

Bear hunting with Fred and Barney

Fred and Barney bear hunting. They first find a cabin. Fred sets of to find a bear. Barney stays at the cabin to set it for the night. He starts a fire and makes the place homely and starts cooking. As Barney is cooking he hears a noise, "Barney open the door", listening more carefully he hears it again, this time louder "Barney open the door", looking out of the window a terrifying sight comes to greet him. Fred is running as fast as he can, followed by a grizzly bear. "Barney open the door" shouts Fred for the third time. Doing so, and stepping out of the cabin, Barney holds the door open. Fred heads towards the door, but at the last second changes direction and dives to one side. The bear unable to change course barrels through the door into the cabin, Fred shuts the door, and as Barney watches all his hard work inside the cabin is destroyed by the now trapped angry bear, Fred announces with a smile, "You watch this one, I'll go get us another"

This joke is often used to illustrate the difference between Evangelism and Discipleship!

We might be better served by coming to understand the speaking of Christ to others is "a way of being" not a one off trip. We can come to a position where we desire to live a life missionally.

Evangelism can often cause a great deal of stress within the minds of those who follow Jesus, with a variety of images conjured up. Today I want to highlight the idea of A to Z evangelism.

What is the good news?

As believers in Jesus, we have come to a unique position in the world. We have understood that a sinful past is no longer a determining factor for a sinful future.

Jesus by his death and resurrection on the cross has broken the power of sin, proved by breaking the symbol of that sin, Death. With the gift of the Holy Spirit to us, as recorded in John 20, and Acts, we understand through the Holy Spirit's leading we can live a life victorious over sin. This knowledge is the good news. We can experience the relationship

with God based not on our worthiness, but on the merit of the one who is worthy, Jesus.

What I am seeking to do in life is allow others to come to see Jesus, how I see Jesus!

In our working out of values within the church, one suggest is

"The road to Christ in Heaven is one that displays many signs. Love, Forgiveness, Support & Caring, all wrapped up in a directory of invite."

What we are doing is inviting people to join us in a journey we are undertaking, discovering the travelling together is the main idea. To do this, it would help if can settle a few things in our mind, First,

We need to have the heart to see people moved towards God

Romans 10:13-15 (NLT) For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

If something is vital, we will want to share, talk about it, and show a passion towards it. The same is with activities and people. Consider how you feel about your main hobby or pastime, or who you would like to spend time with

III- Desert Island Disks- A program which asked, "if you were marooned on an island, what music would you take with you", the same has been asked, what would you take with you. Which people, items, books, etc.

What is important? IS this heart for Jesus evident?

We need to believe this is important for others as humans, and for no other reason of benefit to ourselves.

It can be impressed upon people that we need to save people to “earn points”, “to get people into the church community”, “to make us feel we are achieving”, all these reasons make people “objectives” as opposed to being related to as “image bearers of God.”

Our life needs to see those we interact with as people who have intrinsic value, no matter how marred by sin their life may currently display.

We need to recognise that others felt the same way about us.

Mark 16:15-16 (NLT) And then Jesus told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. 16 Anyone who believes and is baptised will be saved.

It is always a good activity to consider who connected in our lives to show us that God loved and cared for us, and to see that same attitude in our lives for those who we are called to interact.

We need to understand we are not always called to make the whole move; we are part of a chain.

In training areas, we talk about the Engel scale.

The Engel Scale was developed by James F. Engel as a way of representing the journey from no knowledge of God through to spiritual maturity as a Christian believer. The model is used by some Christians to emphasise the process of conversion, and the various decision-making steps that a person goes through before they become a Christian

simplified

Engel Scale

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- 10 No God framework**

 - 9 Experience of emptiness**

 - 8 Vague awareness of Christianity**

 - 7 Interest in Christianity**

 - 6 Awareness of the Gospel**

 - 5 Positive attitudes to the Gospel**

 - 4 Experience of Christian love**

 - 3 Aware of personal need**

 - 2 Grasp of implications of the Gospel**

 - 1 Challenge to respond personally**

 - 0 Repentance and faith**

 - +1 Evaluation of the decision**

 - +2 Learning the basics of the Christian life**

 - +3 Functioning member of local Church**

 - +4 Continuing growth in character, lifestyle and service**

 - +5 Effective sharing of faith and life**

I prefer to use another way of illustrating this; I call it A to Z, it is to hold in our mind that people are somewhere along the journey, some further away from Christ, position "A", some a lot closer, position "Z". Our responsibility is not to make sure people are in position Z, but to help them be moving in a direction towards this destination by our lifestyle, attitude, interaction.

In fact, if we can help walk alongside a person from position A to Position B, we have done the work of the Lord.

The first step is a prayer, - "make me an accomplice in your plan."

Are we willing to pray for an opportunity to intersect in helping people on the journey? We are looking to become willing partners with God. We need to come to a realisation that God is already at work and is inviting us to join in his work of inviting others!

We need to come to understand people are looking for Spiritual connections more than we may realise.

One translation of Proverbs 11:30 is "The seeds of good deeds become a tree of life, and those who win souls are wise."

We live in what would be termed "Greek culture" in the day of Jesus, a vast mix of people searching for a Spiritual meaning amount many conflicting accounts of explanations claiming to be true. This mix is not something to be feared, but to be embraced. It is the world of the church of AD30.

Things we practically do

Create Space- If you are too busy with the business of life, you can miss the business of life! For all of us we feel the tug of doing more than we ought, and getting caught in the way of living which draws us away from God. The best reaction is not always to find a lonely mountain top and reflect, but to take what we are doing and dedicate it towards God. How can things I do be re-designed to reflect Jesus on a daily basis?

Pray for those who are interested.

Instead of spending time working on your efforts, spend time praying for God to bring someone "across your path" that he would have you share.

Expect opposition and pray about it.

The enemy Satan does not want God glorified, this is a given understanding of those who follow Jesus. We should expect him to push back; our answer is prayer.

What are the key things that we can share about our life in Christ

Think about why Jesus is who he is within your life, and practice sharing them, become confident in your testimony. If a sport is worthwhile, or a hobby worth doing we practice. The same is true for speaking up, practice in privacy so publicly becomes easier. Ask your selves, What good things has God done this week in my life?

See this is a way of life, become it takes consistency and time, but we are part of a chain moving people from A to Z

Finally, Remember some people are ready, the harvest is there!