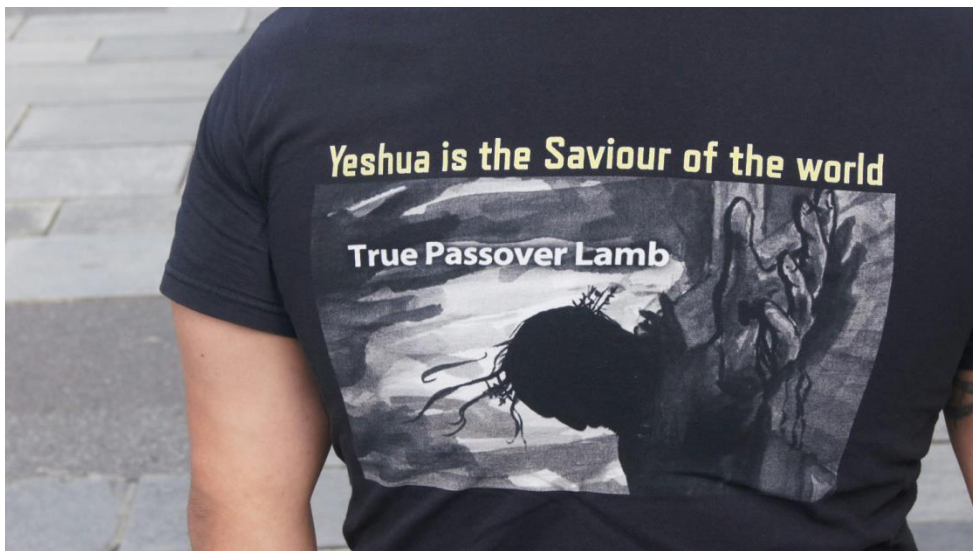


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Full Gospel Evangelism

Abundant Ways to bring Good News



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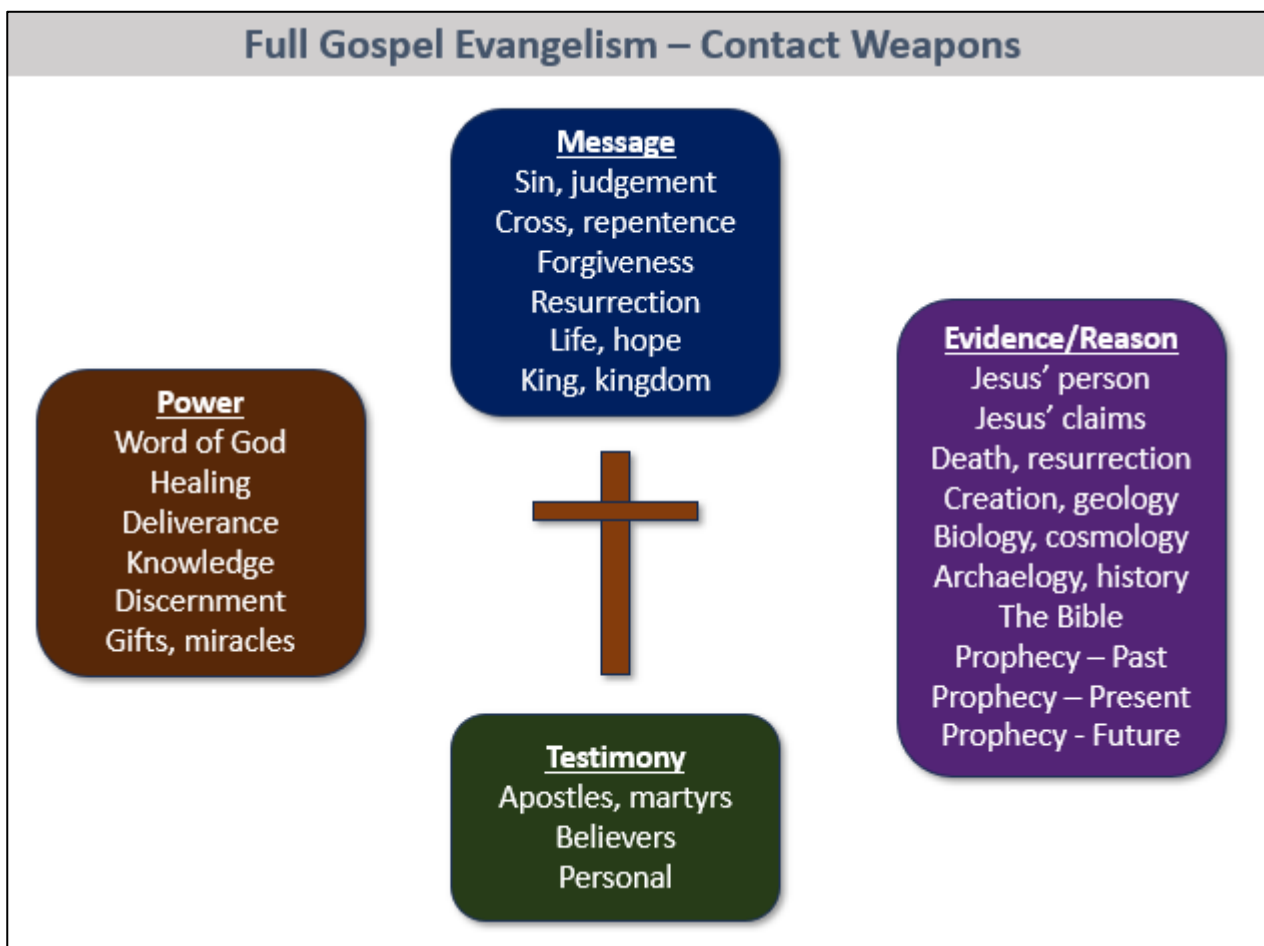
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Full Gospel Evangelism

