



EVERYDAY EVANGELISM

MATT QUEEN

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By Matt Queen

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Introduction

In 1950, the Southern Baptist Convention was comprised of 7,079,889 members. The 27,788 churches to which these members belonged reported 376,085 baptisms, meaning that one person was baptized for every 19 members. In 2011, the convention's 45,764 churches reported 15,978,112 members and 333,341 baptisms. The baptism-to-member ratio increased to one baptism for every 48 members—8,898,223 more members and 17,976 more churches resulted in fewer baptisms and a higher baptism-to-member ratio!

While certain factors, such as the increasing number of churches that fail to report their Annual Church Profile, explain some of the discrepancy, this higher baptism-to-member ratio identifies a glaring deficiency among Southern Baptist churches. The need of the hour in our churches is that we practice *everyday evangelism*. Everyday evangelism is an atmosphere in which church members regularly share their faith as a natural part of their daily lives.

Motivating and mobilizing your church in *everyday evangelism* can be a daunting endeavor. Nevertheless, you have decided to read this book because you are up to the task! A simple strategy to assist you as you create a culture of *everyday evangelism* in your church includes the following:

1. PRAY

Seek the Lord's direction, power, and blessing for this evangelistic endeavor through prayer. Regardless of how well-intentioned and prepared the personal evangelist is, he needs the Lord's direction and wisdom in order to begin this endeavor and see it sustained in his church. Ask God to empower you in making evangelism contagious in

your church. Involve your church members in regular times of focused prayer for the salvation of the lost in your community. Also, pray that the Lord will begin to stir a passion for consistent evangelism within other church members' hearts. Lastly, seek the blessing of God upon this endeavor. Apart from His blessing, any attempt to promote an *everyday evangelism* kind of atmosphere in your church will fail.

2. COMMIT

Make a personal commitment before God to practice intentional, *everyday evangelism*. Ask God to help you keep this commitment. Share this commitment with others in your church, and ask them to encourage and keep you accountable to fulfill it. Consider your daily agenda, and intentionally schedule evangelism into your day.

3. ENCOURAGE

Invite others in your church to commit to daily, intentional evangelism. Not everyone you invite to become a consistent personal evangelist will make this commitment, but some fellow church members will commit if someone will only ask them. Periodically send those who make such commitments notes, emails, or text messages to encourage them and assure them you are praying for them as they evangelize.

4. EVANGELIZE

Ask those who make commitments to accompany you during the church's scheduled evangelism outings. Keep in mind that some of those who commit are would-be evangelists, needing someone to teach them how to share the gospel. Share some basic gospel presentations with them (*e.g.*, The Roman's Road, Steps to Peace with God, One Verse Evangelism) and encourage them to memorize at least one presentation. Demonstrate how to utilize the gospel presentation they select in live evangelism encounters. Also, invite them to begin to participate in the evangelistic conversations, assuring them that they can do so at their own pace and that you will assist them in the conversation if they experience any trouble.

Others who commit to evangelize have confidence in sharing the gospel but have never equipped someone else to evangelize. Encourage them to identify two fellow church members to train in evangelism. Make yourself available to advise and counsel them whenever they have

questions about best training practices. Over time, also challenge them to teach those they have trained in evangelism how they, too, can equip and train future would-be evangelists.

Thank you for your interest in *Everyday Evangelism*. This book aims to encourage the pastors, staff, deacons, and members of local churches everywhere to practice *everyday evangelism*. In it, readers will find essays that present biblically driven evangelism themes that seek to motivate readers and their churches in a commitment to practice *everyday evangelism*. Readers, beware, this book will challenge some of today's most commonly accepted evangelism misnomers by first identifying how evangelism was practiced in Scripture and then applying biblical principles to inform contemporary practices of evangelism.

May the Lord bless your evangelistic efforts and once again breathe revival into believers and churches across our nation.

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CHAPTER 1

Toward an Understanding of Evangelism

Three telephone pole installation crews sought to win an installation contract with the local telephone company. The phone company decided that it would put all three crews to a test. Each team would be given one day to set as many telephone poles in the ground as possible.

