Edwin Yamauchi, etc. have provided us with the wide spectrum of positions and perspectives on this topic.

The appearance of this volume could not have been timelier! In the turbulent confusion created by *The Da Vinci Code* and the *Gospel of Judas*, James E. Edwards returns the reader to the source of the Christian faith—*"the evidence and claims of the New Testament and the early church ..."* (p. xii). James seeks to remove suspicion and doubt for Christians while demonstrating to pre-Christians the evidence of reasonable credibility to embrace Jesus as the only Savior and *"the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints"* (Jude 3). This book is clearly the product of a New Testament scholar's skills and an apologist's passion which were filtered through the academic rigor of the author's peers in the Religion and Philosophy Department of Whitworth College.

From the outset, the author exposes the foundational influence of the Enlightenment which changed the rules of the game from the pre-Modern to the Modern era and elevated the human self and human reason while making naturalism its paradigm. The New Testament and the Christian faith has been subjected to the Enlightenment's historical skepticism for 250 years. Much of the Christian faith was immediately jettisoned *"including the authority of the Church, Scripture and divine revelation"* (p. 13) but it retained greatly-altered concepts of God and Jesus.

The author traces the three chronological quests for the historical Jesus using naturalistic methods of investigation. The First Quest tried to explain away the miracles in the Gospels while the Second Quest focused on showing how the early church influenced the resultant picture of a

mythologized Jesus in the Gospels. The Third Quest with the Jesus Seminar as its public front concentrates on the influence of Judaism and the social environment of Palestine on Jesus' life. After explaining the conclusions of the Jesus Seminar scholars, the author exposes their hidden suppositions.

To address the historical skepticism, James masterfully establishes the reliability of the New Testament as a historical document, the reliability of what the Gospels say about Jesus, and the self-understanding of Jesus as God in chapters 3-5. Then in chapters 6 and 7 the author brilliantly concludes that Jesus is not only the Savior of the world, but the first Christians *"witnessed to the gospel in the face of conflicting claims of salvation, including Torah loyalty, the Caesar cult, and esoteric mystery cults"* (p. 139). Similarly, Christians in the Third Millennium are called on to declare their absolute allegiance with *"Jesus is Lord"* who also is *"the full and final revelation of God, the savior and judge of the world*" (p. 140).

Edwards argues in chapter 8 that since ideological pluralism and moral relativism have reduced peoples' understanding of sin and hell to mere metaphors, then likely God, heaven and salvation have the same status. Basing on Martin Luther's logic, the author concludes that when the reality of evil is denied, then the reality of God becomes redundant. Furthermore, the need for a transcendent redemption evaporates without a transcendent dimension of evil. Since G.K. Chesterton's observation that *"the doctrine of sin is the only empirically provable doctrine of the Christian faith"* (p. 162) is true, we need a radical grace that only Jesus brings and provides through the cross—a grace that *"accepts, forgives and transforms"* (p. 152).

After unpacking the positive and negative impact of postmodernism on Christianity the author roots the basis of the exclusivity of Jesus in the very nature of God (p. 180). To the possible threat of world peace Edwards offers Jesus as the only Redeemer and Peacemaker because the gospel is the only power to bring about reconciliation.

This volume would be a companion textbook for apologetics, evangelism and theology courses and a riveting faith-building tool for personal growth.

T.V. Thomas is Director or the Centre for Evangelism & World Mission in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Christianity in the Academy: Teaching at the Intersection of Faith and Learning
By Harry Lee Poe
Grand Rapids MI: Baker Academic, 2004. 208 pp.

This is not an evangelism book per se. However, it is a book that issues a clarion call for Christian believers and Christian scholars to "evangelize" the academy by demonstrating the compatibility of faith and higher education. It guides them to undertake the challenge of *"thinking Christianly"* in relation to their academic disciplines in three ways: First, to illustrate the fact that all academic disciplines inherently deal with faith issues. Secondly, *"to expose the most critical issues of faith that form the very substance of the academic disciplines,"* and thirdly, *"to distinguish philosophical and other biases that have been imported into their disciplines but are not intrinsic to those disciplines"* (p. 14).