Many years ago, a group called the Full Gospel Businessman's Association was formed to reach out to working men, using the Bible, personal testimony and God's power through the use of spiritual gifts. I have adapted this term to "Full Gospel Evangelism" to encourage us to think of "the big picture". Often, outreach focuses on one particular approach such as giving out tracts or offering prayer. In the Great Commission, Jesus commanded His disciples to preach a message and back it up with power, which He promised to provide. The Lord created the universe by His Word and Spirit operating together. How powerfully would our outreach be transformed by returning to the pattern Jesus gave, with God's enabling and grace!

These slides and the comments which follow are intended to encourage our vision and confidence in the Lord's abundant means for equipping us, rather than as a handbook of methodologies.

Contact Weapons



I use the term "contact weapons" for a couple of reasons. First, outreach is spiritual warfare at the sharp end, and we need weaponry in order to fight. The New Testament refers to both God's Word and His Spirit as a sword (Ephesians 6:17, Hebrews 4:12). Second, I am referring to any personal encounter between a believer and a non-believer which involves some element of overt witnessing – whether in casual conversation or through intentional outreach. In other words, in principle, any of these "tools" may be appropriate in a given circumstance and available to us, given the Lord's leading and empowering.

Most of the examples here can be backed up with Scripture references, especially from Acts but also the Gospels. (I have included some references but encourage further personal research.) The exceptions are those relating to specific scientific disciplines which have arisen later, but are so important for counteracting the falsehoods currently taught in the education system to deny belief in God and the Bible in particular. In the New Testament, evidence from creation and history *are* both used by the Apostles in their witness. Let us break this down further.

Message

I once belonged to a small house church consisting of mature, faithful, spirit-filled believers who might be described as “on fire for the Lord”. Yet one evening, when we were each asked to explain the Gospel, we stumbled and struggled and came up with our various answers, all of which lacked conviction. It was a sobering, eye-opening moment. Believers are encouraged to be able to at least provide an explanation for the hope that we have (1 Peter 3:15), and of course we should desire that the quality of our lives would prompt such questions.

