

*The "Method" of Evangelism*

## The Art of Asking a Good Question

by Pastor Scott Boerckel

If you have been a Christian for any length of time, you will likely have been introduced to one or more methods of sharing your faith with others.

"The Story," the Bridge Illustration, Evangelism Explosion, Sharing Jesus Without Fear, and the Four Spiritual Laws are among countless methods of evangelism.

Often, we find ourselves having been trained in several "methods" of evangelism, but we still find ourselves not really sharing our faith. What can we do about that?

First, warm your heart toward the Lord and what He has done for you. 1 Samuel 12:24 says, "Only fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart. For consider what great things he has done for you." Then, it will be from a sense of joy, not from foreboding obligation, that we share about how wonderful Jesus is.

(continued on page 2)

The next several editions of the OakLeaf will highlight a few **spiritual disciplines**. A spiritual discipline is a practice identified in the Scriptures as a means of promoting spiritual maturity among believers in Jesus. This edition focuses on "Evangelism." Telling people about Jesus is an essential aspect of "Making Disciples" one of East White Oak's three Vital Signs.

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## The Art of Asking a Good Question

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Second, pray. Ask the Lord to guide you each day into encounters where there will be freedom to share the hope that you have. There are a couple of wonderful articles in this OakLeaf designed to help you know the importance of prayer and how to pray in evangelism.

Third, craft good questions. The Bible is filled with evangelists who knew how to ask good questions. Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch, "Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30) Jesus, when he was calling his first disciples, asked the question, "What are you seeking?" (John 1:38). In fact, the most common response of our Lord to those who questioned Him was to pose another question back to them!

I wonder how it would develop our relationships with lost people if we asked more questions and listened really intently to their answers. It might just be that we will gain a passport into their lives to have a closer relationship, where we can present Jesus in more fullness.

Below are some questions that I have found helpful toward initiating a deepening relationship with some-

one. Don't feel like you have to ask ALL the questions! In fact, just one might open a door to further relationship.

1. What burdens are you carrying today?
2. What joys are you experiencing?
3. Will you tell me about your family?
4. That's a fascinating tattoo. Can you tell me a bit about what it means to you?
5. We are going to ask God's blessing on our meal in a minute. Is there anything that we can pray for you? (asked to a server in a restaurant)
6. What is the biggest thing on your plate in the coming week?

I believe that there has never been a more critical time for all believers to grow in evangelism. Romans 10:13-14 says, "Anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. But how shall they ask 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?" (TLB). So, let's warm our hearts toward what God has done for us in Christ. Let's pray earnestly that the Lord will open doors of opportunity to share our faith. And let's ask well crafted questions, listening intently to the responses, so that we can grow in loving relationship with those who need to know the Savior. We long for the result to be that we can fully and clearly share the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit and see many turn to the Lord Jesus in repentance and faith in Him.

**Pastor Scott's new sermon series will begin November 27!**



## Your Part in Building a Healthy Church

IN A PAGAN WORLD



**First Corinthians**

Evangelism Lessons from our Missionaries

# Ordinary, Everyday Interactions

by Laurie Soliday



**During my language learning days in Germany, I took a three week “crash” course where I had 3 hours of class in the morning, then another hour and a half with a personal tutor in the afternoon.**

Jana, my tutor, was a typical Berliner who had no connection to Christians, or even spirituality in general. The only interaction she had with church was when she walked by the one in her neighborhood.

Over my three weeks with Jana, we talked about Christianity and faith quite a bit. It doesn't hurt that my job of leading the student ministry for Cru in Germany lends itself to conversation. But during that time, what I found most important was just being able to share what God was doing in my life.

*What I found most important was just being able to share what God was doing in my life.*

For people like Jana, Jesus feels like a fairytale. They can't fathom there's a God they're separated from or that a savior would die for them. But my life, and what God was doing in it, showed how real God is. It didn't need to be deep. In fact, that could be more inaccessible. I would share little things—what stood out in the Sunday sermon, what I didn't understand as I read in the Bible during my time with God, or how I prayed a short prayer as I was doing my homework.



Cru evangelism training event in Latvia

At the end of our three weeks, Jana said she was surprised how comfortable it was to talk with me. She wasn't ready to become a Christian, but she did mention she'd like to go into that church she would often walk past. All I did was to be in a relationship with God myself, and share with someone who was not yet a believer my ordinary, everyday interactions with Him.



Laurie attended East White Oak while she worked with Cru in Central Illinois from 2002-2011. Since then she's lived in Berlin, Germany and leads the student ministry of Cru in Germany. Laurie enjoys cycling through the German countryside or relaxing at home with her two cats.