The roots of this book are intrinsically intertwined with Professor Harry Poe's own personal journey from his formative years of undergraduate studies. His associations with the C.S. Lewis Foundation, the Center for Christian Studies of Gordon College and the Center for Faculty Development at Union University in addition to his dialogues with his faculty colleagues have enriched this engaging volume. The preface by respected author and professor of philosophy, Dallas Willard, endorses the significance and quality of the book while funding of the author's position as the Charles Colson Professor of Faith and Culture at Union University commends his intellectual ability and scholarly pursuits.

Using varied nomenclatures, the author in chapter 2 helps the reader to understand the broad spectrum of perspectives of religion and higher education institutions (pp. 34-51). He draws from David S. Dockery for institutional identity, David Guthrie for institutional ethos, Harold Heie for the degree of cognitive impact of religion on academic disciplines, Larry Lyon and Michael Beatty for attitudes toward religion in religious and secular schools, Richard T. Hughes, William B. Adrian and James Tunstead Burtchaell for different denominational approaches.

In chapter 3, Dr. Poe concludes that the fundamental cause of the battles fought within the institutions of higher learning in the West stem from the alarming reality that higher education has no longer a clear purpose that is governed by a compelling vision. He traces the historic roots of higher

education to the medieval church when its purposes were innately related to the church's form and function. The church created higher education based on the fact that God *is "the basis for understanding the relationship of all knowledge"* and its purpose was *"to deepen one's faith, knowledge of God and knowledge of God's creation"* (p. 54).

This Christian foundation was evident in the goals of educational institutions—Harvard's motto used to be *"In gloriam Christi" ("for the glory of Christ")* and "*veritas"* ("truth") is still inscribed on its seal; the seal of the University of California is inscribed with *"Let there be light"* (Genesis 1:3). However, the lack of unity and meaning in the contemporary academy is a result of trading its *"universal knowledge, universal values, and universal norms"* (p. 56) for relativism and fragmentation. This absence of a unifying theory of knowledge has also produced a lack of the basis of character (p. 70). Therefore, the author is convinced that Christian educational institutions must fulfill its founding purpose to serve Christ in relationship to churches and follow the road map outlined in chapter 8: *"Asking the Critical Questions."*

Readers familiar with Poe's earlier volume, *Christian Witness in a Postmodern World* (Abingdon, 2001), will be amused to discover that he summarizes its nine chapters into one—*"Chapter 4: From Modernity to Postmodernity"* while expanding its four-page *"Postscript"* into *"Chapter 5: A Christian Worldview*." The author contends that the postmodern generation is yearning to recover what was lost by past generations trapped in modernity. They are reacting against the fragmentation of modernity and crave wholeness. They long to bring about the integration of the spiritual and material in all of life. Furthermore, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault have crafted *"the intellectual framework for postmodern thought"* resulting in a postmodern philosophy (p. 91). These two conditions provide the opportunity for Christian believers *"to bring fresh answers to the questions people ask"* (p. 84) and the Christian scholars to bring the Christian dimension during the course of teaching their disciplines in the academy.

In the brief survey of the common disciplines in the academy in chapter 6, Poe illustrates, first, how all disciplines share common concerns, second, how religion overlaps with every discipline or family of disciplines and, third, how each discipline shares in concerns common with the doctrine of creation. In light of that, he challenges the academy to address their

common problems of *"introspection and isolation"* (p. 132) and in chapter 7 espouses the necessity and advantages of interdisciplinary dialogue.

Every Christian involved in the educational enterprise needs to read and study this book—from trustees to students, from church leaders to campus workers. It will shape and sharpen the Christian mission in the academy.

T.V. Thomas is Director of the Centre for Evangelism & World Mission in Regina, Saskatchewan Canada

The Next Reformation: Why Evangelicals Must Embrace Postmodernity
By Carl Raschke
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004. 235 pp.