- **Sin, judgement.** Gospel means “good news” and is centred around the person and ministry of Jesus, in particular His death, resurrection and returning to judge each one of us and reign as Lord and King (Acts 18:29-31). To the modern generation, being called out as sinners facing judgement is bad news, but without it, Jesus’ death is meaningless. Spurgeon said that his preaching to the unsaved was first and foremost about the Law (the Torah, Ten Commandments, Sermon on the Mount) to bring the conviction of sin needed to then proclaim the message of God’s grace. Before His death, Jesus described the ministry of the Holy Spirit as bringing conviction (John 15:5-11).
- **Cross, repentance.** Jesus’ death was appalling. Our salvation was paid for at enormous cost. Paul resolved with the Corinthians to devote his message to “Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). The cross is God’s wisdom and power (1 Corinthians 1:18), so why do we so often avoid it in favour of more “seeker-friendly” messages? The preaching of the cross brings repentance to salvation.
- **Forgiveness.** Deep down, despite the searing of conscience through the red-hot iron of social programming and propaganda, most human beings have an awareness of their own failure and guilt. God’s forgiveness is the greatest gift any human can receive.
- **Resurrection.** The resurrection of Christ demonstrates God’s power, Jesus’ glory, and the future that awaits humanity – albeit with two possible and contrasting outcomes.
- **Life, hope.** Faith in Jesus literally transforms life in this world, and brings hope for the future. It is so transforming that we become renewed, literally “born again”.
- **King, kingdom.** The Gospels refer to the reality of the Kingdom of God/Heaven. This is an incredibly powerful theme, with implications for our present lives, but especially for the time when our glorious King returns to reign. How many of us seriously meditate and marvel at what is to come? Everything truly worth having, which people yearn for yet seek down blind alleys or paths of destruction, is found in God’s Kingdom.

Power

In “How the Church Lost the Way” Steve Maltz explained how institutional Christianity transformed the living, organic Body of Christ into organisational hierarchies which stifled the faith, gifts and ministries of ordinary believers. The Lord has long been seeking to re-awaken His people to their calling, both for ministering to each other and for reaching the lost. There are some excellent books on this subject, including John Wimber’s “Power Evangelism” and Dan Holland’s “Prophetic Evangelism”.

- **Word of God.** The Bible may not be the first thing we think of when it comes to power, but it was Jesus' only defence against Satan in the wilderness, and the apostles used Scripture powerfully in their testimony to bring people to faith (Acts 2:17-21, 25-28, 34-25 etc). The Word of God and the Spirit of God are life-giving and inseparable (John 6:63).
- **Healing.** Many ordinary believers have discovered the riches of Christ's healing power when praying for other Christians. Some have also taken this "outside the building" and discovered to their joy that the Lord is still healing unbelievers as part of the Gospel ministry (Acts chapters 3, 5, 7, 28).
- **Deliverance.** In the New Testament, healing and deliverance are part and parcel of the same power ministry to set people free (Acts 19:11-12). However, this can be a very challenging area within a church context, let alone in a public space. Even Paul exercised caution in its use (Acts 16:16-18). Therefore, the Lord's wisdom and guidance are especially important here.
- **Discernment.** The discernment ministry can be part of deliverance, but is wider, including words of knowledge or insights into people's motives. (Acts 5:1-6, 8:23, 8:29, 9:11, 10:18, 16:6-10 etc)
- **Gifts and miracles.** Acts includes some remarkable events, such as the outpouring of tongues spoken in the languages of those present, or Paul being unharmed by a snake bite, and Eutychus' dead body being restored to life. As with all gifts, God is sovereign, but I include these examples lest we be tempted to overlook the possibility He might use us in similar ways. (Acts 2:5-12, 12:1-11, 19:11-12, 27-28:9)

Evidence/Reason

Paul's approach to evangelism was to go the synagogues, where he "reasoned from the Scriptures" (Acts 17:2) that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah. Jesus had instructed the Twelve to go first to the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 10: 5-8). Paul reminds us that the Gospel is for the Jew first, and then the Gentile (Romans 1:16). The Lord was already drawing many Gentiles to Himself by bringing seekers to the synagogues, where many of them came to faith by listening to Paul's exposition. Therefore, we should not think that just because Jewish people have the advantage of knowing the Scriptures in the Tanakh ("Old Testament"), Gentiles should not be presented strongly with the Old Testament evidence for Who Jesus is. Indeed, this is our richest source of truth, and salvation only comes by the Father revealing Him to us.

