



**Part 1 of 5**

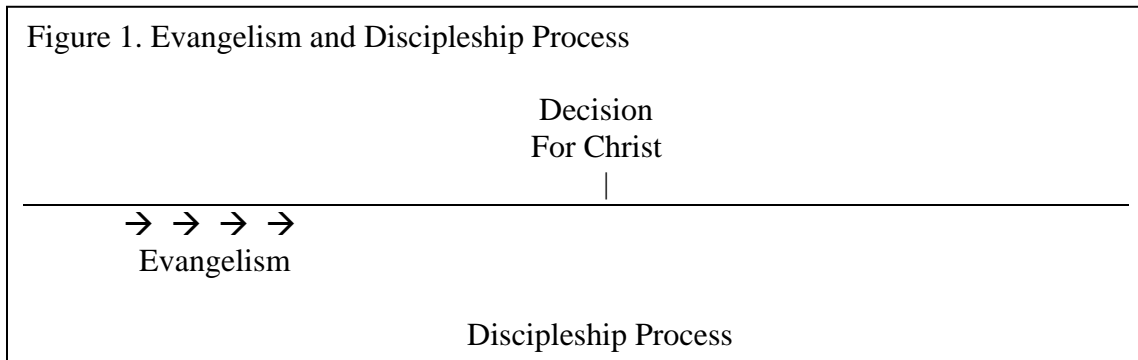
**Introduction and Overview**

*Defining Evangelism*

(a) **Narrow view:** ‘Evangelism’ means to make known the facts of the gospel to others (2 Tim 4:5). It involves telling non-Christians about the meaning behind Jesus’ death and resurrection so that: (1) they can work out the implications of it in their own lives (2) through it God can save those He has predestined to be saved (Acts 13:48).

(b) **Broader view:** Although evangelism centrally involves proclamation, it should also be regarded as part of the discipleship process where others learn to obey the Lord’s teachings; naturally, this includes repentance and believing in the gospel (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:6-18). The task of discipleship and making the gospel known to non-Christians are closely intertwined in practice. In the Bible, we see that Paul labours as a spiritual parent to the Thessalonians, imparting both the gospel and his own life (1 Thess 2:7-8). Proclaiming the good news is accompanied by care for the unbeliever. This concern continues to grow after they believe.

To limit the scope of this article, I will talk about evangelism as spanning somewhere in between the two views. It is part of a discipleship process whereby Christians consciously seek to help a non-Christian move a step closer to, or start considering, a decision for Christ (See Figure 1). In practice, we may engage in activities that generate or sustain interest in gospel matters. There are many ways in which this is done, whether we do it in our conduct or relationships with others. As an example, not many of us believed in the gospel message the first time we heard it. Before we believed, there were other occasions where observing the lives of Christians impacted our understanding and later decision to trust in Jesus.



If we understand the relationship between evangelism and discipleship, we will not merely be concerned about preaching the gospel to unbelievers. Instead, our aim would be to foster relationships with unbelievers such that more gospel opportunities should arise. Moreover, when they come to the saving knowledge of Jesus, it would be natural to teach them more about God and show love to them.

### *Objectives*

Through this article I hope to achieve three objectives: Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF) members would (1) understand how to communicate the gospel, (2) recognize the broader aspects of outreach as mentioned (3) are encouraged to participate in the great commission.

### *Outline*

Ravi Zacharias, a renowned speaker on apologetics aptly put forth how the gospel could be made known to the modern man.

- Not merely content, but conviction
- Not merely conviction but communication
- Not merely communication, but consistency

Though Ravi Zacharias did not mention this, I think that the other vital aspect in evangelism, beyond individual action, is involvement in evangelism as a community. As mentioned in the previous section, there are many aspects in which OCFers can be involved in making the gospel known.

For example, hospitality, which is the care of strangers, would be particularly important for reaching international students. Continual *proclamation without a caring presence* is handicapped. Many OCFers who are shy but yet desire to be obedient to God in fulfilling the great commission can be actively involved in these areas.

The framework for the article:

#### (1) Commission, Content, Communication and Conviction

- This section would address issues more geared toward the ‘narrow’ definition of evangelism, specifically dealing with issues in street outreach like (1) What is the importance of taking the initiative to meet other non-Christian students? (2) What are the essentials of the gospel I must share? (3) How do I share the gospel with clarity and conviction?

#### (2) Consistency and Community

- The next part would address broader issues of outreach (1) What kind of lifestyle would facilitate the growth of the gospel? (2) I’m not a preacher but I would like to see others come to faith in Christ, how can I still be involved?