Evangelism Lessons from our Missionaries

# Sharing the Gospel in Relationships

by Mark Kuzdas



*Discipleship Training in Costa Rica*

## Tin Shacks—Barbed Wire—Raw Sewage—Mud Floors

We were excited 20 years ago to finish language school in Costa Rica and finally go full-time into the challenging and forsaken places of violence and hopelessness. Surely, these places would be fertile ground for sowing the seeds of evangelism. But it was hard.

We learned many things in those first months. The gangs would do whatever was necessary to protect their territory and power. Violence was a way of life. We were warned while in language school that these areas were to be avoided. However, God also opened our eyes to the needs that resulted from the poverty, lack of education, drugs, abuse, and violence.

*God opened our eyes to the needs that resulted from poverty... drugs, abuse, and violence.*

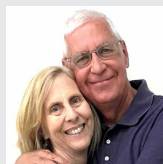
It was not about sharing the gospel with as many people as possible. No, it was going to be about meeting the many needs and building relationships and trust. It meant not giving up and trusting God for long-term fruit.

God has shown us many ways to show God's love, earn trust, and, more importantly, earn the right to be

heard. The children's feeding center, where hundreds of kids come every day for a hot lunch, is just one example. When we talk about God's love for us, the message is accompanied by actions of love. The results of sin? They are living it. Many hearts are made ready to hear and respond to the gospel.

If the gospel had been the end game, Jesus would have departed from this world content that His disciples were "saved." But no, it was the starting point. It is a glorious and amazing starting point but not the end. It was time to go and lead others to Jesus and teach them what it means to love and follow him. "Go, and make disciples."

Here is what the Lord has taught us. Through a loving relationship, share the gospel. Don't leave them when they respond. Instead, continue to love them as never before by teaching them what it means to love and follow Jesus and train and challenge them to do the same. The light of the gospel penetrates the darkness through disciples making disciples.



*Mark and Meg Kuzdas are the founders and directors of Christian Light Foundation Costa Rica. Their primary focus for the past 20 years has been sharing the gospel and discipleship. Their ministry involves providing for children in poverty, seminars, youth activities, counseling, and church planting.*

Evangelism Lessons from our Missionaries

# Conversations with a Cup of Tea

by Lucas O.

**“New Russian Law Bans Evangelism!”** I may have rolled my eyes slightly as I read the headline from a clickbait Christian news site.

Well, it's partially true. The law passed several years ago made certain forms of evangelism a finable offense, but it was focused on street evangelism that invited people to become members of a particular cult or church. Talking about your personal faith was still protected under the constitution. So, despite the headlines, little has changed in our mode of evangelism over the 14 years we have been in Russia.



*Over tea and snacks...we get to know people and that includes sharing our faith.*

The setting we most often find ourselves in when talking about the Good News is a kitchen table with a cup of tea. In Russia it's traditional to serve tea to guests, so over tea and snacks is how we get to know people, and that includes sharing our faith. When we speak with Tuvan people, we also must recognize that one of the barriers for them is the ingrained thought that the God of the Bible is for Russians and not them. Tuvans traditionally practiced shamanism and were later converted to Buddhism, and those two belief systems are considered an integral part of their identity. To accept Christ is seen as rejecting their roots, which would anger the spirits.

With that in mind, when we talk about Christ, we focus on the fact that His life, teaching, death, and resurrection were for ALL people. Heaven will be filled with people “from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages...” (Rev 7:9). As often as we can, we try and connect nonbelievers with believing Tuvans. Through those relationships they can witness that believers are still fully Tuvan and yet they possess a hope, peace, and joy that cannot be obtained through the rituals of the shaman or the prayers to idols, but only through a relationship with the Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Lucas, and his wife have been serving as missionaries in Russia since 2008, focusing on discipleship. With their four kids, they enjoy traveling on the trans-Siberian railroad to visit other regions of Siberia and taking on the many adventures that God brings to their life in Russia.*







Evangelism Lessons from our Missionaries

## Sowing the Good Seed

by Steven Orner

**Evangelism is such a big word. It is something that can feel so weighty that the average person might even avoid it for fear that they are not qualified.**

However, I cling to a few examples from Scripture that guide me and encourage me as we seek to do just this to people in Madagascar who have never heard the Good News of Salvation. The first example is to do it together. Sharing the Good News can be challenging work. In Luke 10, one of the first examples of mission work, Jesus sends out His team two by two. He has them go and directly engage and build relationships as they share the Good News. So, we work to partner with and train up Malagasy missionaries who can go with us.

