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Conversational Evangelism:

How to Listen and Speak So You May Be Heard

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CONVERSATIONAL EVANGELISM MODEL (LEVEL 1)

Meekness and Truth Ministries
www.meeknessandtruth.org

CONVERSATIONAL EVANGELISM

Learning Objectives



This seminar will help you to:

- 1. Understand the problems in evangelism today**
- 2. Learn how to use a pre-evangelism paradigm in your witness to others**

* This paradigm involves four types of conversations

1. Hearing Conversations
2. Illuminating Conversations
3. Uncovering Conversations
4. Building Conversations

- 3. Practice building bridges to the gospel with others**

* These four types of conversations correspond to four roles we need to play in our not-yet Christian friends' lives:
Musician, Artist, Archeologist, and Builder

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Connecting Apologetics with Evangelism

“Our problems in evangelism are not one of methodology but one of maturity”

Pre-Evangelism

If evangelism is planting seeds of the Gospel, pre-evangelism is tilling the soil of their mind and heart, preparing them to at least be willing to listen to the Truth (Mark 4:8).

Understanding the Need for Pre-Evangelism Will Compels Us...

To redefine what we commonly mean by evangelism. Evangelism is a process (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Allow others to surface the truth for themselves (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

- * Jesus' example
 - He was a master at asking questions (Lk. 18:18-19; 20:2-4).
 - He knew the value of allowing others to surface the truth for themselves (Jn. 4:14).
 - He knew that sometime it was best not to tell people things so directly (Matt. 13:11).
 - He knew that sometimes it was not always best to share all that we know (Jn. 16:12).

Misconceptions that can affect our witness

- * What is involved in Biblical Faith?
 - Our Faith must have an object to be valid (1 Corinthians 15:14)
- * What is the relationship between Faith and Reason?
 - The important distinction between “Belief that” and “Belief in” (Js. 2:19)
- * What does it mean to be ready to give an answer in 1 Pet. 3:15?

The Bottom Line about Evangelism

The more we have the opportunity to share the Gospel the greater likelihood that more people will come to Christ.

The more pre-evangelism we do the more opportunities we will have to share the gospel with others.

Therefore the more pre-evangelism we do the greater likelihood that more people will come to Christ.

Barriers to more Effective Evangelism

- We aren't totally convinced of the truth of Christianity! (Jn. 8:32).
- We don't realize the degree to which we have been forgiven! (Luke 7:47).
- We forget the urgency of the task (Matthew 5:30).

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Key to Evangelism

The vital role of the Holy Spirit (John 6:65, 1 Corinthians 2:4-14)

- To empower us to speak in a more effective way (Acts 14:1).
- To empower us to live godly lives (Philippians 1:14).

The Four Parts Of This Model Correspond To The Four Types Of Conversations We Want To Have With Our Not-Yet Christian Friends

A. Hearing Conversations - Like a musician, hear the sour notes people are "singing" to us.

This is always the first step where we seek to understand what they actually believe, and to detect some of the inconsistencies in their viewpoint.

Types of inconsistencies you might hear:

- 👂 Belief vs. Heart Longing (Eccl. 3:11)
- 👂 Belief vs. Behavior (Galatians 2:14-16)
- 👂 Belief vs. Belief (Acts 17:22-30)
- 👂 Illogical Belief (2 Cor. 1:18)

Points to Note:

1. Remember to focus on listening carefully to what they are saying
2. Point out the most stand-out inconsistencies rather than pointing out all inconsistencies

B. Illuminating Conversations - Like an artist, asking questions helps paint a picture to enable them to see themselves more clearly.

- This is where we ask questions to help people to "see" for themselves (without directly telling them they are wrong) some of the discrepancies in their beliefs. Our goal is to help them question whether their beliefs are a strong enough foundation to build upon.
- That uncover the meaning of certain unclear terms.
- That surface their uncertainties and / or expose false beliefs or concepts.