## **COMMISSION: The necessity of the gospel**

So why should I personally be involved in sharing the gospel with others?

- **Commanded Great co-mission with God (Matt 28:18-20)**
  - Matthew 28:18-20 (outline from 'Salvation'; Phillip Graham Ryken)
    - Universal Authority: Because all authority on earth belongs to Christ, we dare to go out to share the good news with others. Because He has all authority, we have hope for success.
    - Universal Audience: This includes everyone whom we meet.
    - Universal Obedience: No culture is free from obeying the Lord's commands.
    - Universal Presence: In undertaking this task, we are promised with Jesus' presence. It is not only a comforting thought. I am reminded that Jesus, the author of the gospel speaks through me to save.
  - This command is binding for us, and not merely for the apostles.
  
- **The means by which unbelievers eventually come to faith in Christ (Rom 10:14)**
  - Example of Timothy: exhorted to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim 4:5) - centrally to make clear the fundamentals of the gospel to others
  - As we begin to see that there is no other name in heaven and on earth by which man can be saved (Acts 4:12) Hell is the place reserved for unbelievers where there will be an unquenchable and eternal fire. Because we have transgressed an infinite God, so we will suffer an infinite torment if we do not believe in Jesus
  - Although DL Moody was uneducated, he was a prominent evangelist in America in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; hundreds and thousands of people came to know Christ through him. Some people wanted to find out the secret to Mr Moody's success. Mr Moody invited them into his hotel room and asked them what they saw when they looked out the hotel window. One of them said 'A park and some children play' ... finally they asked Mr Moody what he saw. As Mr Moody stared out of the window tears began to stream down his face. He said 'When I look out the window, I see countless thousands of souls that will one day spend eternity in hell if they do not find the saviour.
  - Do we believe that there is no other way in which people can come to God? Then we must share the gospel.
  
- **Glorification of God**
  - The Westminster Catechism pithily sums up our chief goal, which is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Humanity will glorify God through the accomplishment of the great commission, where every tongue and tribe will come in worship of Him. (Rev 7:9-10, Phlp 2:9-11)
  - All our efforts for evangelism are ultimately for His glory.

## Part 2 of 5

### **CONTENT: Understanding the Gospel and Contextualising**

What are the essentials of the gospel I must share?

#### **What is the gospel?**

- It is the good news that God has fulfilled His plan of salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and made it available to everyone (1 Tim 1:15).
- We look at Romans 1:1-4 for a clearer definition of the gospel and its imperative:

<b>Verse</b>	<b>Substance</b>	<b>Implication in our preaching</b>
1. Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God	Gospel of God	God defines the good news. It is not to be thwarted to fit our worldview of how to get a better life or prosper
2. which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures,	Promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures	Fulfilment of OT prophecies. God promises to deal with the fundamental problem of sin by a Saviour.
3. concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,	Concerning His Son Jesus Christ, who was born of the seed of David	Focus is on Jesus Christ rather than God the Father or the Holy Spirit. Need to talk about the meaning of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.
4. and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead	Declared to be the Son of God... by the resurrection from the dead	The resurrection, and hence the death which preceded, is important to bring up.

- It is important to be clear about what the gospel consists of, so that we would not withhold critical truth or preach other truths as the heart of our message. ***We preach Jesus as God who died, rose again and is exalted – therefore there is forgiveness of sins.*** This is the pattern given in the sermons of Peter and Paul (Acts 2; Acts 13)  
These are some of the things I would like to point out which often convolutes our message:
  - Foremost, repentance and faith are not the gospel. It is what people do in response to it. This is the work of God. Our responsibility is to inform them of the person of Christ – what they are to place their faith in and why repent.
  - Living a godly life is not the gospel. It is the sanctifying work of God after a person believes.
  - Our personal testimony, church activities are not gospel facts either.

## The gospel truth alone?

- The above being said, there may be instances where we do not need to preach the gospel immediately to someone. Instead, we can share our changed life or fun church activities with others. We have to be conscious that such topics do not infringe on the gospel, but may eventually lead to a non-Christian wanting to know who Jesus Christ is.
- And even if we are attempting to share the gospel, there are certain mindsets in our highly secularised world that must be answered before someone becomes receptive to hear the gospel. E.g. How can there be a God? Or, which religion is true?
  - These are all valid queries and we should not leap to preach the gospel without addressing some of these pertinent questions.
- Last, putting the gospel “*plainly*” to someone may not be the best way to help them understand it fully. It is necessary to contextualise the meaning of it all in everyday language so that someone can easily comprehend it. **People have different perspectives about what you want to communicate.** For example, some would see sin for what it is, others would not.