- **Jesus' person.** The life and personal qualities of Jesus stand head-and-shoulders above anyone else who has ever lived, and contrast with others whom people worship or even entrust their lives and eternal destiny to. (Mark 15:39)
- **Jesus' claims.** "I am the way, the truth and the life, and no-one comes to the Father but by me" (John 14:6). Jesus is either Lord, lunatic or liar, and the most important question for any human being is "Who do you say I Am?" (Matthew 15:16).
- **Death, resurrection.** The New Testament stands or falls by the testimony of those witnesses who saw Jesus' die or met with the resurrected Lord, along with the supporting evidence of non-Christian sources from that time. Paul said that if the resurrection were not true, Christians should be pitied above all people for wasting their lives on a lie (1 Corinthians 15:19). In modern times, the most powerful evangelists include atheists or sceptics who looked at the evidence and were completely changed – Josh McDowell, J Warner Wallace, Frank Morison and Nabeel Qureshi, for example.

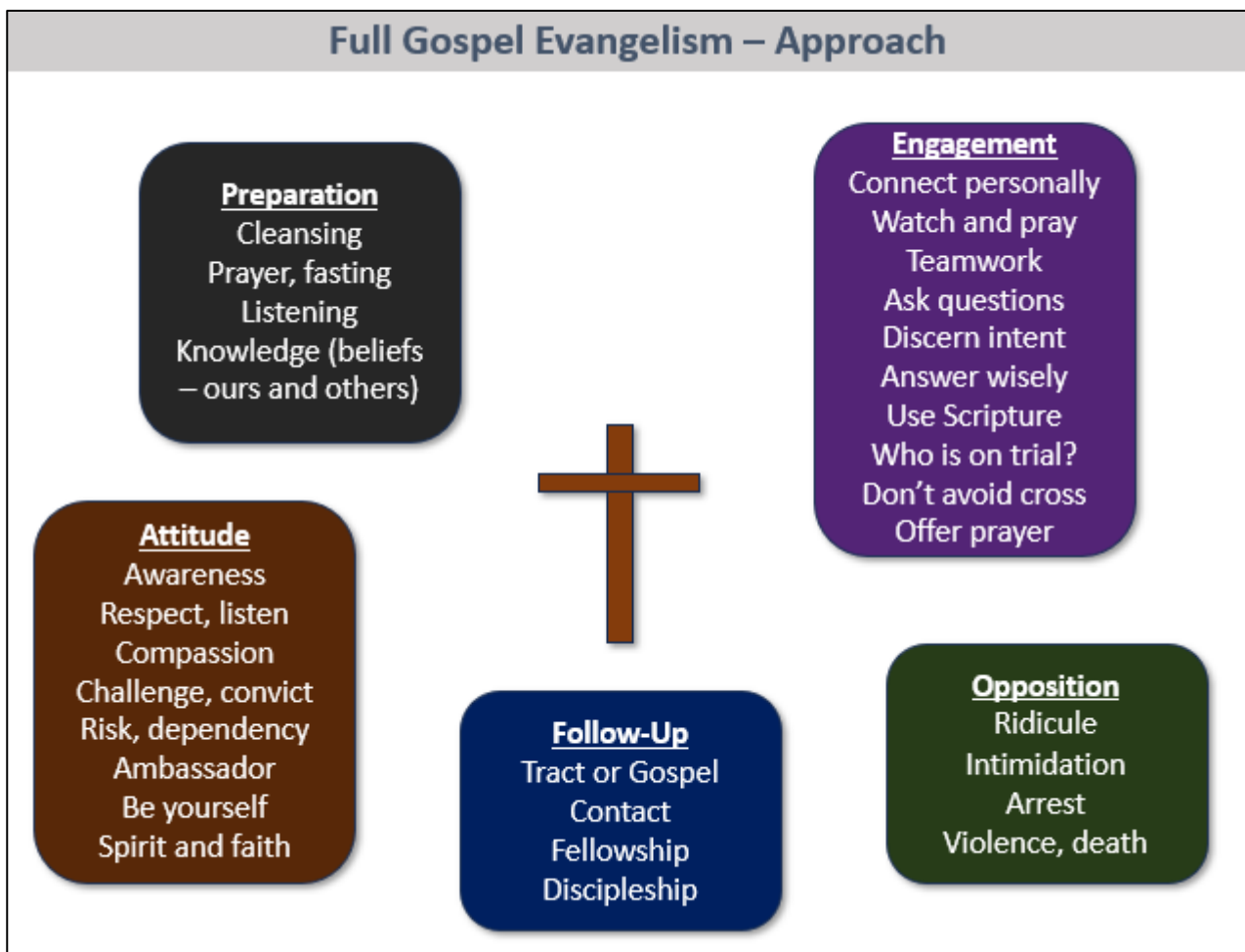
- **Creation, geology.** Both the Tanakh and the New Testament tell us that the evidence for God is plainly seen in creation (Romans 1:18-20). Who is not touched by the wonders of the world we live in, the majesty of the universe, or at the birth of their child? Either these things are the product of random forces or they are the result of deliberate design by a personality of unimaginable wisdom, righteousness, knowledge, and power. True science invariably points emphatically to the latter. Contrary to popular myths taught by our education system, the geological column, for example, is far better explained by rapid and catastrophic events resembling those described in the Bible's great flood narrative, rather than by gradual deposition over time.
- **Biology, cosmology.** Scientists are completely unable to explain the origin of life, the creation of the "simple cell", how sexual reproduction could have "evolved", and countless other insurmountable challenges to the theory of evolution. Richard Dawkins has even admitted to the possibility of a Creator – provided it is not God! Some prominent evolutionists are willing to concede that the "anthropic principle" – the evidence that the universe is fine-tuned to an infinitesimal degree to support human life – is among the most challenging obstacles to their belief system.
- **Archaeology, history.** A considerable amount of archaeological and historical evidence supports the Biblical record. Leading archaeologists such as Nelson Glueck have claimed that in their own field no evidence exists to contradict the Bible, except perhaps in the complex and speculative area of dating events. Discoveries in recent decades lend significant credence to the Biblical narratives, for example, those concerning the Exodus and Mount Sinai, Noah's Ark, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Tower of Babel.
