

**“The Culture and Practice of Evangelism”
Adult Sunday Studies Class on Evangelism Training
CPC Summer 2015, Week 7**

**Evangelism at CPC this Year
Being Missional and “Second Look” Events**

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Review:

- Week 1: God is a God on mission. His purpose for the church is to save a people for himself.
- Week 2: How does one become a Christian? Not just a decision, but engrafting into Christ through integration into a local church.
- Week 3: Theology of Evangelism: Importance of Divine election in evangelism, and a practice of missional participation
- Week 4: Contextualization: sharing without Christianese; theories of atonement
- Week 5: Practical Guides to Evangelism: Testimony, gospel presentations (Four Spiritual Laws, the Bridge, One-Verse Evangelism), sharing resources
- Week 6: Christianity Explored

The Missional Church

1. How to make the church missional not just mission sending

- ***Not Church as Trainer:*** The church is often seen as the place where Christians are “fed” and “trained” so that individuals can do the “real work” of ministry out in the world.
- ***Not Church as Theater:*** “Church as Theater” puts the emphasis on the pastor’s charm/rhetoric/message or the musicians talent or the beauty of the building, programs, etc.
- ***Church as Evangelist:*** God in the midst of his worshipping people has the power to compel and convert. Edmund Clowney called this “Doxological Evangelism”. If we as the church really are God’s temple and he really does mediate his presence through his body, then an encounter with his church being the church is an encounter with God.

There is no false dichotomy between seeking to worship God and reaching non-Christians. There is no false dichotomy between giving God glory and being seeker sensitive or “feeding” believers and reaching non-believers. If God is present, he is present to save.

This is true most clearly in worship, but is also true whenever we gather as his people. It is true as we gather in small groups, church events, and how we love each other. But, we can do things that obscure this identity.

Missional churches must:

1. Expect non-believers to be present in everything we do. Acts 2 demonstrates that people were added to their numbers by watching and present. 1 Corinthians 14 makes it clear that non-believers were regularly in worship.
2. Make worship comprehensible, yet not shallow. Paul rebukes churches who made worship inaccessible (1 Cor. 14). Yet, it was still worship. It wasn't a pep rally or a revival service. Depth doesn't repel; it attracts.
3. Believe that God can convict and convert through means of grace.

CPC is missional; we structure church life to be missional. But, we constantly must return to this goal. What has to happen for us to be missional? What must happen in worship? In weeknight events? In community groups?

Reaching Post-Christendom

It is misleading simply to state that the western world has become increasingly secular. The real complicated factor is that the remnants of Christendom are still all around us. This leads many people to feel as though they know Christianity, can dismiss it without need to investigate it further, and can explore other faiths with an open mind.

The remnants of Christendom have also left a distrust in organized religion. Fair or not, this distrust has put up an immediate wall to the gospel and Christian community.

We know these are your co-workers, friends, and family members and that many of them need "pre-evangelism." They need venues to be exposed to the gospel that aren't non-starters like church events. The session and staff have proposed "second look" events this fall as one way to provide these opportunities.

"Second Look"

Think of the many issues that we've given a "second look" to in our culture over the last few years: sexuality, gender, race, authority, mental illness, etc. These are issues that our society may have had strong opinions about but have shifted recently by giving them a second look. That is the appeal we want to make to those around us.

It isn't a sales-job; it isn't a lecture or guilt trip. It is also not an appeal to encounter Jesus existentially, a Jesus of their own making. It is inviting them to look past the negatives of Christendom to see Christ as he is found in the church.

It is meeting our friends and neighbors where they are in the process. And, this process can look different for many people. Tim Keller in *Center Church* (p. 281) does a good idea of illustrating this process as they **make mini-decisions**.

1. Awareness: “I see it.” They begin to clear the ground of stereotypes and learn to distinguish the gospel from legalism or liberalism, the core from the peripheral.

They make mini-decisions like these:

- “She’s religious but surprisingly open-minded.”
- “You can be a Christian and be intelligent!”
- “The Bible isn’t so hard to understand after all.”
- “A lot of things the Bible says really fit me.”
- “I see the difference between Christianity and just being moral.”

2. Relevance: “I need it.” They begin to see the slavery of both religion and irreligion and are shown in the transforming power of how the gospel works.

Examples of mini-decisions here are as follows:

- “There must be some advantages to being a Christian.”
- “An awful lot of very normal people really like this church!”
- “It would really help if I could believe like she does.”
- “Jesus seems to be the key. I wonder who he was.”