*A young girl once confessed to her priest that she thought she was guilty of the sin of pride. She said, "When I look in the mirror, I think I am beautiful." The priest said, "That's not a sin, that's a mistake."*

## Other tips

- **Understand key concepts:** Importantly, understand your key gospel concepts well so you can cover it. Learn how to craft your message so that it is relevant to the listener. For example, someone struggling with existential issues like ‘why am I here on earth in the first place’, you may like to emphasize the meaning of life as God intended for it to be as you explain the problem of sin.
- **Keep it simple:** ‘keep the main thing the main thing’. In other words, keep it simple. This cannot be overemphasised. (A) Avoid peripheral concepts which you read from some theological textbook just yesterday. Sometimes we may be tempted to flaunt our knowledge of the Bible by explaining things like satan etc. This often confuses people. (B) If we have to talk about these concepts, don’t over-explain them. We do not need to give a sermon about the whole of God’s redemptive plan starting from Genesis to Revelations. Think of it as you’re trying to explain the gospel to a child. You can communicate the gospel well by preparing early!

*There was a barber that thought that he should share his faith with his customers more than he had been doing lately. So the next morning when the sun came up and the barber got up out of bed he said, "Today I am going to witness to the first man that walks through my door. Soon after he opened his shop the first man came in and said, "I want a shave!" The barber said, "Sure, just sit in the seat and I'll be with you in a moment." The barber went in the back and prayed a quick desperate prayer saying, "God, the first customer came in and I'm going to witness to him. So give me the wisdom to know just the right thing to say to him. Amen. Then quickly the barber came out with his razor knife in one hand and a Bible in the other while saying "Good morning sir. I have a question for you... Are you ready to die?"*

Issue	Verse	Concepts to convey, Concerns to address	How to address concerns How to clarify concepts	Analogies
<b>PROBLEM of sin</b>	Romans 3:23 'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'	<p>What is sin?  - Rejecting God  - Failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature</p> <p>Am I a sinner?  What are the tangible effects of sin?</p> <p>What is inherited guilt, inherited corruption?</p>	<p>Often, it may be useful to start with the garden of Eden  (1) Start on familiar ground  (2) Explain God's intention in creation and our unbroken relationship with God  (3) We show how man rejected God's goodness from the very beginning</p> <p>Talk about the actual sins which we commit in our lives. Show that God is a Holy God.</p> <p>Make relevant the world events and happenings to show how mankind is sinful. Eg, wars, famine</p> <p>At this point, it is often helpful to show how sin not only separates us from God, but also from others (self, world). This often strikes a cord within a person.</p> <p>The person may not think they have done any evil deeds. Show that in comparison to God's standard which is perfection, none of us can match up.</p> <p>Show that all of us are unable and unwilling to save ourselves</p>	<p>A parent desires to have an intimate relationship with his/her child, similarly God desired from the beginning to have a close relationship with mankind</p> <p>As a child, no one had to teach us how to do what is wrong, but we naturally know how to steal, lie etc.</p> <p>One aspect of sin is self-centredness; this causes problems and pains in relationships. For example, I know of someone/ an event...</p> <p>None of us can be perfect according to God's standard in this life. It's impossible for us. It's just like trying to jump to the moon. Some may jump higher than others, but none of us can reach it!</p> <p>We have turned our backs on God</p> <p>All of us are like prisoners (of sin). Because we are behind bars, we cannot free ourselves.</p>

			... show that because of inherited guilt, we will eventually face judgment. We do not actually need to explicate that this guilt is inherited. This links to the subsequent point.	All of us are in the midst of an ocean without any life-rafts or safety vests. We can muster all our abilities to keep afloat, but we will eventually drown unless someone comes to save us
<b>PENALTY is death</b>	Roman 6:23 'The wages of sin is death'	Judgment	Importantly, show that God is a Just God and everyone will have to face judgment.  It may be helpful to show that judgment is already at work in the present time (Rom 1:18; Jn 3:19)	A judge who upholds the law by punishing wrongdoing (because it harms people) is considered upright and just. God is a just God. He will punish wrongdoing. For example, if you are caught speeding and let's say you need to pay a fine of \$1000.
<b>PROVISION is Jesus</b>	Roman 5:8 'But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us'  1 Pet 1:3 'We have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'	God's mercy and love on mankind.  God's guarantee of our justification and hope through the resurrection of Jesus	Show that God loves mankind. It is important to affirm to the individual whom you are sharing with that God loves him/her.  The penalty of sin is paid for by God and offered to anyone who believes  Jesus' resurrection insures both our resurrection and power over sin in our lives. Moreover, it shows that Christ's work is complete; He no longer needs to remain dead.	None of us has the resources to pay the fine. However, God is a gracious judge who also <i>offers</i> to pay the fine for a criminal  Just as a judge gives a notice when a penalty has been fully paid, God also shows that our penalty has been paid. Although God pays this penalty, the letter of blamelessness is then applied to us.