*My job is to be faithful...go out with other fellow believers, build relationships, sow the seeds of salvation, and work the Harvest in due time.*

Evangelism is about sharing with people, and as Paul says in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 that he was willing to share not only the Gospel of God but also himself. So, the second lesson is to remember it is about people. Sharing life and struggle and the gospel with them. It is not a “hit and run” but rather a stay and build. Find a community that needs Jesus and live with them and share life with them.

Finally, when it comes to evangelism, we need to remember who develops and grows the Harvest. God is the Lord of the Harvest and the one whose very words caused all of creation to come into being. In that, the pressure is off of us to produce results. I love Matthew 13:24 where Jesus



Malagasy villagers on the island of Nosy Mitsio Madagascar

tells a parable of a man who sowed good seeds and then the enemy came and sowed weeds in the same field. His servants wanted to try to fix the problem right away and at the risk of pulling up the good seed. The Master of the field told them to wait and in due time the harvest would show the grain from the weeds. This revelation takes so much pressure off of me to be a “Soul Saver.” God changes hearts and brings salvation. My job is to be faithful—go out with other fellow believers, build relationships, sow the seeds of salvation, and work the Harvest in due time. I can trust that God will bring the Harvest and He will change lives, and I just need to be available and faithful.



Steve and Bekah Orner and their 4 children serve with Africa Inland Mission in Madagascar. They work with unreached people groups and in training Malagasy missionaries.





Christmas is more than festive lights, pretty presents, and holiday traditions.

We celebrate an eternal God who became a baby in order to offer eternal life to each one of us.



### Christmas Concert

DECEMBER 11

2:30 & 5:00 PM



### Christmas Eve

DECEMBER 24

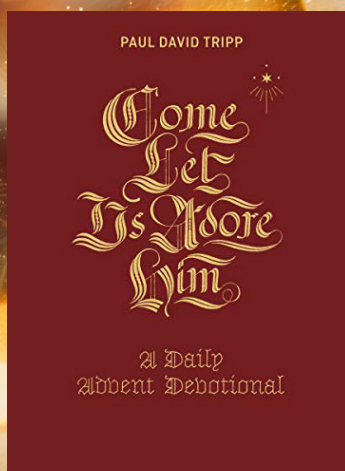
3:00 & 4:30 PM



### Christmas Day

DECEMBER 25

10:30 AM



## Advent Resource

For those who would like an Advent resource, consider picking up ***Come Let Us Adore Him*** by Paul Tripp. This book offers one gospel-centered devotion for every day in December. At the end of each devotion is a section for parents and children, featuring one Christmas theme, discussion prompts, and related verses for further exploration. It's a resource designed to help you do the one thing that matters most each December — celebrate Jesus. Order a copy from any online book distributor.

[EastWhiteOak.church/christmas](http://EastWhiteOak.church/christmas)







## Evangelism Stories

# Can any Christian be an Evangelist?

by Dirk May

## Is there hope for someone who is not a natural evangelist to share Christ? In other words, the ordinary believer.

I found the answer to this question on my trip to New York City with Spread Truth Ministries.

The trip might be described as a one-week evangelism boot camp. We spent each day on the streets of New York City either offering to pray with people in the various boroughs or engaging with people in the parks, all with the idea of sharing the good news of Christ.



2022 Spread Truth team from East White Oak

The questions, doubts and objections came to a head as I reached our hotel. "I cannot do this, Lord. I'm a sinner who is not worthy. They won't listen anyway." One passage that kept coming to mind was Exodus 4:11 "Who has made man's mouth?". The Lord will tell me what to say to people. Pat Gregory, our East White Oak group leader for the week, would remind us "God uses sinners to tell other sinners where to find hope." As we were reminded in our daily worship time, salvation is of the Lord and God opens hearts, not man.



Sharing and praying on the streets of New York City

The beauty of the Good News is that it is not about the one who shares it, but it is about the Lord Jesus who displayed all His glory when He did a marvelous, powerful work on the Cross. Paul said that he preached the gospel not with clever speech so the Cross would not be emptied of its power (1 Corinthians 1:17).

The Good News is simply pointing our fellow man to Jesus and saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God." In Him you will never be disappointed.

Spread Truth was an opportunity to say "Yes" to God's call, and to let God use my stammering tongue to glorify the Lord Jesus.



Dirk May serves as an elder and small group leader. He enjoys spending his free time laughing with his wife, Sue, and playing with their grandchildren.



# Outreach to the Local Indian Community

by Elia Kudari



CEF Five Day club hosted by the Kudari family

## We grew up in a predominantly Hindu culture.

As the influences from society were molding our minds with ideas and beliefs, we were, at the same time, introduced to the gospel at a very young age.