- **The Bible.** The volume and quality of documentary evidence and textual transcription makes the Bible by far the world's most reliable ancient manuscript. It is unique in the extraordinary unity of its message and themes, despite being written over a period of thousands of years by numerous authors of entirely different backgrounds.
- **Prophecy – Past.** Many Jewish people are coming to faith in Jesus as their Messiah simply by reading the prophetic words of Isaiah chapter 53 and Psalm 22. It is claimed that some 300 prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus at His first coming. While some of these may be obscure and open to interpretation, a great number of them are crystal clear. The odds against these being fulfilled in the life of one individual defy "chance". However, the most important question is why the Bible invests so much of its content to heralding the arrival of this One individual!
- **Prophecy – Present.** Jesus and the apostles connected current events to Bible prophecy in their urgent calls to repentance (Matthew 16-3, Acts 2:16-21, Acts 3:24). Our present day resembles the Bible's description of the world in the "last days" in so many extraordinary ways that we are presented with remarkable opportunities for challenging people to consider the truth of the Christian message. These include the return of the Jews to the land of Israel and the obsessive worldwide hatred of both the people and the country, globalism and the move towards a cashless society, natural disasters including bizarre events such as rivers turning red, wars and inter-ethnic conflict, concerted attacks on societal norms and Judeo-Christian values, as well as an emerging trend towards a one-world religion.
- **Prophecy – Future.** Whilst our present era, today, gives good grounds to conjecture our proximity to the End Times scenarios set out in Scripture, there still remains good news (Gospel) in the prospect of that future time of perfect government in this world, under our Lord, Yeshua (Jesus). The Bible encourages to know the End from the Beginning!

Testimony

Jesus' parting words to His disciples concerning their mission until His return were that they would be "my witnesses" (Acts 7:1). Why does the Watchtower organisation describe themselves as "Jehovah's Witnesses" rather than "Jesus' Witnesses", in contradiction of the very Gospel message they claim to preach? All our testimony should be centred on Jesus.