<p><b>PROMISE of forgiveness and eternal life</b></p>	<p>Acts 3:19, John 3:16 '...whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life'</p>	<p>God's promise to whoever believes</p>	<p>Communicate that despite our wrong-headed lives and all our brokenness, God promises to forgive us and restore that relationship again.</p>	<p>For example, a woman who has been unfaithful to her husband, but the husband promises to forgive her and restore the relationship with her again.</p>
<p><b>PERSONAL Response</b></p>	<p>Romans 10:9</p>	<p>The need to personally repent and receive Jesus</p>	<p>'I don't feel anything special...'  Emphasize that it is a decision, an act of the will; the emotions will come along later. This is sometimes necessary to point out since we live in a world of emotionalism.</p>	<p>All of us have faith in things which we cannot see or fully predict with certainty. For example, I have faith that when I get on a tram, it will take me to my destination. In the same way, we can place our trust in Jesus to take us to God. The difference is, unlike Melbourne trams which may break down (or drivers go on strike), God will always keep His promise. We know this because He says it in the Bible.</p>

**COMMUNICATION: How can I share the gospel in Street Witnessing/Witness-pairing**

**Street Evangelism**

Some of us may cringe when I say street evangelism. I used to think that I could share the gospel with my friends without needing to go out to speak about it to others – especially strangers! But in reality, I never had frequent opportunities to speak about Christianity to my friends. Coming to Melbourne and engaging in street witnessing weekly with a Korean church has changed my mind about street-witnessing/witness-pairing. There are many benefits.

- (1) Conscious Commitment: Habitual sharing of the gospel during street-witnessing makes you more conscious of the need to share it with people. This overflows into your daily life and you unwittingly create more opportunities to link conversations that you have with others to Jesus. In Paul's ministry, he had in view the preaching of the gospel as primary (1 Cor 1:17).
- (2) Cross-communication (no pun intended): Keeps you relevant to the world.
  - a. In church, we can easily hide ourselves behind the familiar jargon and an agreeable audience. However, discussing theology with unbelievers is thoroughly different. It confronts our blind-spots. For example, I was talking to a non-Christian about the resurrection of Jesus. He asked me if Jesus had received a new body after he was raised. I confidently told him yes. However, he asked me why did Jesus still have the nail-prints on his hands then? Interested to know the answer? Well... find out for yourself.
  - b. Decreasing segmentation of your life between church and work/school.
- (3) Continual Dependency on God: The scary (those who would swear at you) but exciting (those who would want to receive Jesus) thing is that you never really know what kind of people you may be speaking to. The uncertainty creates a vacuum within us to pray; striving to rest on the certain promise of God.

**Practical Skills**

When we meet people in the city of Melbourne, we hope to create a space of time where we can provoke interest in Christianity or help them consider their own faith. At times, we would not be able to share the gospel with them. We may end up helping them with an accommodation-hunt or just conversing with them about their travels. In the longer term, we hope to befriend them. By doing so, we can create future opportunities for them to speak to someone about Jesus.

But at some point in time, we should share Christ persuasively and intelligently, praying that our message should appeal to the whole person. The timing to do that really depends on experience and listening to God.

- **Audience: Finding an appropriate person who would listen**
    - Find someone who you think has time to listen. Preferably, someone who is seated or waiting. Often, I've noticed that other international students would be more receptive to talk to you. Maybe that's just because we're international students ourselves.
    - Preferably, we should try to approach someone of our own gender. It is less threatening and creates less suspicion in the person. *'Hmm... is this guy trying to pick me up?'*
    - **STEP 1: Introductions and Intentions**
      - Smile, say hello, shake their hand!
      - Introduce yourself and your partner first and where you come from (ie, your church) Your partner can pray, but also be attentive to what is going on.
      - Put in your catch line: ...
        - Their thoughts: "Yawn, this is going to take a longggg time..." or "I've heard this before..."
          - Tell them: 'It will only take 5 minutes of your time, could I just explain more about Christianity to you?'
          - This works wonders and often gets people at least hear what you have to say. It often extends longer than 5 minutes because the person would have questions.
        - If they ask: 'So what is it that you really want?'
          - Inform them clearly your intentions of sharing the gospel (good news that God has for their life)
    - **STEP 2: Inquire and Thank them**
      - If they say: 'No thanks, I believe in something else'
        - Tell them, 'I see, I only know a little about this religion, could you tell me more?'
        - Ask them. 'Have you heard about Christianity before? Could I explain it to you?'
      - Continue to put you off - Smile, shake their hand, and thank them for taking time to listen.
      - Be aware of the religious vilification laws. Don't be pushy, but respect them.
- **Approach/Catch-lines: How would we broach on the subject of Christ? (This may not be too helpful since we would only know what kind of person we are talking to when you do start speaking to them... but could help in deciding what aspects of the gospel or theological topics to emphasize)**
  - Existential approach: Have you ever wondered about the meaning of life?
    - Need to understand how Christianity gives meaning to life amidst all other religions