Raschke's thesis is that evangelicalism is an heir to the foundationalist epistemology of the Enlightenment. With the apparent failure of modernism, evangelicals are thrust into the situation of either adapting to postmodernism in their theology and practice of ministry or of becoming irrelevant to the emerging worldview in North America and Western Europe. More seriously, Raschke charges that if evangelicals do not modify how they understand God and others in terms of the relationality that marks postmodernism, they will persist in a Gnostic and idolatrous existence shaped by human design rather than divine will. As a leading scholar on the development of postmodernism and, according to the preface of the book, someone who has always considered himself an evangelical, Raschke certainly carries the credentials to make and substantiate these charges.

Although Raschke rarely makes direct reference to evangelism, the implications of his thesis are clear for evangelism insofar as both its study and practice are shaped out of an evangelical worldview. Scholars and practitioners of evangelism are called to reject their modern presuppositions and engage with the postmodern. "Because evangelicalism as both a theological community and a movement is thrust forward by church growth and the practice of evangelism, it has been forced to confront the dynamic peculiarities of contemporary modern culture." (p. 92)

The first five chapters recount the development of philosophy from the Reformation forward. Raschke contends that Martin Luther and the Reformers represented a proto-postmodernism in their approach to the Bible

and theology, "Religious postmodernism…is the *spirit of the Reformation*." (p. 110) In the slogans of *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*, the Reformers sought to let people encounter God apart from the interpretive apparatus of the Roman Catholic Church. This, Raschke argues, prefigured the present struggle of postmodernity against the evangelical prescription of inerrancy. Evangelicalism developed its inerrantist tendencies because of its ties to modernism which, according to Raschke, flowed from Descartes and Locke through old Princeton to the present day. This philosophical lineage causes evangelicals to give epistemic primacy to human reason.

By connecting with postmodernism, Raschke asserts that evangelicals would return to the Reformation by giving faith, rather than reason, epistemic pride of place, allowing for more genuine interaction with the transcendent God of the Bible. To buttress this point, Raschke spends significant time charting the development of postmodernism. Freely acknowledging the eclectic nature of postmodern thought, he explores the philosophical, social, political, literary, and aesthetic forums that all gave rise to postmodernism. Drawing especially from such authors as Kierkegaard, Derrida and Levinas, Raschke concludes that postmodernity is "at base a theory of language that lays bare…the 'infinite qualitative difference' between the exhibitions of human intellect and the splendor of our eternal maker." (p. 32)

The tone of the book shifts significantly in the last four chapters. Stepping away from a careful charting of modernity vis-à-vis postmodernity, Raschke considers how to engage in postmodern ministry. He does this by couching postmodern ministry in the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, explaining the Pentecostal perspective of the church's history and present situation. He then recounts several personal experiences of visiting postmodern/Pentecostal congregations.

While Raschke's attempt at providing constructive examples of postmodern ministry is appreciated, he may hurt his cause more than help it by how he contrasts evangelicalism with Pentecostalism. Based on evangelicalism's specious epistemology, he turns evangelicalism into a strawman that lacks the ability to engage in postmodern ministry. He suggests that evangelical congregations cannot foster genuine relationships among congregants, be creative in worship or engage in spiritual warfare. Pentecostal congregations, however, are capable of all these activities. These observations may accurately portray Raschke's own experiences of

evangelical congregations, but they seem unreasonable as general descriptions.

The contrast between evangelicalism and Pentecostalism is stretched even more thinly in view of the strongly inerrantist stance taken by most Pentecostals. This is an issue Raschke does not acknowledge.

Moreover, Raschke does not contend with the theistic streams of analytical philosophy. Certainly the moderate foundationalists, who Raschke gives short shrift, cannot be so quickly disregarded. Their development of Canonical theism is an increasingly prominent alternative to modernism and postmodernism, as it looks past the Reformation to the first four centuries of the Church's existence for a more genuine ecclesial model.

Raschke has helped move the conversation about the next shape of the Church forward. Much more is left to be said, however. To that end, this book can best be used to spark further conversation in a graduate level class discussing ecclesiology or analytical philosophy.

Rev. Mark Teasdale is a Harry S. Denman Fellow for Evangelistic Studies, Graduate Program for Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.