

**Xenos Christian Fellowship**  
**Christian Ministry 3: Moving Into a Ministry Lifestyle**  
**Week 5 – Loving the Lost: Evangelism**

**Evangelism and missions: central to the purpose of the church**

**(Matt. 28:18-20) “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. (19) *Go therefore and make disciples* of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, (20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”**

**(Acts 1:8) “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and *you shall be My witnesses* both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”**

**(2 Cor. 5:18-20\*) “Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and *gave us the ministry of reconciliation*, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and *He has committed to us the word of reconciliation*. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”**

**(1 Tim. 2:3,4) “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires *all men* to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”**

**(2 Pet. 3:9) “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for *all* to come to repentance.”**

**What is at stake in having an evangelistic focus?** Consider the opportunities and threats that hinge on a church staying focused on evangelism:

- 1.** Spiritual vitality, excitement, and confidence in the gospel tend to flourish in an outreaching church.
  
- 2.** Opportunities for new ministry abound in churches that are vigorous in outreach.

3. Relational conflicts often increase in ingrown churches.
4. Ingrown churches often proliferate "*brass-polishing*"—focusing on less important things (e.g., recreational activities; corporate worship, etc.), and/or an "*ivory tower*" *Bible-club mentality*—focusing on non-essential theological issues (e.g, end-times scenarios; speaking in tongues; etc.).
5. A "ghetto" mentality may develop, which justifies lack of contact with non-Christians, and often rationalizes tribalism, political prejudice, materialism, and other sins.
6. The ingrown church becomes calloused to the plight of the lost—not just that they are going to hell in the next life, but that they are deceived and miserable in this life.

**(Matt. 9:36) “And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.”**

**(Eph. 2:12) “Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”**

### **Three participants in evangelism**

#### **God's role**

It is difficult to exaggerate how important it is to understand and rely on God's role in evangelism. This is the key to seeing evangelism as an exciting adventure instead of a terrifying or burdensome duty. Keep your focus on God's role!

- *God creates opportunities for us to share our faith.*

**(Col. 4:2,3-6\*\*) Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4**

**in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. 5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.**

- *The Holy Spirit convicts people of their guilt and lostness.*

**(John 16:8-10) “And He (the Holy Spirit), when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment; (9) concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me; (10) and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you no longer behold Me; and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.”**

**(Acts 2:37) When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”**

- *God empowers those who share their faith.*

**(Eph. 6:19,20) And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

**(1 Cor. 2:2-4) For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.**

**A practical way to rely on God's role:**

**What happens if we lose sight of God's role?**

**The hearer's role:** To choose whether or not to believe.

**(Mt. 23:37) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling."**

**God provides answers to the honest investigator.**

**(John 7:17) "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself."**

**What happens if we lose sight of the hearer's role?**

**Our role:** To present the message of salvation in a way that the hearer can understand.

**(Rom. 10:14) "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"**

Remember that the message of the gospel is the power of God to salvation (Rom. 1:16)! To this end:

- Realize that while pre-evangelistic steps like good deeds, general spiritual conversations, etc. are important and may even be necessary before explaining the gospel, they are not “evangelism.” We have not evangelized until we have shared this good news.
- Assume people don’t understand the gospel, that they have misconceptions of this core issue in Christianity. One of our main jobs is to identify these misconceptions and explain what the Bible really says. The most common misconceptions are:
  - We must earn God’s acceptance by good works vs. we receive God’s acceptance as a free gift by faith in Christ (Gal. 2:16; Phil. 3:9).
  - God wants us to relate to him impersonally through ritual observance and with fear-threat-guilt vs. God wants a personal love-trust relationship (Rev. 3:20; John 1:12).
  - We must change ourselves morally before we can come to God vs. We can come to God the way we are by receiving Christ (Luke 23:43) and then God begins to change us (Rom. 12:2).
- Rely on the power of God’s Word by quoting or reading these passages. Use illustrations (e.g., SCALES; “DO vs. DONE;” BRIDGE), but don’t neglect using the Bible itself!
- Experienced evangelists point out that people usually need to hear the gospel message several times before it “sinks in.”

