

Contagious Christianity

Part 1

5. PROCESS-ORIENTED

- Event-oriented evangelism often has to rush and push people.
- Process-oriented evangelism patiently brings people along step-by-step.

6. TEAM-ORIENTED

- A person's coming to Christ is like a chain with many links.
- We do not have to feel that we individually carry the full burden of evangelism. God has not called us to only be the last link, just to be a link.
- We need to intentionally become partners with other Christians, linking our strengths and abilities in order to lead people to Christ.

7. PUTTING OTHERS FIRST

- Deferring to their interests, hobbies, schedules and openness.
- Listening to their opinions before giving ours.
- Taking an interest in their backgrounds, stories, questions, doubts and frustrations.
- Asking them about themselves, what they like or dislike, believe or disbelieve, value or do not value.
- Really listening to them and being interested in what makes them who they are.
- Putting them first earns us the right to talk about our own interests, which eventually would include our spiritual interests.
- People are hungry to be in a relationship with someone who really cares about them.

Putting the Word to Work

- God wants each of us to reach people with the Gospel.
- The most effective way to do that is through developing meaningful relationships with those we hope to reach.
- To help do that, begin to develop an Impact List.

Next Week ...

- Bring a completed "Evangelism Styles Questionnaire" and your "Impact List" with you.
- We'll discover an "Evangelism Equation" that will work, no matter what personality type you are.

The Anthropic Principle

- Raise or lower the universe's rate of expansion by even one part in a million, and it would have ruled out the possibility of life.
- If the average distance between stars were any greater, planets like earth would not have been formed; any smaller, the planetary orbits necessary for life would not have occurred.
- If the ratio of carbon to oxygen had been slightly different than it is, none of us would have been here to breathe the air.
- Change the tilt of the earth's axis slightly in one direction, and we would freeze. Change it the other direction, and we'd burn up.
- If the earth had been a bit closer or further from the sun, or just a little larger or smaller, or rotating at a slightly different speed, the resulting temperature variations would be completely fatal.
- Someone went to a lot of effort to make things just right so we could be here to enjoy life.
- Modern science points to the fact that we must really matter to God.

A Principle From Business

- "A Customer Revolution" – Tom Peters, in his book *Thriving On Chaos*
- "The Upside-Down Pyramid" – Ken Blanchard, in his book *The One-Minute Manager*
- Businesses, if they're going to be successful for the long haul, must pull their attention off of themselves and refocus their energies on their only reason for existence – to serve their customers!
- Traditional Corporate Pyramid vs. the New Corporate Pyramid
- Businesses must develop a "customer obsession."
- **Don't rebuke them for stating the obvious – have you ever been in a situation where this advice was sorely needed?**

- Modern science teaches us that people matter to God.
- Modern business teaches us that they'd better matter to us, too.
- **The problems and solutions of the business world have close cousins within the Christian community. We can get so easily entangled and ensnared in the internal issues, questions and personal situations in our church that it's hard to remember that the primary reason we remain on this planet is to reach the people "OUT THERE." (We can worship, live holy, etc. in heaven – but we can't witness!)**
- **We quickly forget how much people matter to God, and we fall prey to making "armchair assessments" of who God has use for and who He doesn't. That list almost never includes the people who aren't part of our church!**
- **This is DANGEROUS, for if these people don't matter much, then we don't need to get all worked up about reaching them, right? WRONG!**
- This is an age-old issue, for the same attitude surfaces in various places throughout the Bible. One day while Jesus was teaching, the religious leaders began complaining about Him hanging out with the "undesirables." It bothered Jesus so much that He told 3 powerful stories ...

A Lesson From Scripture

- Three parables in Luke 15:
 - A shepherd with a lost sheep
 - A woman with a lost coin
 - A father with a lost son
- This is the only time that Jesus told three parables in a row – this was very important to Him!
- Essential elements in Luke 15:
 - Something of great value winds up missing
 - That which is missing is important enough to warrant an all-out search
 - The retrieval of the lost results in a great celebration
- "In the same way, there is joy in the presence of God's angels when even one sinner repents." (Luke 15:10, NLT)
- You never lock eyes with another human being who is not valuable to God!

Relational Evangelism

- Negative: Obnoxious, Pushy, Insensitive
- Positive: Outgoing, Bold, Extroverted
- We need to get past our NEGATIVE stereotypes of evangelism, which prevent us from becoming contagious Christians.
- But we also need to get past our POSITIVE stereotypes of evangelism, because there are many people who would not relate to this kind of person, but they would relate to us!
- We do not have to become something ODD that we do not want to be.
- Nor do we have to become something GREAT that we may never be.
- Rather, we can be OURSELVES!

RELATIONAL EVANGELISM IS ...

1. AUTHENTIC

- "Christians are to BE good news before they SHARE the good news." - Joe Aldrich, in his book *Lifestyle Evangelism*

2. NATURAL

- Relational Evangelism reflects our own personality, putting others at ease and letting them know that what we have is real.

3. PERSONAL

- People today have grown immune to most of the "impersonal methods" of communication, but they are still open to talking with a personal friend.

4. VERBAL

- "And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:14)
- Just as words without actions are empty, so are actions without words.
- We have to live AND explain the gospel.