- Confrontational approach: (1) If you were to die today, would you go to heaven? (2) What do you think would happen to you if you were to die today?
    - Focus on the issue of death and life after
  - ‘Salesperson’ approach: Have you ever heard about God’s wonderful gift for you?
  - Direct approach: Do you know who Jesus Christ is? Have you ever wondered why Jesus Christ had to die?
  - Indirect approach: (1) Hi, I’m here to do a short survey with you... (2) I’ve been tasked by my church to find out what religion you believe in and why.
- **Apologetics: Providing answers to facilitate non-Christians considering their own beliefs.**
    - One of the fears that some of us have may be in answering difficult questions posed by non-believers. Sometimes we do not have all the answers. Some truth about God remains a mystery to our finite minds.
    - However, I attempt to provide some *possible* responses to different types of people who may be genuinely seeking answers. There are many other ways to answer these questions. These are just some common topics our highly secularised students tend to ask.

Issue	How to address issue	Analogies
<b>I do not believe in God</b>	<p>Clarify if they are either an agnostic or atheist. Agnostics believe that God cannot be known. Atheists believe that there is no God. This is often tied to belief in science and self. Don’t have to use those particular terms.</p> <p>Agnostic: That is why we believe that God has revealed Himself to us through the Bible.</p> <p>Agnostic/Atheist: Ask them if they have ever considered how creation reveals God (Psalm 19).</p>	<p>It is not possible for a blind person to explicitly see how things look like because he/she has lost that sense. Similarly, we as finite beings do not possess infinite qualities. Yet, it is possible for the blind person to figure out how things may ‘look like’ by having others describe it and using his/her other sensory faculties. So we can know God too, if He shows Himself to us in a way we understand.</p> <p>When we walk along the seashore and notice a sandcastle, how do we know that someone made it? Have you ever considered that the intricate workings of our human body reveal a Designer?</p>
<b>Evolution vs. Creationism</b>	<p>Popular issue. There is no God who created the world. Rather everything happened in a cosmic ‘Big Bang’. If everything happened by chance, there is no meaning to life. Moreover, there is no need for me to trust in what they say. Their logic is the outcome of a chance process.</p>	<p>If Chance created the world that we lived in, then our reasoning would also be an outcome of chance, right? If that were so, how am I to trust in such logic? Why should I trust what you say?</p>

		<p>Instead, if someone logical and intelligent gave me this logic, my reasoning would then be trustworthy right?</p> <p>There are two computers. One was just constructed by chance, and another was built through careful design. Which should I trust?</p>
<p><b>That is not logical. E.g. resurrection from the dead or heaven etc.</b></p>	<p>Our faith is logical. Ensure that they know the difference between logic and a possible rare occurrence.</p> <p>Limited human experience. Finite minds.</p>	<p>A square circle by definition is an illogical statement. Whereas a pink elephant is a possible rare occurrence. We have not seen a pink elephant, but it is possible that it exists. We cannot prove that it does not. Similarly, some of the claims of the Bible are beyond our human experience, but not impossible, nor illogical.</p> <p>Consider in mathematics there is 3 or more dimensions in Euclidean space. It is hard for us to fathom physically or even experience it. Nevertheless, it is possible to construct and solve a mathematical problem that consists of 3 or more dimensions.</p> <p>It is impossible for man to fully comprehend God because we are finite. It is like asking us to imagine living in a 5 dimensional world.</p>
<p><b>Science and not God nor faith</b></p>	<p>Usually, the individual who talks about this has a faint notion of the philosophy of science. It rests on the tenets of logic (reasoning) and empiricism (observable and tangible), specifically logical positivism. Following this strictly, everything that is true must be observable and reasonable. However, one critique about this philosophical approach is that logical positivism cannot prove itself to be true. It is impossible for the idea to prove itself observable and reasonable.</p> <p>What you want to get to is for them to agree that <i>some things</i> that are <i>not</i> observable are still true and trustworthy. Refer to us having limited experience.</p>	<p>Science (Logical Positivism): If we say that we must see something for it to be true, how do you know that that idea is true?</p> <p>We cannot test everything we see for it to be true, but we believe that they are true. For example, we believe that this chair would hold our weight and not collapse. We have not tested it before we sat on it, but it is still trustworthy enough.</p>