3. Credibility: “I need it because it’s true”

This is a reversal of the modern view that states, it’s true if I needed. If people fail to see the reasonableness of the gospel, they will lack the endurance to persevere when their faces challenged. Examples of mini-decisions include thoughts like these:

- “I see that the Bible is historically reliable.”
- “You really can’t use science to disprove the supernatural.”
- “There really were eyewitnesses to the resurrection.”
- “Jesus really is God.”
- “I see now why Jesus had to die—it is the only way.”

4. Trial: “I see what it would be like.” They are involved in some form of group life, and some type of service ministry, they are effectively trying Christianity on, often talking like a Christian— even defending the faith at times.

5. Commitment: “I take it.” This maybe the point of genuine conversion, or sometimes a person will realize that conversion has already happened, and they just didn’t grasp it at that time. Examples of many decisions include these:

- “I am a sinner.”
- “I need a Savior.”
- “Though there are a lot of costs, I really must do what Jesus says.”
- “I will believe in Jesus and live for him.”

6. Reinforcement: “Now I get it.” Typically, this is the place where the penny drops and the gospel becomes even clearer and more real.

Here are some practical ways to engage others (taken from *Center Church*, 283-4)

Engaging neighbors

- Take regular walks in your neighborhood to meet others who are out and about. Go to the same places at the same time for groceries, haircuts, coffee, shopping. This is one of the main ways to get to know those who live geographically near.
- Find an avocation or hobby you can do with others in the city. For example, don't form a Christian backpacking club; join an existing one.
- Look for ways to play organized amateur sports in the city.
- Volunteer alongside other neighborhood residents and nonprofits and with other programs.
- If you have children, be involved at the school and get to know other parents.
- Be hospitable to neighbors –when and where appropriate, invite them over for a meal or a movie, Etc.

Engaging colleagues, coworkers, and friends

- Do recreational activities with them– Watch sports (Live or on TV at home or in a nightspot); go to a theater show, museum exhibit, art gallery exhibit, etc.
- Invite them to join a sports league with you.
- Invite them to work out with you at a gym.
- Put together a movie night.
- Go out of your way to eat with them as often as possible. Invite people over for a meal in your apartment to try a new restaurant.
- Plan trips for outings–a trip to the beach, a historical site, etc.
- If the person has a skill or interest, ask them (sincerely!) to educate you.
- Organize a discussion group on something– politics, books, etc., inviting mainly non-Christians.

Organic Ways to Reach Out (*Center Church, 286-7*)

1. One-on-one-informal

- Let others know of your Christian faith by simply mentioning church attendance or Christian beliefs and casual conversation.
- Ask questions about other peoples beliefs and experiences with faith and church and simply listen appreciatively and sympathetically.
- Listen sympathetically to someone's challenges and mentioned that you will pray regularly for them.
- Share a difficult personal issue that you have and be sure to mention that your faith helps you by giving you strength and granting you forgiveness, etc.
- Share your spiritual narrative– A brief testimony of your Christian experience.

2. One-on-one-planned/intentional

- Offer someone a book for audio recording about Christian issues and invite them to discuss the reactions.
- Initiate a discussion about a friend's biggest problems with were objections to Christianity.
- Listen respectfully and give them some things to read and discuss.

- Regularly read a part of the Bible together—preferably one of the Gospels— to discuss the character of Jesus.

3. Provide an experience of Christian community

- Invite friends to situations or where they meet believers but where there is no direct Christian event or communication.
- Invite friends to venues where they hear the gospel communicated and discussed—one-time events, such as an open forum; fellowship group; worship service; Group meeting for inquirers, such as book club, seeker group, etc.

4. Share your faith

- Share the basics of the Christian faith with your friend, laying out how to become a Christian and inviting them to make a commitment.

“Second Look” Events and Study

1. “Cocktail Parties” in your general area where you meet to socialize but also with the clear intention that a video clip will be show about a new study. There is no commitment by coming to the party.

2. A Four-Week “Second Look” at Christianity. They may have experienced Christianity before, but try giving it a second look by a four week walk through the Gospel of Mark.

Christianity Explored uses a video intro, a reading of Mark’s gospel, and questions. The event centers around a meal and is intended for those who want to explore Christianity (i.e. not to fill the room with Christians and one unsuspecting unbeliever).

Curriculum

Week 1. Orientation: Who are we? Who is Jesus?

CE1: Good news: What are we doing here?

CE2: Identity: Who is Jesus?

Week 2. Sin

CE3: Why did Jesus come?

Week 3. The Cross

CE4. Why did Jesus die?

CE5. Resurrection: Why did Jesus rise?

CE6. Grace: How can God accept us?

Week 4. Our Response

CE7. Come and Die: What does it mean?

Sign up if interested in hosting a cocktail party, hosting a study, or participating in either.