Looking back, we greatly appreciate God's providence and grace in that He granted us opportunities to hear about and know the Lord Jesus. We realized the importance of knowing the gospel and the truth, even from a very young age, even as we were exposed to different worldviews. We can confidently testify that the truths that we learned, even with a limited understanding, played a vital role as we grew up in very challenging and hostile circumstances and religious contexts.

When we moved to Bloomington, we were pleasantly surprised to see thousands of Indians. We quickly learned that most of them do not know the gospel. God placed, on our hearts, a desire to reach them with the gospel. We began to pray and started exploring opportunities to reach, with the gospel, both adults as well as children. God, in His mercy, enabled us to have outreach events during Easter and Christmas.

In God's providence, we were introduced to Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) and their summer program, Five Day Club. CEF provides materials and

teachers/helpers, who will come and conduct the club every day for five days, for an hour and a half. We gladly took that opportunity and began to host these clubs at our house. God brought many children, between 40 to 70, to these clubs. Most of these children were from Hindu families and to our joy, parents and grandparents would often join them. They heard the gospel and had lots of fun too. Many have expressed their joy to be able to hear and learn about the Lord Jesus for the first time in their lives and some have received Bibles joyfully and told us that they began to read the Bible.

*Many have expressed their joy to...  
learn about the Lord Jesus.*

Hosting these outreach events is impossible without the assistance of faithful brothers and sisters. Many from East White Oak Bible Church volunteered to assist us with rides, sharing the gospel, nursery, and in many other ways. We faithfully planted the seed and are praying and hoping for the harvest which only the Lord can bring forth in His own time.



*Elia Kudari is married to Jyothi. They have three daughters. Elia works at State Farm and has served the Lord as an elder here at East White Oak. He currently serves as the Acts 2:42 Adult Bible Fellowship teacher.*



Evangelism in Ministry

# The Power of Prayer in Evangelism

by Dr. Jeff VanGoethem

**Why is it that we are seeing such a low rate of conversion in our times? Christian leaders, denominations, and many others are very concerned about it.**

You might answer by saying, “Well look at our culture. It has grown increasingly more godless, people are indifferent toward the things of God and the gospel, and not only that, many voices seem to be against the truth in today’s world.” I would not say you are wrong if you said something like that.

However, have you considered that little prayer is offered these days for the lost? Church-wide prayer meetings have largely died out across the land. Interchurch prayer is very rare. Busyness has so eaten up our personal lives that we no longer seem to have time for secret prayer. And with little prayer comes little power.

Have you also considered that in times past, believers did gather together to make fervent, urgent prayer for the lost? Yes, it has happened. Sadly, not consistently but from time to time believers were stirred up to do this. And conversions were mighty in number and frequency. Perhaps now is again the time to be stirred up for converting souls more than ever as we see godlessness growing throughout the land.

There is a connection between unified prayer and powerful evangelism. In John 17 the Lord prayed that his church would be “one” (i.e. unified). The early church experienced a powerful unity in the early chapters of Acts in answer to the prayer of Jesus in John 17. As they experienced unity they prayed together for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and boldness in evangelism (Acts 1:14, 4:23-31). And there resulted a GREAT QUANTITY of conversions, which occurred with GREAT FREQUENCY (Acts 2:41, 47).



*Prayer meeting at East White Oak*

*There is a connection  
between unified prayer and  
powerful evangelism.*

What is the secret to a great quantity of conversions, with great frequency? It is unified prayer in the church. Can we unify for prayer in our day? Is this the season the Lord will stir us? All depends on God. Therefore, all depends on prayer. Ministry leaders, dear believers, will you gather in unity with your brethren and pray for conversions?



*Pastor Jeff VanGoethem has been in pastoral ministry for 40 years, including nearly twenty as Senior Pastor of East White Oak. He has returned to East White Oak after pastoring for some years in Dallas, Texas, to serve as Associate Pastor of Spiritual Development and Missions. He is married to Karen. They have four daughters and four grandchildren.*



# Bible Fellowships Spur Evangelism

by Steven Mann



## “To do good and diffuse light is a duty for which all members of Christ’s church are responsible...

“Christians ought to tell others that they have found medicine for their souls, if they see them ignorant and dying for want of it. What saith the Apostle Peter? As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another (1 Pet. 4:10). They will be happy days for the church when that text is obeyed.” *J.C. Ryle, Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: Mark.*

Evangelism, by definition, indicates the spread of the gospel to all corners of the globe. When we hear that term **evangelism**, we often think about Paul traveling across vast spans of territory and taking the Word of our Lord to unreached peoples.