When the day was over, the first crew reported to the phone company official that they had installed 35 poles in the ground. The company representative was very impressed! The second crew reported that they mounted 32 poles in the ground. The phone official relayed to the second crew, “That’s good, but it’s not good enough.” Finally, he asked the third crew: “How many poles did you set in the ground?” The foreman proudly announced, “Two!” “Two?” asked the phone company official. “Why are you so proud of installing two telephone poles? This team set 32 poles, and the other team set 35.” “Well, yeah,” said the foreman, “but look at how much they left sticking out of the ground.”

WHAT EVANGELISM IS NOT¹

In the same way that the third crew misunderstood the task at hand, many would-be personal evangelists want to practice *everyday evangelism*, but they misunderstand what evangelism is. In order to understand the

1 Alvin Reid, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of evangelism, popularized the following approach of articulating misconceptions of evangelism in order to define evangelism in *Evangelism Handbook: Biblical, Spiritual, Intentional, Missional* (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 17-22.

meaning of evangelism, churches and believers first must understand what evangelism is not. Consider the following common misconceptions of evangelism:

1. Use Words When Necessary²

Some churches and believers think they practice evangelism on the basis of their moral and upright lifestyles, apart from actually verbalizing the gospel. They believe the difference that Christ has made in their lives on its own, without a verbal declaration of the gospel, will raise unbelievers' curiosities and lead them to approach believers with their inquiries and interests in the gospel. Practitioners of this approach fondly assert a common misnomer attributed to Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel; use words when necessary."³

Tommy Kiker, a Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary pastoral ministries professor, retorts, "'Go, preach the gospel, use words when necessary,' is like saying, 'Go, feed the hungry, use food when necessary.'" Believers should live moral and upright lives, but they have been called to live according to the highest standard of righteousness, that is, holiness (*cf.*, Eph 1:4; 5:27; 1 Pet 1:15-16). While believers' lifestyles must match the demands of the gospel, believers must not forget that evangelism necessitates a verbal proclamation of the gospel. They, like first-century believers, are called to preach the gospel (*cf.*, Acts 10:42; Rom 10:15; 1 Cor 1:17; Gal 1:15-16; Eph 3:8; and 2 Tim 4:1-2), not merely to live holy lives.

On this point, consider the model of the apostles and first-century believers. They do not "use words when necessary" when they practice evangelism in the New Testament. Words are necessary for personal evangelists in the New Testament! Examples of New Testament evangelism occur in the context of proclamation, not mere demonstration or duty alone. In fact, the New Testament addresses this kind of approach only once, and it refers to a marriage in which a believing wife is married

² Reid coins this "The Mute Approach" in *ibid.*, 17-18.

³ Mark Galli discredits this quote being attributed to Francis in *Francis of Assisi and His World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003). Also, he states the following in a subsequent Christianity Today article: This saying is carted out whenever someone wants to suggest that Christians talk about the gospel too much and live the gospel too little. Fair enough—that can be a problem. Much of the rhetorical power of the quotation comes from the assumption that Francis not only said it but lived it. The problem is that he did not say it. Nor did he live it." "Speak the Gospel, Use Deeds When Necessary;" accessed on May 8, 2014, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2009/may-web-only/120-42.0.html>.

to an unbelieving husband (1 Pet 3:1-2). As such, this passage's specific context and intent is not prescriptive for all believers, that is, for men and women to which this situation does not apply; nor should it be adopted by all believers as a normative evangelistic approach.

2. Professionals Only⁴

This misconception of evangelism advances a narrative that only certain people can, or should, evangelize. A number of churches and believers consider evangelism to be a task for pastors, preachers, and evangelists. They are convinced that only those with “the gift of evangelism” have the ability and the responsibility to evangelize.

This mindset fails for many reasons. First, the Bible never describes “the gift of evangelism.” Paul does identify “the gift of the evangelist” (Eph 4:11), but he explains that these spiritually-gifted evangelists equip the saints for ministry (Eph 4:12-13). Second, the evangelistic enterprise of the church cannot advance through the evangelism practiced by evangelists alone because God has ordained that all believers evangelize. Nowhere in the Gospels does our Lord appoint only spiritually-gifted evangelists to fulfill the Great Commission on their own. If He had, not all of those first disciples who received the Great Commission would have evangelized others or encouraged the disciples they made to evangelize, but they did! Last, if the task of world evangelization falls only upon spiritually gifted evangelists, then Jesus' promise to be with us always (Matt 28:20) applies only to evangelists.