- **Apostles, martyrs.** The meaning of the word "apostle" is someone who is sent with a message, whilst "martyr" means a witness. Sometimes telling others about Jesus can be fatal – at least in this life. Most of Jesus' apostles died for their faith. Not only did they testify about everything that Jesus had done and Who He is – including their personal encounters with him (Paul's Damascus Road experience, for example), but they demonstrated their complete conviction in the reality of His death and resurrection by their willingness to die for this truth. (Acts 2:32, 3:15, 5:32, 10:34-43, Acts, chapter 22:4-21)
- **Believers.** Faithful Christians throughout the centuries have followed in the footsteps of the apostles with their testimony, such as gang leader Nicky Cruz who was saved through David Wilkerson's preaching in New York.
- **Personal.** Anyone who has been born-again has personal stories of the reality of Jesus' powerful impact on their life. Sharing these can stimulate faith on the part of those who hear them.

Approach



As believers, we are called to be ambassadors for Christ (Ephesians 6:20). This awareness should transform our daily lives, and particularly be reflected in how we do outreach and our attitude towards other precious human beings, for whom Jesus gave His life. Like us, every individual is unique, and this means that our personal encounters in outreach will always be special in some way. Interpersonal skills are essential for meeting people “where they are at” and listening carefully to them. But we should also be intentional about sharing our message and can do this more effectively if we know where someone is “coming from”. Not everyone is receptive, and whilst indifference is the most common reaction, we may also encounter hostility and need to respond graciously.

Personal outreach encounters have a *before* and an *after*. If we are involved in evangelism, we have the opportunity and responsibility to prepare ourselves and to consider how we should follow-up with any individual who expresses a serious interest in our message. Dan Holland has authored excellent and complementary books for helping new believers and the church community work together in response to Jesus’ call to make disciples. (See **Christian Publications International**).

Preparation

Believers are told to be “filled continually with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18), and the Spirit guides us and leads us into all truth. In one sense, therefore, the Lord should always be able to use us in any given opportunity which might arise unexpectedly. However, when intentionally engaging in mission we can also prepare ourselves so as to be more effective.

- **Cleansing.** Walking with the Lord should make us quick to repent and be forgiven for the “sin which so easily entangles us” (Hebrews 12:1). In evangelism, we also have a responsibility to those we meet. The Gospel is both a message and a spiritual encounter. We therefore need to be absolutely sure of the message we share and examine what spirit we are ministering through.

Any “gospel” which gives a person the impression that the love of God is that of some sort of indulgent parent who does not care how we live (and by implication that Christ’s crucifixion was pointless), is a false one that encourages people to embrace *the wide way* that leads destruction (Matthew 7:13).

When laying on hands, we can “impart” what influences us. Dan Holland records an incident when members of a congregation were overcome with a desire to take up smoking after receiving prayer from their pastor, who had recently resumed the habit. It is possible for believers to minister through demonic spirits if they have not renounced such things from their former lives, or even received a counterfeit “impartation” at a Christian event, such as “Toronto Blessing” style meetings. In short, we must be clean vessels!

- **Prayer, Fasting.** The Hebrides revival was the result of two elderly ladies praying, fasting and interceding together in private before the Lord. (Acts 4:23-31, 13:2)
- **Listening.** The Lord may give us words of knowledge to identify people and issues we will encounter, or speak to us through Scripture and the insights and experiences of others. Listening matters. (See references to “Discernment” above.)
- **Knowledge (beliefs – ours and others).** Knowing what we believe is essential for clear communication, but what about the beliefs of others? People we meet will often also hold deep convictions and are entitled to try to undermine our own beliefs and promote theirs instead. Therefore, we should develop our understanding of the main reasons why people of different belief systems reject the Gospel so that we may respond more helpfully. (Acts 16:16-34)

Attitude

If we treat others as we would be treated ourselves, we cannot go too far wrong. The biggest mistake we can make, however, is to believe that it is unloving to challenge someone about their beliefs. Evangelism is a rescue mission!