**COMMUNICATION Cont'd:**

- **Attitude: Some general principles**
  - (1) **What kind of attitude would help the person be receptive to hearing this message from someone else again?**
  - (2) **What kind of attitude would allow me to befriend this person?**
  - (3) **What kind of attitude would allow me to hear what the person believes in?**
  
- Key 1: Listening
  - 1 Pet 3:15; Col 4:6 – Gentleness and Respect
    - It is interesting to know that the apostles tell the Christians to be ready to give an answer. This not only means preparing ourselves to know what to speak on, but *answering their concerns*. While much has been emphasized on what we need to proclaim, we have to understand the needs and perspectives of the individual as well.
      - This involves listening
      - We can learn how to agree with the person, not the content
        - “I respect your view, why is it that you believe in it? Could you tell me more?”
    - Specific Listening skills to convey to the listener that you are concerned for what he/she is telling you
      - Repetition of Words: For example, word-for-word parroting of the person. In my pastoral counselling classes, our lecturer had to practice parroting for one whole month! But it goes to show a fundamental problem that we all have... we don't really know how to listen. Listening is fundamental in communication.
      - Rephrasing of Thoughts: “Are you saying that...?”
      - Recreation of Meaning: Coming out with a personal story that communicates the same meaning as what you heard the speaker saying.
    - Ask them questions to see if they have understood what you said.
  
- Key 2: Friendship
  - More than just getting to a ‘Yes’
    - Intention of befriending the person not as just a project
      - Asking how you can help them in some area of their life
      - Meeting up with them. This is one way to stay in touch.
      - Think of investing long term. The goal is to build a friendship with them. Through this friendship, share the gospel continually. When the person believes in Christ, you would be there to disciple him/her.



## Caveats

- **Anticipate rejection**
  - The gospel is inherently offensive to those who are perishing.
    - The gospel is exclusive. There is no other name by which man can be saved. It goes against popular teachings of ‘tolerance’.
    - The gospel exposes our wrongdoings and inability to reach God’s standards. It hits at man’s pride and self-righteousness.
  - Or perhaps you did it badly or the person was just having a bad day. However, don’t be discouraged, the beauty of experience is that you can learn from it.
  
- **Acknowledge your need for God through prayer**
  - Some reasons why I believe we need to pray:
    - The empowering of your speech comes in prayer (Eph 6:19 – open our mouths boldly to make known the gospel)
    - The enlightening of the listener’s eyes comes through God (Acts 16:14 – God opens the hearts of unbelievers)
    - The encounter of eternal consequence lies in God’s hands (Sovereignty of God)
  - I cannot overemphasize prayer.
    - *I was in Illinois for a time and visited Wheaton College. Walking around the Billy Graham centre, there was a quotation of Billy Graham which said, ‘if God should take His hand off me, I would have no more spiritual power. The whole secret of the success of our meetings is spiritual – it is God answering prayer. I cannot take credit for any of it.’*

## CONVICTION

We can be so familiar with the verbiage, comprehend grand theological concepts, and yet live a lackadaisical lifestyle - one that is narrow-mindedly nonchalant to the great need of people around us. Though it may not be an explicit biblical concept, there are places where God challenges our faith to fully devote their lives to Him. Consider the time when Jesus plainly spells out the cost of following Him (Luke 9:23), or when James warns us of double-mindedness (Jas 1:7-8). These passages compel us to make a stand – either to act upon or neglect our Lord’s commands.

What does conviction look like? We often think of it as a product. Terms like “man or woman of conviction” give us a snapshot of a mature believer’s life. But it may be better to think of conviction as a goal – toward a deep faith in God. This emphasises our permanent weaknesses and transient strengths. Paul reminds us to take heed when we think we stand, lest we fall (1 Cor 10:12). As Christians, the ongoing trials enlarge as we grow, but we may move toward greater conviction with the help of God, through persistent human effort.