3. Anything and Everything⁵

Several think that evangelism occurs at any and every activity occurring in their churches. While churches and believers should do everything they do with an eye toward evangelism, the sad reality is that they do not. Because churches and believers do lots of different kinds of things, they convince themselves that their activities constitute evangelism, even if they haven't shared the gospel in the course of all they are doing. Thus, they believe when they have a pot luck meal and many unbelievers attend, they have evangelized. Some have convinced themselves that because many guests visit their church on a particular Sunday

4 Reid calls this approach “The Professionals Need Only Apply Approach” in *Evangelism Handbook*, 18-20.

5 Reid refers to this approach as “The Cop Out Approach” in *ibid.*, 20-22.

morning, evangelism has occurred. Still yet, others think they have evangelized on the basis that they have offered a ministry (e.g., Vacation Bible School, a financial workshop, a marriage enrichment weekend, a food pantry, or a clothes closet) to the community. While all of these endeavors and situations are commendable and can be outlets to evangelize, those who think anything and everything they do is evangelism must realize that if the gospel of Jesus Christ is not verbally proclaimed and offered to those in attendance, then an event, not evangelism, has taken place.

4. When I Get Time

Some tell themselves they will evangelize when they feel like it or have the time to do so. This mindset inevitably relegates evangelism to a pastime activity, if it occurs at all. In order for *everyday evangelism* to take place, it must be intentional and sometimes even planned. Those who fail to plan time to evangelize will fail to find time to evangelize.

5. We are All Okay

Either telling others they are already God's children, or simply believing it to be true, constitutes a "we are all okay" misconception about evangelism. One specific example of this approach can be found in Steve Smith and Ying Kai's book, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution*. In it, Smith says that Kai began evangelistic conversations by stating, "Congratulations, you are God's child! The problem is that you are lost, but I will show you how to be saved."⁶ The Bible teaches that all people are God's creation (cf. Gen 1:27), but only repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ alone appropriates men and women as the children of God (cf. John 1:12; Rom 8:16; 9:7-9; and 1 John 3:1). If we tell our hearers that they are God's children already, then why would they want to repent and believe? In fact, taking this statement to its logical conclusions can promote a type of "Christian" universalism that assumes everyone will be saved in the end. *Everyday evangelists* aren't spiritual gurus; they are God's mouthpieces that sound forth God's love for the world through Jesus Christ's death, burial, and resurrection and call for everyone, everywhere to repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

6 Steve Smith with Ying Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* (Monument: WIGTake Resources, 2011), 217.

6. Shaming Others

Personal evangelists, who on their own authority and/or for their own pleasure condemn and shame others during an evangelistic encounter exemplify the “shaming others” mentality. In this approach, evangelists seek to make listeners feel bad about themselves apart from the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Extreme cases of this attitude include so-called evangelists berating others without either talking to them or sharing the gospel with them.

Everyday evangelists must convey to their listeners that all sinners are judged because they have not believed in Jesus Christ (John 3:18-19, 36); but they must not neglect to tell those who hear that Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins, and if they will repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ, they can be forgiven and declared righteous in Jesus Christ. Likewise, sinners must be told that hell awaits them if they do not believe and repent, but everyday evangelists must tell them in such a way that their listeners realize that the evangelists care for their souls and want them to avoid hell through Jesus Christ and Him alone.

7. Winning at All Costs

Some believers seem more interested in winning arguments than they do winning souls. In their well-meaning attempts to explain and defend the gospel, they end up arguing their point in hopes that their listeners will concede that the evangelist is correct and they are wrong. The apostle Paul states five times in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 that he has done everything he can do under the law of Christ to win others, but by “win” he neither means simply to convince them nor to triumph over them. Rather, he intends “win” to mean leading them to faith in Christ (1 Cor 9:22b). Therefore, everyday evangelists should share the gospel with complete confidence in its veracity but do so for the reason Christ evangelized—so that people will repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).

8. Sheep Stealing

Other well-meaning church members encourage a member from another church to unite with their church and call what they do evangelism, when in reality they exercise “sheep stealing.” This practice proves unhealthy and essentially becomes a kind of spiritual cannibalism. Although every church should encourage an inviting and accepting

atmosphere for believers that are searching for a church to which they can belong, this characteristic on its own merits does not constitute evangelism.