- **Awareness.** Relax in the Lord and be attentive to clues from what people say, do not say, or their body language. We want to avoid being pushy, for example, when someone is not interested.
- **Respect, listen.** Listening demonstrates respect and conversation should be a two-way street. (Acts 22:6-3)
- **Compassion.** Compassion is a powerful motivator for us to speak to people, be vulnerable and even offer to pray for them – sometimes with remarkable results. Jesus healed a leper because He had compassion (Matthew 8:2-3).
- **Challenge, convict.** The Gospel convicts us of our sin, leading to repentance and salvation. We can be extremely reluctant to go down this path for fear of offending, causing rejection or because of British reserve. The Spirit must lead us so that we do not approach this with hard judgementalism, but remember that conviction of sin is God's gracious gift as it pinpoints the problem in order to apply the remedy. Consider whether you personally came to faith through conviction of your own sin, and if you would want to withhold this from others? (Acts chapter 2)
- **Risk, dependency.** The Spirit of God is bold and we are not given a spirit of timidity by the Lord (2 Timothy 1:7). It takes courage to reach out, so we need to ask the Lord to help us. "Nothing ventured, nothing gained". (Dan Holland's book is subtitled "Kingdom exploits in the risk zone".) Jesus sent out His disciples telling them to take nothing with them – in other words, to be completely dependent on the Lord (Luke 9:3). Even He depended entirely on His Father and the Holy Spirit's leading (John 8:28).
- **Ambassador.** We represent Jesus through our message, character, the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts He gives us. To some we are the "fragrance of life" and to others "the stench of death" (2 Corinthians 2:16). Let us accept this fact and be prepared for our light to be seen. We do not take money (Acts 8:20).
- **Be yourself.** Believers are all individually God's workmanship, and therefore wonderfully unique. Do not try to be someone else, but learn to recognise how the Lord works through you in order to grow in what He has given you. Outreach can, paradoxically, be one of the most relaxing places to be simply because we are in the will of God!
- **Spirit and faith.** "Be filled with the Spirit" (Acts 7:55, 11:24), recognise that you are on the Father's business, and that he "rewards those who earnestly seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). The most helpful question you can ask on outreach is "Father, what are you doing right now?" (John 14:10).

Engagement

This is all about "where the rubber hits the road"! What are the practical aspects about talking with people?

- **Connect personally.** When you see the other person as a unique individual whom God loves, it can be easy to break the ice with a simple greeting, question or comment that can unlock a conversation. From here, we may find we have things in common which open up the possibility of exploring spiritual matters (Acts 22:15). I am astonished at how often I discover some personal

connection with the person I am talking to, such as a mutual interest. To get started, though, we all need to find our own way of doing this in a way which is natural and comfortable for us. Perhaps you do not even want to do this, but would prefer someone else to break the ice and after a while invite you into the conversation at a suitable time. That is fine too. I recently saw a very direct method used which actually worked well with its no-nonsense approach. It went something like "Hi, I'm Maurice. I'm a Christian and we're here talking with people about Jesus", followed up by a question to encourage discussion on spiritual matters.

- **Watch and pray.** Our job is to be aware of what the Lord is doing and what is going on around us, even in the conversation we may be currently having (John 5:19). We should "watch and pray" as we do outreach.
- **Teamwork.** The Lord has equipped people with different gifts, backgrounds and experience. Relaxing and allowing Him to naturally mix us up and use us individually, in pairs or small groups during a time of outreach is a fruitful and joyful experience.
- **Ask questions.** Asking questions allows us to discern someone's orientation to life and to respond in a helpful way. For example, does the person believe in God, what do they think will happen when they die, do they consider themselves religious or spiritual, or more importantly, what do they think about Jesus?
- **Discern intent.** We are involved in spiritual warfare and sometimes people will seek to trip us up with a "clever" question, possibly to reinforce their own sense of moral or intellectual superiority, or deflect from being put on the spot themselves. It can be helpful to consider what the person's intent is, and even ask questions to uncover their real motives, or simply to avoid misunderstandings.
- **Answer wisely or respond with questions.** Given these potential pitfalls around people's motives, Jesus calls us to be "as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves" (Matthew 10:16). More often than not, He answered a question with a question, and we can learn from Him. He did this not to be evasive, but to make people reconsider their perspective, attitude or to bring them under conviction, as in the case of the parable of the "Good Samaritan" (Luke 10:25-37). By responding to a question with a question, we can often (by the Spirit's grace) re-set the agenda and refocus the conversation. This is especially helpful in dealing with frivolous or evasive questions from people who want to avoid the challenge of the Gospel. (Further thoughts here: <https://christiancomment.org/2021/02/02/question-for-question/>)
- **Use Scripture.** The words of the Bible are more powerful than our own. Learning Scripture so as to quote it appropriately and effectively allow us to be the Lord's spokesperson in a given situation. It is helpful to have a Bible on hand to refer to and even look at together. We want people to desire to read the Word of God for themselves and this can whet their appetite. (Acts 8:32-25, 13:32-47)
- **Who is on trial?** In the Western world, people think of themselves as sitting in judgement of God, evaluating reasons why they might either believe that He does not exist or, that if He does, why they are morally superior to Him! CS Lewis wrote an essay on this called "God in the Dock". In reality, God will put *us* on trial! In evangelism, we ideally want people to put *themselves* on trial so that they will be convicted, will become disciples, and will be acquitted on Judgement Day. Therefore, whilst using reasoning and evidence to help break down someone's *intellectual* resistance can be helpful, turning the conversation intentionally to moral issues allows God to challenge their *conscience*.
- **Don't avoid the cross.** "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18)