Some suggested ways of growing in our convictions:

- Purposing in your heart to obey God regardless the cost
- Meditating on the Word of God
- Struggling in Prayer
- Fellowshiping with other like-minded believers

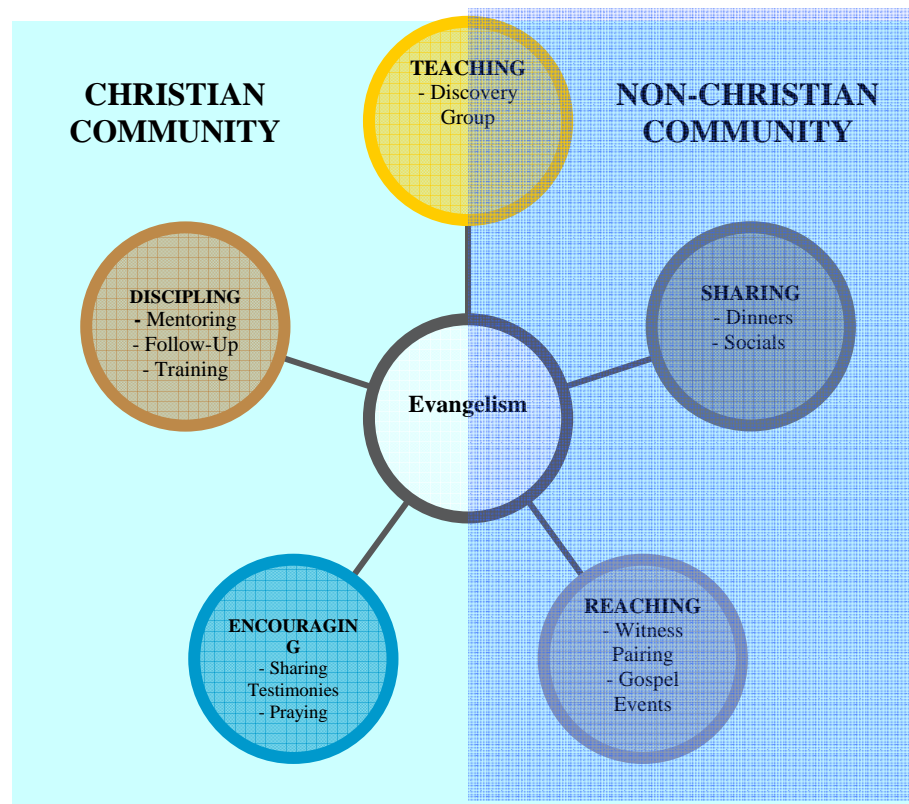
## CONSISTENCY AND COMMUNITY

Reading the New Testament books like Acts and the epistles, there are two patterns in how the gospel is propagated. We see that through the involuntary dispersion of the persecuted Christian community, or intentional missionary journeys, churches are established in formerly unreached areas. While this migratory style of outreach has its advantages, there is another form which is less itinerant and transitory. The authors of the epistles encourage the newly founded Christian communities to continue spreading the faith to the unreached around them through their lifestyles (1 Pet 3:15, Heb 13:2). Through demonstrating godliness consistently, other members of the community, like family members, could be won for Christ (1 Pet 3:1-7).

At the start of the article, I have mentioned that evangelism centrally involves proclaiming the gospel. And a major part of our discussion was on the gospel and communicating it. But the evangelistic process may not begin with that activity alone. Another pattern of gospel propagation stems from demonstrating a godly lifestyle to unbelievers. These complementary enterprises that allow non-Christians to experience Christian love would support and sustain outreach efforts. In Figure 2, Street-Evangelism or Witness-pairing is seen as one example of reaching to the non-Christian community. But not everyone is best suited for that task. It would be preferable if members in OCF be involved in different aspects of evangelism. Other equally important efforts involve inducting non-Christians into a Christian community through dinners or socials events.

We can also think of community outreach efforts as involving a larger Christian collective. Most of our evangelistic activities are piloted, planned and performed by members in OCF itself. Perhaps we can also think of collaborative efforts with other like-minded organisations. This can expand our pool of resources and enlarge our vision.