Churches and believers do not evangelize believers, they evangelize unbelievers. Furthermore, evangelism is not inviting already established believers to become members of a church (though such an invitation is encouraged if evangelists find believers who are not actively involved in a Bible-believing church). Rather, evangelism is inviting unbelievers to respond to the good news of Jesus Christ through repentance and faith by becoming disciples of Jesus Christ, professing their newfound faith through believer's baptism, and being taught obedience to all the commands of Christ (primarily in the local church in which they will be baptized and to which they will belong).

9. Visit My Church

Similar to “sheep stealing,” some simply invite unbelievers to attend their churches. While church members should invite unbelievers to their churches, any invitation to attend church that does not also invite unbelievers to receive Christ cannot be considered evangelism. What about unbelievers who never accept the invitation to attend church in order to hear the gospel? Or, what about those unbelievers who intend to come to church but suddenly die before Sunday comes? What if some unbelievers do attend church, but the pastor does not preach the gospel to them? In order to evangelize unbelievers, *everyday evangelists* must present enough of the gospel to them that they know what Jesus did for them on the cross and from the tomb, as well as invite them to receive Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

10. Another Notch in My Belt⁷

“Belt-notching” is a popular idiom that refers to those who boast of some success or achievement for the purpose of bringing attention to themselves. Believers who only concern themselves with adding another notch in their belts act out of pride in order to receive recognition for those who, upon hearing the gospel, profess faith in Jesus Christ. Scripture exhorts evangelists not to boast or seek credit for what God does in the gospel through their evangelism (1 Cor 1:31; 9:16; 2 Cor 10:12-18; Gal 5:25-26; 6:13-15).

⁷ Reid explains this approach by combining “The Sheep Stealing Approach” and “The Belt-Notching Approach” under what he calls “The Numbers Game Approach” in *ibid.*, 18. However, this book conceives “The Sheep Stealing Approach” as a separate approach than “The Belt-Notching Approach.”

11. Manipulation

Unfortunately, some who practice evangelism attempt to manipulate and pressure their hearers into making professions of faith. Those who use manipulation neglect the convicting work of the Holy Spirit and attempt to force their hearers into a decision for which the Spirit of God has not prepared their hearts. Those who practice such things would do well to keep in mind that if they can talk people into making a decision, then others can talk them into making a completely opposite decision. Worse yet, manipulators can foster a false assurance of salvation within those who have not actually repented and believed in Christ, if not altogether harden sinners' hearts to receive the gospel because they believe they are saved when in reality they are not.

WHAT EVANGELISM IS

With so many misconceptions abounding, what then is evangelism? Any church or believer desiring to practice consistent *everyday evangelism* must understand the meaning of evangelism. Evangelism is *that Spirit-empowered activity, in which the disciples of Jesus Christ give a complete and intentional witness to the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, calling unbelievers to become disciples of Jesus Christ by repenting of their sins and placing their faith in Jesus Christ alone.* Evangelism aims that those who hear the gospel and become disciples of Jesus Christ will then become members of a local church through believer's baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit and will be taught obedience to all the commands of Jesus Christ.

WHAT IS A SIMPLE EVANGELISTIC APPROACH?

Having identified the most common misnomers concerning evangelism, as well as defining evangelism and its aim, does a simple evangelistic approach exist that can assist believers in practicing *everyday evangelism*? Intentionality in evangelism isn't simply knowing that believers should evangelize; rather it is making a plan to evangelize consistently and then executing it. Any strategy that encourages believers to evangelize will result in *everyday evangelism*. One simple approach everyday evangelists can utilize as they intentionally seek to evangelize unbelievers includes the following:

1. Pray

Everyday evangelists who do not pray will find their evangelism meeting with failure. During their quiet times, periodically during each day, and before they gather for planned times of evangelism, believers should pray for God's Spirit to precede their witness and to empower their witness for Jesus with boldness. Praying for these requests will not guarantee that everyone that hears the gospel will respond in faith, nor does it mean that everyday evangelists will not experience spiritual attacks. However, failure to pray in preparation for evangelism essentially forfeits the blessings of God and leads to spiritual vulnerability.

2. Identify and Utilize Points of Contact

Personal evangelists will find no shortage of people who need to hear the gospel; however, those finding trouble identifying those with whom they'll share the gospel will want to utilize points of contact. They can find points of contact beginning with those with whom they have relationships (*e.g.*, unbelieving family, friends, and neighbors). In addition, they can approach people like their barber/hair stylist, their dentist, or solicitors who visit their homes.