- **Offer prayer.** Sometimes it is appropriate and helpful to offer prayer for people, and it is usefully gratefully received! At times the Lord will even a heal an unbeliever on the streets immediately in response to prayer – something which can bring a person to faith in Jesus.

Follow-Up

Not every conversation needs follow-up. It depends on circumstances such as whether this is a chance encounter or an outreach mission, and on the person's reaction. Use your judgement in the Lord. We referred earlier to Dan Holland's helpful books on this subject.

- **Tract or Gospel.** A tract is probably more suitable for arousing interest, whilst a Gospel will take someone who has indicated a genuine interest further into their exploration of the truth.
- **Contact.** We should consider whether a contact ought to be personal, with a particular church or even provided by giving out a list of Biblically sound fellowships that someone might want to consider visiting.
- **Fellowship.** A gentle way to take things further may be to meet in a social setting - in effect on neutral ground, where one can relax and talk freely. There are also options to invite people to church gatherings of various kinds if it seems suitable.
- **Discipleship.** Whilst the goal of outreach is ultimately discipleship, it is important that people understand what they are getting into (Luke 14:26-33). This is a bigger commitment than continued exploration, and is appropriate for those who profess Jesus as Lord.

Opposition

Sharing the Gospel is engaging in spiritual warfare, and we are opposed by spiritual forces that mobilise people against us. We should not be naïve about this, as Jesus spoke about counting the cost.

- **Ridicule.** Although I have not personally encountered this reaction from an individual, in this country our education system and media have been increasingly contemptuous of Christian beliefs over a period of many years. The indifference of many is probably due to this. The 2024 Olympics ramped up the ridicule of Jesus and our faith to perhaps unprecedented levels for a Western democracy – and is likely the harbinger of worse to come. (Acts 17:32)
- **Intimidation.** Mobs, chanting and violence have erupted on UK streets in an alarming way in 2023 and 2024, with Jewish people inevitably being the most aggressively targeted. Christian street preachers have also increasingly been subject to harassment in recent years. Intimidation is intended to cause fear, which is an entirely natural and understandable reaction to threat. The Lord reassured Paul in such a situation (Acts 17:13, 18:9-10, 19:34).
- **Arrest.** Christians are now being arrested in Britain and elsewhere, and even prosecuted for newly invented "crimes" such as silent prayer on behalf of the unborn or talking openly about having personally abandoned a homosexual lifestyle. (Acts 5:18)
- **Violence, death.** These are realities for Christians in many countries across the world, and those of us who witness for Jesus should not shy away from recognising this. The Bible promises rewards to those who remain faithful, especially for those whose loyalty is "even unto death" (Revelation 12:11). However, if we are born again, we have already died and now live in Christ. Physical death in this life is our entrance to glory. (Acts 5:40, 7:54-60)

Seeing Victory!

Gospel outreach is the greatest privilege for the true disciple of Jesus. We note that some are called to be an evangelist in a very direct and powerful way, but all Christians have a responsibility to give an account of the hope that lies within us (1 Peter 3: 15-17). Be assured of this, if you determine to share the good news of the Kingdom, then God will both provide the opportunities and the wisdom needed. Ask for faith, and Jesus promises to supply (James 1: 5-8). Praise Him!