(The Three D's of Evangelism - Doubt, Defensiveness, and Desire)

Ask questions in a way that:

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- surfaces their doubt (*uncertainty*) - Luke 20:41-44
- minimizes their defensiveness (1 Peter 3:15-16)
- creates a desire (*curiosity*) to want to hear more! (John 4:10)

C. Uncovering Conversations - Like an archeologist, uncover their real barriers to the Gospel

- This is where we try to uncover the real barriers they have to the Gospel (Jeremiah 17:9).
 - Determine whether their issue is a real concern, or a smoke screen.
 - Formula: If I could answer your question, would that help?
 - Determine the nature of their barrier (intellectual, emotional, or combination)
 - Handling the tough questions
 - Uncover the specific emotional baggage that they are carrying.
 - Ask God for wisdom in discerning what the real issues are that you need to address with your non-Christian friends (Js. 1:5).

Handling Emotional Baggage

- ❖ Invite them to share their story
- ❖ Listen discernibly for the most obvious barriers to the gospel
- ❖ Empathize with them
- ❖ If appropriate, affirm God's love and hope for them
- ❖ If appropriate, ask for forgiveness for how another brother or sister in Christ treated them
- ❖ Tell them you will keep them in your prayers
- Determine whether there is a question or concern behind the question or issue raised.
- Find out what their biggest barrier to Christianity is.
- Find out what would motivate them to get answers in these areas.
- Uncover the Volitional Factors (Jn. 12:37)

In this step we are attempting to surface an unwillingness to believe that goes beyond just dealing with the intellectual and emotional barriers (Jn. 12:37).

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- * *Remember that prayer is an important arsenal in our spiritual war for the souls of men (Jas. 5:16). Pray for spiritual enablement(1 Cor. 2:14)*
 - * *Demonstrate Christ's love to them (Jn. 13:35)*
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D. Building Conversations - Like a builder, build a bridge to the Gospel (John 8:32)

- *Because there has been an erosion of truth today, we need to find common ground with others using planks of common understanding. Our goal is to then attempt to build a positive case for Christ and look for opportunities to invite them to trust Him.*
 - Find the right balance in your approach (Acts 14:1; Phil. 1:14)
 - Determine whether their barrier requires a more objective or subjective approach
 - Be mindful of the fact that your life will speak louder than your words
 - Find common ground with those we are attempting to reach (1 Corinthians 9:22)
 - Build a bridge from a point of shared beliefs (Acts 28:23; Acts 17:24-29)
 - Even those that they may not be quite aware of
 - Explaining Heart vs. Head bridges
 - * Heart Bridges

We need to show how Jesus fulfills the inner longing of our hearts, calms our fears and realizes our hopes.
 - * Head Bridges

We need to show that Jesus is truly "one of a kind"
 - Example: Head and Heart bridges
 1. What you believe will affect how you live!
 2. Not all religious viewpoints can be right!
 3. Faith must have an object to have merit!
 4. Not all religious leaders made equal claims!
 5. The proof of Christ's claims has no parallel among major religious leaders!
 6. Without God, some people find it difficult to find meaning in life!

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- Remember the goal: Use this bridge to offer our pre-believing friend a path to Christ (2 Timothy 4:2-5).

- Actively seek for opportunities to transition to the Gospel.
 - o Remember Do versus Done

 - o Invite them to take a step of faith!

A Question to ask to move our pre-evangelism discussion towards evangelism

Q: Has anyone ever explained to you the difference between Christianity and all other religions? I can explain the difference between Christianity and other religions in two words:

Do versus Done (See Bill Hybels, Contagious Christians Training)

Muslims believe that salvation depends upon man measuring up and not on God's grace. (Do)

Buddhism teaches that salvation comes about when one desires to stop desiring. (Do)

Hinduism teaches that if one does enough good he can pay off his karmic debt and escape the cycle of reincarnation. (Do)

Jesus says accept the gift I offer. It has already been "Done" for you (you can do nothing to earn God's gift). Invite me to come into your life and change you from the inside out (Jn. 1:12; Philippians 2:13).

Q: Has anyone ever explained to you the difference between Christianity and all other religions?

"Buddha claimed to point to the way, Mohammed claimed to be a prophet of God, but Jesus Christ is the only major religious leader that ever claimed to be God, who fulfilled prophecy, lived a sinless life, and then died on the cross and rose from the dead."

Summary of Conversational Evangelism

We want to *hear* their discrepancies and then *illuminate* them by asking questions that will "clarify" their religious terminology and "surface" the uncertainty of their perspective. Then we want to *uncover* the real barriers and *build* a bridge to help them take one step closer to Jesus Christ each day (1 Corinthians 3:6).

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