Some who desire to evangelize have decided to do so if God will provide them with opportunities to do so. However, by "opportunities" they mean someone coming up to them and asking them what they must do to be saved. Rarely, if ever, will these hopeful evangelists get these "opportunities." Therefore, consider evangelistic opportunities from God as those people with whom evangelists come into contact that their spiritual state is unknown or that it is known that they need Christ.

3. Articulate a Transition Statement

Once evangelists have identified points of contact for evangelism, they need to engage these people in conversation. Because God is the creator of all things, evangelists should anticipate and listen for topics that arise in the conversation to transition to the gospel. Some examples of these transitions include: 1) discussions concerning an earthly father can lead to discussions about the Heavenly Father's love as demonstrated by sending Jesus Christ to die for everyone's sins; 2) information about important life events can lead to personal evangelistic testimonies about how they came to Christ; 3) concerns about impending death or the

uncertainty of life can lead to conversations about how believing in the gospel provides the only way for people to go heaven; and 4) details about others' weekend activities can lead to dialogues about believers' Sunday church services and ultimately to the gospel.

4. Present the Gospel

Utilize any presentation of the gospel that is both biblically accurate and easy to remember. However, evangelists desiring to share the gospel in a more natural, extemporaneous way will want to ensure they present the core elements of the gospel. First, they must convey the reality and consequences of sin in the lives of their hearers. Second, they must declare the life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ and how He alone serves as the provision for everyone to be reconciled to God. Last, they must explain to their listeners that reconciliation with God through Jesus can only occur if they will repent of their sins and believe in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

5. Encourage Questions for Clarification

After an evangelist gives a complete presentation of the gospel, he should ask his hearers the following questions: 1) "Do you understand what I have shared with you?" 2) "Do you have any questions about what I have shared with you?" and 3) "Have you ever made this kind of decision?"

If the person responds, "Yes," then ask him to share with you when he made this decision and to provide some of the details of how he received Christ. If he testifies of having experienced biblical conversion, then encourage him to become an everyday evangelist if he is not consistently evangelizing.

6. Invite Your Hearers to Receive Christ

If the person with whom you are sharing the gospel does not articulate a biblical conversion experience, then explain to him how his experience falls short according to Scripture, and invite him to receive Jesus through repentance and faith. However, if he responds, "No," then ask him if he will repent of his sins and believe in Jesus' death for his sins and resurrection from the dead for his salvation.

Many of those who hear the gospel will decline to repent and believe. With complete sincerity, devoid of any manipulation, an everyday evangelist should advise someone who declines of the eternal consequences

of his decision and encourage him to reconsider it. If he still rejects the offer of the gospel, then leave him with a gospel tract that includes your contact information⁸ or the contact information of your local church.

On the other hand, if the other person indicates that he would like to repent and believe, then summarize the gospel and emphasize the demands of the gospel. Ask him if he understands the decision he is about to make. Depending on his response, do the following:

1. If he indicates, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, that he wants to repent and believe, then instruct him to call on the Lord for salvation (Rom 10:13) in repentance and faith. Remind him that Jesus, not his prayer, will save him and that he receives his salvation by calling on the name of the Lord in repentance and faith. Encourage him to express 1) his sinfulness before God, 2) his need for salvation through Jesus Christ alone, 3) his request for God to forgive his sins, and 4) his gratitude for God's grace to him in a prayer. If he indicates he needs assistance in praying, instruct him to pray the previous four aspects (taking time after each one to allow him to do so) in his own words, rather than having him repeat your words after you.
2. If he previously misunderstood what he said he wanted to do but realizes he is not prepared to repent and believe, then encourage him to consider what you have told him, and leave with him a gospel tract containing contact information.
3. If he says he understands the decision, but you are unsure, then reemphasize the high demands of the gospel. If he then becomes unsure about repenting and believing, follow-up with discerning questions to determine how, or if, the Holy Spirit is working conviction in his heart that leads to repentance. However, if upon hearing the high demands of the gospel and under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, he remains confident about his desire to repent and believe, then do not prevent him from calling on the Lord for salvation.

⁸ A personal evangelist should consider creating an email address and registering for a Google Voice number (www.google.com/voice). He can use the new email address and virtual phone number in lieu of his personal email address and phone number. The new contact information will provide an intermediary step of security for the evangelist.