***Figure 2. Evangelism and the related activities***



## **Framework of OCF Evangelistic Activities**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Bible Verse</b>	<b>Current Practices</b>	<b>Future Practices for consideration</b>
Reaching	Acts 13:13-52	Witness Pairing/ Street-Evangelism	Teaming up with other churches or Christian groups to maximise outreach potential
Sharing	3 John 1:5-6	Thursday Night dinners , Home ministry	Bible Study socials to include non-Christians
Teaching	Matt 28:18-20	Discovery Group, Outreach Archive & Resources	(1) Training new-Christians to teach in discovery group (2) Developing materials for non-English proficient members (English classes)
Encouraging	Rom 1:8; 1 Thess 2:19-20	Prayer Meetings	Chosen Back-to-Basic members to share conversion testimony with OCF once a month as part of thanksgiving and praise
Discipling	2 Tim 2:2	Follow-up, Workshops, Training Sessions on gospel sharing, nurture groups	One-on-one mentoring for street-evangelism, evangelistic Bible studies

To encourage OCFers to serve in an area of evangelism, I have organised a short interview with *Neil Hawthorn*. For those who do not know Neil, he is of Norwegian descent but has been a regular attendee of OCF activities. He's religiously devoted to the football team "Essendon" and is involved in evangelism through his infamous Thursday Night Dinners.

### **So Neil, what makes you want to be involved in evangelism?**

*Primarily, it is because I have a real love for people. And the fact that I have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, and had the privilege of knowing Him. I would like others to have the same privilege.*

### **How are you currently involved in evangelism?**

*Currently it's very much through the stomach. For example, when people were hungry, Jesus fed them. When they were fed, He was able to share the gospel. That was one occasion. At other times, he did other things. So the idea of food in a private home away from church (because some will not attend church). Bring them into your home and make them feel at home, let them realise through your actions that you care about them, and so you find that after a while, friendships within the dinner on Thursday night begin to blossom (just ask Auntie Margaret the number of people she's matched on Thursday night dinner). So friendships develop, and a number of Christians start inviting them to come to OCF on a Friday night. It is also been used the other way, in that there are new people in OCF whom we've not known very well. And in the small group of say 10-20, I'm able to know them much better and they feel much more at home in OCF. The underlying thing is that I have prayed for the individuals.*

**How long have you been doing this? How many people have you seen come to Christ.**

*Dinners have been going on for 9 years every Thursday while I am in Melbourne. I know of 3 who have trusted Christ who were first met by my Aunt at the street or the market. All 3 are still loving the Lord. The one for whom the dinner started was the first one to become a Christian, but that took 2 years. It is not an overnight thing. He trusted in Christ at an OCF-Sydney discovery group.*



**What continues to motivate you to do this?**

*There is still a lot more people out there who have not yet had a chance to hear about Christ, and there will always be people who have not heard of Him. My love for these ones will continue. I was brought up with the belief that in this world, there are no strangers, just friends I am yet to meet.*

**How would you encourage other OCFers to be involve? So they all start a Thursday night dinner?**

*I would suggest that other OCFers be willing to firstly open their place for a meal from time to time. Maybe some classmates, and who have a high ratio of Christians from OCF in attendance. To help the non-Christians realise that we Christians are normal people and we don't always hit them on the head with a Bible and we don't have a pitch-fork in our hand. We are just average people, as it was with a friend of mine who became a Christian. He then built a bridge of friendship for Jesus to walk across. One thing to be sure of, is that the friendships are not superficial, but genuine friendships – with genuine care and love for them. As you build the friendship, then the opportunity will arise for you to share the gospel.*

*Most importantly, your motivation should be love.*

*Of all the people you invite for dinner, only a few may become Christians. But do not be disheartened. Continue to be their friend. And continue to pray for them, as it may be some years before the harvest.*

**Any other things you want to say (Besides Essendon)?**

*One thing to remind with the dinners. Be willing to say grace at the meal. Even if you think it may offend the person. Because we are to keep our standards. And if you know that a person has a certain weakness such as alcoholism. Be sure that there is no alcohol around.*

*If you have any rules or standards within your home. Maintain those standards and let them know. E.g. no smoking in the house even if its pouring rain outside and no alcohol.*

**CONCLUSION**

I hope *not* to leave you with a checklist of 'to-dos' to improve on the aspect of evangelism in your life. This is not the main point. These are ideas that you may want to incorporate into your life in seeking to honour God and reach out to the lost. In our everyday routines, we often chance upon the Spirit-led spontaneity of the moment to share our Christian love and message with others. Whether we recognise the opportunity, or take it up, usually depends on the depth of our personal relationship with God. Being evangelistic is different from doing evangelism.

Despite the relative ease in understanding the concepts behind evangelism, I find that my living lags far behind my knowledge. Perhaps you are in that same position. What my words and understanding cannot do to inspire you, God's Spirit is more than able. I pray that God's hand should find a way into your heart – to incite that desire for the lost. May our eyes be enlightened, to see and experience the resurrection power of Christ; the Personal dynamic force to overcome our lethargy, our fears and all things hindering the work of the gospel.

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