

The Journey Thus Far



Dr. David Geisler is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and has been involved in Church and para-church College Ministry for over 25 years. In 1994, he was hired by the graduate branch of Campus Crusade for Christ to help develop a national pilot program at U.T. Austin to reach skeptical graduate students. What he discovered is that there is a real need for Christian ministries to understand how to do process evangelism, especially with those more skeptically minded. As a result, in 2000 he started Meekness and Truth™ Ministries. In 2002 in cooperation with his team he developed a new pre-evangelism paradigm called Conversational Pre-Evangelism that he has taught throughout the U.S. with College ministries, churches, seminaries, and mission organizations. In 2004 he felt called to Asia to equip Christians in the East in this new pre-evangelism paradigm. In the seven years he was in Asia he taught in 15 countries and trained over 300 bible and seminary students in practical apologetics, many who are now pastors and missionaries all over Asia. In 2009 he co-authored a book with his father, Christian Apologists, Norman Geisler, titled *Conversational Evangelism: How To Listen and Speak So You May be Heard*. In July of 2011 he and his family relocated back to U.S. in Charlotte N.C. where David oversees M&T's global movement both in the East and the West.

About our Ministry

How do we reach out to those who not only reject any belief in absolute truth, but are also openly hostile towards those who proclaim to know the truth? We believe that in this new millennium we must actively engage in pre-evangelism if we are to reach those that are either indifferent or openly hostile towards the claims of Christ.

Meekness and Truth Ministries has developed the Conversational Evangelism model as an easy to teach, easy to use pre-evangelism process to supplement your evangelistic efforts. This model teaches that in our witness to others it can be helpful to allow others to surface the truth for themselves first by asking them probing questions. Once this happens, it may be easier to find common ground with them in building a bridge to the gospel step by step. As the Apostle Paul said, *"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."* (1 Corinthians 3:6).

This model also explores effective ways of integrating compelling Christian evidences into our daily conversations with pre-believers through interactive dialog. There are primarily four types of conversational engagements: (1) a conversation that focuses on hearing what the other person actually believes; (2) on asking questions illuminating gaps in their belief systems; (3) on uncovering real barriers and deeper root issues; and (4) on building a bridge to the gospel. By more effectively understanding these kinds of conversations we can more easily find pre-evangelistic encounters to dialog with others that may lead to more easily sharing the good news with others!

CHALLENGES IN WITNESSING IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

"I am convinced that our problems in Evangelism are not one of methodology but one of maturity." - Dr. David Geisler

Introduction: Obstacles to Evangelism Today

Because there is a radical change in our world today, it has become more difficult to do evangelism. Consequently what is needed is a new way for us to think about evangelism to reach out to this current generation. By engaging others in pre-evangelism using "lite" apologetics, this may create more opportunities for us to engage in direct evangelism. It may also create greater interest in being better equipped to answer our friend's questions. Yet at the same time there are barriers to being more proactive in our evangelism. In understanding these two issues we could be like the men of Issachar.

"from Issachar, men who understood the times and knew what Israel should do...." (I Chronicles 12:32)

I. Our world has changed and has made our evangelism task more daunting.

A. Examples in the West and East

B. Conditions that created the environment for this crisis:

- Understanding the Post-Modern period:
 1. Pluralism
 2. Post-Modernism
- Implications of postmodernism that affect receptivity to the gospel:
 1. They feel free to _____ or construct "knowledge's" and "realities."
 2. They believe persuasion is to be _____.
 3. They believe that to be exclusivistic is to be _____.
 4. They believe that our belief that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life is just one of the _____ among other narratives in the world that are equally as valid.

II. Things to remember in our witness to others today. (1 Chronicles 12:32)

How can we talk to people in such a way that creates greater interest in hearing our gospel?

- A. We must be good news before we can effectively share good news, especially with those we see on a regular basis. (Philippians 1:14)
 - We may be the only _____ that anyone ever reads.
- B. We must give ourselves the permission to sow. (1 Corinthians 3:6)
 - We will give ourselves permission to sow if we see evangelism more as a _____ and not just as an _____.
- C. We must also give ourselves the permission to till the soil. (Mark 4:8)
 - Tilling the soil = Pre-Evangelism.
 - If evangelism is planting seeds of the Gospel, pre-evangelism is _____ the soil of their mind and heart, preparing them to at least be _____ to listen to the truth.

"Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, multiplying thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times." (Mark 4:8)

Jesus' Example:

- He was a master at asking questions.

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone." (Luke 18:18-19)

"Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?" He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: John's baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?" (Luke 20:2-4)

- He knew the value of allowing others to surface the truth for themselves.

"...but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (John 4:14)

- He knew that sometimes it was best not to tell people things so directly.

- He knew that sometimes it was not always best to share all that we know.

"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear." (John 16:12)

III. Some Practical Suggestions for Taking the Next Step!

- A. Determine who the Lord is placing on your heart to _____ out to.

Who are the three people God is placing on your heart to help take one step closer to Jesus Christ?

- B. Pray for open doors. (Colossians 4:3).

"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." (Colossians 4:3)

- C. Look for _____ appointments daily! (Acts 8:29).

And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over and join this chariot." (Acts 8:29)

- Look for ways God is already at work in the lives of those you want to reach!
- Ask God for wisdom to know what to say in your conversations with others. (James 1:5; Acts 14:1)

- D. Make the most of every _____ you have with pre-believers to help them take one step closer. (1 Corinthians 3:6; Colossians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 9:22)

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity." (Colossians 4:5)

"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." (1 Corinthians 9:22)

- Listen carefully in order to make every encounter count.
- Discover what might create greater spiritual openness. (John 4:10; Acts 17:32)
- Look for ways to create more interest in our Jesus!

IV. Clarifying Biblical Terms and Concepts That Affect Our Witness

- A. What is involved in biblical faith?

- Biblical faith must have an object to be valid.

"And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." (1 Corinthians 15:14)

B. What is the relationship between faith and reason?

- The bible makes an important distinction between “belief that” and “belief in.”

“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that - and shudder.” (James 2:19)

- Apologetics bears on the question of “belief that” not “belief in.”

“He went on to say, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him.” (John 6:65)

- Implications of this truth.

1. You can't use apologetics to argue someone into the kingdom.
2. You shouldn't give up using apologetics in your witness to others.

“At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.” (Acts 14:1)

C. What does it mean to be ready to give an answer?

“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15 N.I.V.)

- Our responsibility as Christians is also to eagerly anticipate the questions and objections that our non-Christian friends may raise against Christianity, whether they ask us a specific question or not!

“But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15)

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

“To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:22)