Clearly Paul’s missionary journeys contributed to the enhanced exposure to the gospel, but Paul in his letter to the Colossians clarifies the real driving force behind gospel growth—“And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.” Colossians 4:3-4. See that? Paul, while penning the letter to the Colossians, is not traveling with the gospel throughout the land. Rather, he is “in chains” asking the church in Colossae to pray that God’s will would be done in opening the gospel message to those who would receive it.

From the best we can tell, the early Church, like the church in Colossae, gathered together, prayed, gave to those in need, praised God, and studied the gospel message (Acts 2:45-57). We see a brief yet powerful description of the results of this communion in Acts 2:47 - “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Isn’t that neat? They

came together, prayed, did life together, praised God and who?—the Lord—added to their number daily.

These powerful gatherings are a model for us at East White Oak. Like the early church, through the ministry of Adult Bible Fellowships (ABFs) we expose ourselves to the life-giving force of the gospel. In Fellowship 13, one of these ABFs, we have been studying in the Gospel of John, and have learned, particularly in John 15, that abiding in the Vine—that is in the person of Jesus Christ—is the necessary ingredient in a life that bears fruit and in a life that is useful to Christ for evangelism. Apart from that, the apostle John explains through the words of Christ, we can do nothing. We can bear no fruit. That’s true of evangelism.

The study and prayer over God’s Word on a weekly basis in our ABF grows us in many gospel-centered ways but I’ll mention only one here...Our faith-nurturing community provides the opportunity for us to come together and to intercede and pray for each other as we continue to spread the gospel message to those around us—family, friends, neighbors, teachers, employers, and more.

J.C. Ryle, in the quote mentioned above, indicates that sharing in fruits of evangelism is something for which we all should strive. During this month devoted to missions, please consider Adult Bible Fellowships as one possibility to aid you in your evangelistic efforts and promote gospel-sharing growth in your own life.



*Steven Mann is married to Jessica—who is a talented artist. They have two children, Daniel and Abigail. Steve is a partner in a private law practice. He is a church elder, serves as a musician on the worship team, and teaches in the Fellowship 13 ABF. Steve enjoys running, manicuring his lawn, and being a father.*



## Are you ready for a challenge in 2023?



Professor Grant Horner's  
**BIBLE READING**  
system

\*\*\*\*\*

10 CHAPTERS / DAY

### Each year East White Oak offers a new Bible reading plan to our church family.

This year's recommended reading plan was created by Professor Grant Horner of the The Master's Seminary. It is designed to be an intense foray into every part of the Bible. Read 10 chapters (45-60 minutes) per day in 10 different books of the Bible. See how Scripture explains Scripture in constantly changing patterns through the year. This system is unlike any Bible reading program you've tried before. Professor Horner challenges you to "Try this reading plan for ONE MONTH and find out yourself! You will never be the same."

#### The Ten Reading Lists:

- List #1 / The Gospels** (89 days)
- List #2 / The Pentateuch** (187 days)
- List #3 / Large Epistles** (78 days)
- List #4 / Smaller Epistles** (65 days)
- List #5 / Old Testament Poetry** (62 days)
- List #6 / Psalms** (150 days)
- List #7 / Proverbs** (31 days)
- List #8 / Old Testament History** (249 days)
- List #9 / Old Testament Prophets** (250 days)
- List #10 / Acts** (28 days)

#### Review by Tim Challies...

*"From the outside it looks like this will be a massive amount of work, a huge commitment of time. But I have found that it is not. The purpose is not to spend a great deal of time in pondering each word, but in reading the Bible so much and so often that Scripture begins to explain Scripture... I commend this plan to you."*

[www.challies.com/christian-living/ten-chapters-per-day](http://www.challies.com/christian-living/ten-chapters-per-day)

#### Tips for success:

- ▶ Read one chapter from each list each day in one sitting or two. At the end of a book, go to the next book. At the end of the list, start it again.
- ▶ Read quickly in order to get the overall sense. Read as fast as you comfortably can with moderate retention; shoot for 5–6 minutes per chapter. At the end of a chapter, move immediately to the next list.
- ▶ Most people decrease their time spent and increase their retention after just two or three weeks!
- ▶ If you miss a day or two—ok, get over it, then keep going. Don't cover yourself in sackcloth and ashes and quit! Move the bookmarks along, to find your place(s) quickly the next day.
- ▶ The goal of this system is simple, and twofold: To know scripture, and to love and obey God more!

**Reading lists and additional details will be available in December!** This plan is also available on the YouVersion Bible app.