

Evangelism

Reaching out and saving the lost was the motivation for Jesus coming to die for a sinful world.

'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.' Luke 19:10.

Jesus told many stories about the lost. For example, there is the story of the Lost Coin, the Lost Sheep and The Lost Son who returned to his father. People are found however, when they are restored into a meaningful relationship with Christ through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is through the death and resurrection of Christ that this is made possible.

From our point of view *evangelism* is simply persuading people to commit their lives to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. After commitment comes discipleship.

Evangelism has often been an emotive topic for discussion among leaders. A few take the attitude that if God wants to save the lost, He can do it without your help or mine, while others look for every possible opportunity to reach out to the unconverted. Leaders with the latter conviction, normally see significant church growth.

Four basic assumptions

1. All people *need a Saviour*.
2. God's main way of reaching people is *through people*.
3. Our *attitude of genuine love and concern* for the lost is a significant motivating factor in evangelism.
4. There are always *some people searching for Christ* and they have been made ready by the Holy Spirit and are waiting our arrival. Our church people need to realise this.

Too many people have come into the church through the front door only to later exit through the back. Jesus is not so concerned about decisions, as He is in disciples (Matthew 28:19,20). In this age church leadership must get away from the 'quick decision' approach, although if a person is prepared by the Holy Spirit that is another matter. It is interesting to note that John Wesley while preaching in the open air never called upon people to accept Jesus Christ and become Christians right on the spot. However, he was very keen on small groups, made up of people who wanted to know what it meant to follow Christ.

The Secular person

The following points characterise the Secular person:

1. The Secular person has generally little understanding of the Christian message and their need for the Lord Jesus Christ. Few have ever attended a Sunday School or been exposed to Bible in schools.

2. Secular people are more concerned about life now, rather than the life hereafter. That is why they are so concerned about the environment.
3. Secular people are more troubled by doubt rather than guilt. For example, there is little shame in sleeping around these days, because everyone is doing it (so they say). Most secular people are open to reason.
4. Secular people are lonely. Many spend hours glued in front of T.V.
5. Secular people have a low self-esteem. Too many of our young people commit suicide and others have a sense of hopelessness.

For these reasons and others, the church must have for our age a relevant message and exhibit authentic Christianity. We must seek to answer the questions secular people are asking.

Ways for reaching pre-Believers

There are many effective ways churches can reach people for Christ. Mass crusade evangelism however appears not so effective these days. Here are some methods which have proved most worthwhile.

1. Seeker services (Not always effective)
2. Videos
3. Friendship evangelism
4. Tracts
5. Studies in pre-Christian homes

Engel's chart

Engel's chart is a helpful visual approach in understanding the road people travel as they respond to Christ. We do not want a premature decision, nor do we want an unnecessary delay. Remember, people without Christ are lost.

Modified Engel's Scale

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ETERNITY

	+6	Become 'World Christians'
	+5	Stewardship & Reproduction
Cultivation	+4	Communion with God
	+3	Growth in Grace
	+2	Join the 'Body'
Regeneration	+1	Post-decision evaluation
	+	Repentance & faith in Christ
Persuasion	-1	Decision to Act
	-2	Recognise own needs
	-3	Positive attitude towards Gospel
Proclamation	-4	Gospel has grasp
	-5	Grasp of Gospel
	-6	Aware of Gospel elements
	-7	Aware of Supreme Being
	-8	No awareness of God

Role of the Holy Spirit | Our response | and the Communicator

(Chart used with kind permission of the Christian Leadership Letter)

Follow-up

Develop an effective follow up department within the church where new converts are paired off with other more mature Christians. Notes on Follow-up are in the following chapter.