Here are five practical ways to enhance our role in evangelism:

- *Write a short testimony.*
- *Personally invest in the people around you.*
- *Start spiritual conversations.* See the handout we’ve provided on how to start spiritual conversations.

- *Adorn the gospel.*<sup>1</sup>

**(Titus 2:9,10) “Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.”**

- *Utilize the Body of Christ (Jn. 13:34,35)*
- *Be willing to challenge people to make a decision.*

### **Bill Hybels: “Walk Across the Room”**

Bill Hybels is the founder of Willow Creek Community Church, a large church near Chicago. In this video, recorded at the 2005 Xenos Summer Institute, Bill shares his own experiences sensing and responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

**0:00 – 17:16** (1:54:48 – 2:12:05)

DISCUSS: How does one get ready to hear the Holy Spirit?

**17:17 – 30:03** (2:12:06 – 2:24:51)

DISCUSS: What is your “circle of comfort?” What helps you to “cross the chasm and go into the zone of the unknown?”

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this, see Gary DeLashmutt’s plenary session, “Adorning the Gospel,” in our 2008 Xenos Summer Institute audio archive on our website.

## Harvest vs. Search Theology

Christians often disagree on the degree to which we are responsible for evangelistic results. Harvest and Search Theology are two different perspectives on our responsibility in evangelism.

### Search Theology

**DEFINITION:** Searches for lost people through the faithful proclamation of the gospel, leaving results between God and the hearer.

#### EXAMPLES:

Search theology is flawed because:

- It does not go far enough because it neglects analysis of results.
- The Great Commission provides a command which includes results that we can measure (“all peoples”).
- The example in Acts: Luke includes numbers and ethnic progress in his report of the early church (2:41; 6:7, 9:31; 12:24; 16:5; 19:10,20).
- It can lead to a wooden or mechanistic approach to evangelism and therefore its adherents may not persuade (Acts 17:2-4; 18:4; 2 Cor. 5:11, 20), persist (Acts 17:17), or adjust (1 Cor. 9:19-23).
- It has been used to justify failure in evangelism. Though the reasons for failure are often complex, they should be explored. Such reasons include: sin (including lack of witnessing), focus on unresponsive fields, and ineffective methods.

### Harvest Theology

**DEFINITION:** Finding and winning receptive people through faithful proclamation of an understandable gospel, keeping an eye on results to determine effectiveness and future methods.

#### EXAMPLES:

Harvest Theology is biblical because:

- It does reflect on results
- It is dynamic
- It focuses on the responsive field (while also initiating into new fields)

#### Dangers in Harvest Theology:

- Results are not always immediate (2 Tim. 4:2).
- God's part may be minimized, resulting in problems discussed above.
- Taking identity from results. How would you know if you were doing this? However, having a firm identity in Christ enables us to face the reality that the lost are not being found.
- A numbers-focus can lead you to take your eyes off the serving task at hand.
- You could cheat to get more decisions/numbers.

#### **What you can do to help build and maintain an outreach ethos in your home group**

1. Communicate and celebrate conversions.
2. Pray for the lost corporately.
3. Be an example.
4. Do outreach events together. .
5. Praise others' evangelistic efforts.

6. Share what you've learned about evangelism.

**Maintain evangelism as an important “family value!”**

### **Memory Verses**

**2 Cor. 5:18-20\* - We are ambassadors for Christ.**

**Col. 4:3-6\*\* - Pray for open doors.**

### **Assignment**

**Talk to a non-Christian and record their answers to the following questions:**

- **Do all religions basically teach the same thing? Why do you think that?**
- **What does it mean to be a tolerant person?**

**Write a full paragraph response to each of these common objections to Christianity:**

- 1. "Why should I regard the Bible as God's Word? What about all of the other scriptures?"**
- 2. "How can your religion consign people to hell if they have never even heard about Christ?" HINT: There are really two distinct issues in this objection—God's judgment and whether he judges all people who didn't have access to the Bible.**