

2014 Xenos Summer Institute
Restoring Evangelism in Your Home Group

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The purpose of this workshop

This framework can be used in multiple contexts regarding improving evangelism:

1. Weak evangelism in the home group
2. Change the mission of a believer-only home group to include evangelism.
3. Help an individual believer weak in evangelism.

Some common errors leaders make in leading evangelism

1. Some leaders falsely believe that modeling evangelism is enough.
2. Too much focus on man's role in evangelism at the expense of knowing & trusting God's:
 - a. Almost exclusively drawing peoples' attention to the commands & examples in scripture to reach the lost.
 - b. Focused on methods to engage with & witness to the lost, without addressing the heart motives of the Christian.
3. Too much focus on God's role in evangelism at the expense of intentionality.

Guiding Principles

1. Prior to approaching the group, good leaders come to agreement on the need for change *and* take themselves through this change process first.
 - a.
 - b.
2. How you follow-up this call for change is key.
3. This is not a rigid formula.

The setting in which to approach your group

We usually approach this kind of issue with what we call a "Worker Meeting".

Summary of approach

1. Leaders must make a clear biblical case for what God commands regarding evangelism.
2. Leaders need to help the believers see the discrepancy between God's view and reality (how the group is doing in evangelism).
3. Leaders specifically communicate how God's grace overcomes the underlying sin and motivates & empowers them to live out His call in this area!
4. Outline the changes that are being instituted to help one another live out His commands and in the power of His grace.
5. CONCLUSION: VISION OF WHAT GOD WILL DO through a home group full of faithful evangelists

1. Leaders must make a clear biblical case for what God commands regarding evangelism.

THE PRINCIPLE: Good leaders rest on and direct people to God's authority, not their own. We believe in the power of the Word (Heb. 4:12; 1 Thess. 2:13). We should first communicate a solid, comprehensive biblical case for the area God wants to change.

KEY: get everyone's focus *off* results & *onto being* faithful. (John 15:4,5; 1 Corinthians 3:6, Acts 2:42-47; Acts 1:8)

See - "The Faithful Evangelist" description p. 7

- a. Make a biblical case for investing in the lost
 - i. Prayer: private and corporate Col 4:2-4; Eph 6:11ff; study of prayer & work of the Holy Spirit from Acts
 - ii. Relationship building

Mt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; Col. 4:5; Acts 2:47 ('found favor with all the people'); Titus 2:10, 14; 3:8; 1 Peter 2:12; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; EG.s of Jesus not just w/ disciples but all the people (Lk 24:19; Jn 3:21;
- b. Make a biblical case for our verbal witness
 - i. broaching a spiritual conversation
 - ii. inviting to meetings (Jn 13:34-35; Eph. 4:15-16)
 - iii. giving the gospel → this is evangelism. (Acts 1:8; Romans 10:14; 1 Thes. 2:4; Rom.1:14-17; 2 Cor.5:18-20; 1 Pt 2:9; 2 Tim.1:8; Phil.1:5)

2. Then, leaders need to clearly communicate the discrepancy between God's perspective (#1) and how the group is actually doing in evangelism.

PRINCIPLE: When people humbly acknowledge the gap between what God commands of them and how they live it out, the Holy Spirit convicts them of sin and the need to change & experience a sense of deep tension in their soul. The leader's role is to show them this gap & trust the Holy Spirit to provide the tension.

Leaders need to provide objective evidence that there is a real problem.

KEY: Good leaders are humble about *their own* sins of omission in this area.

Indicators that can be used, working from superficial ones first, then down to the heart symptoms:

A. Superficial indicators of the evangelism faithfulness

- i. First-time guests are coming to the home group

- ii. How frequently do people request prayer for an upcoming time spent with the lost? (our Egroup is key)

- iii. How frequently are people talking about spiritual conversations they've had?

- iv. Are people requesting help with outreach?

- v. Corporate prayer meeting focused on outreach-including praying for specific people reaching out to?

- vi. Do you have a lot of people serving but few verbalizing their faith?

Important qualifier:

B. Then take them deeper & ask: “*Why* do you think we have these problems in investment and spiritual conversations? What keeps us from being faithful in either or both areas?” *What appear to be circumstantial barriers “that can’t be helped” are almost always driven by not trusting God for something He promises in that area.*

Lk 6:45

- i. EG: infrequent time spent building friendships with the lost is not just a “busy schedule thing.”

- ii. Likewise, if infrequent spiritual conversations & seldom witness to the lost, there are deeper reasons for this than lack of opportunity (though certainly that would be one).

INVESTING IN THE LOST		VERBAL WITNESS	
Superficial	Underlying	Superficial	Underlying
Infrequent intentional connection w/ lost yet a lot of time spent on hobbies, TV, our own or children’s sports	Pursuing personal comfort & peace from “lesser things”	Seldom broaching spiritual conversations or witnessing or inviting to home group	Fear of peoples’ disapproval or rejection

THE POINT: if we don’t address underlying heart issues & help them see the *real reason* they don’t open their mouth, giving methods might provide a certain level of confidence in themselves, not God. The outward actions will change temporarily and the heart will be untouched by God’s grace.

C. Depending on how much your group is struggling in evangelism, good leaders will warn the group of the consequences of not turning this around and trusting God in this area.

3. Leaders specifically communicate how God’s grace enables them to faithfully invest and witness.

Eph 1:7; 2:7; 1 Cor 2:12

After explaining briefly that God’s grace does much more than forgive - refer back to the problems you expressed in the point above. AGAIN → preferably using our own personal struggles as the examples

INVESTING IN THE LOST		
Superficial	Underlying	Facet of grace we need to trust
<p>Too little time spent w/ lost - yet a lot of focus on career; perfectly kept house/yard</p> <p>&/or “<u>A lot of time</u>” on couch: TV, video games, I net, sports (playing or watching), hobbies, etc.</p>	<p>Significance from performance & accomplishments. Peoples’ or our own approval of performance</p> <p>Sensual pleasure from lesser things</p> <p>Materialism drives career & \$\$ focus (hoarding or overspending)</p>	<p>??</p> <p>Joy in abiding in Christ (incl. loving others) Jn. 15:11; Joy in His presence Ps 16:11; sacrifice for Christ & promise (2 Cor. 4:7-18) → eternal perspective (2 Cor 5:1-8) → eternal-impact work (5:9-21)</p> <p>God promises He will provide for us materially; Mt. 6:19-23; 1 Jn. 2:17; 2 Cor. 9:8ff; Rom. 8:32</p>

VERBAL WITNESS		
Superficial	Underlying	Facet of grace we need to trust
<p>Seldom broaching spiritual convers., witnessing, or inviting to home group</p>	<p>Fear of peoples’ disapproval, rejection, thought less of</p>	

4. Now lay out a concrete plan for change

Remember, before this believer-only meeting, the leaders have already agreed on & charted out a plan.

PRINCIPLE: Biblical faith always includes action which is based on trusting God to guide and empower us.

Providing the concrete next step(s) of faith demonstrate to the people that this is not a vague call to “get out there & witness”, but a Spirit-led plan that they can embrace.

The plan for developing faithful evangelists needs to address both parts needing changed: Help them get at their heart & equip them for action (see diagram on page 8)

a) HEART: Concrete plan for embracing God’s grace: (2 Tim. 2:1)

- b) **ACTION:** Concrete plan to develop skills to defend & communicate their faith; opportunities to get out there with the lost.

Determine what wineskins will accomplish this.

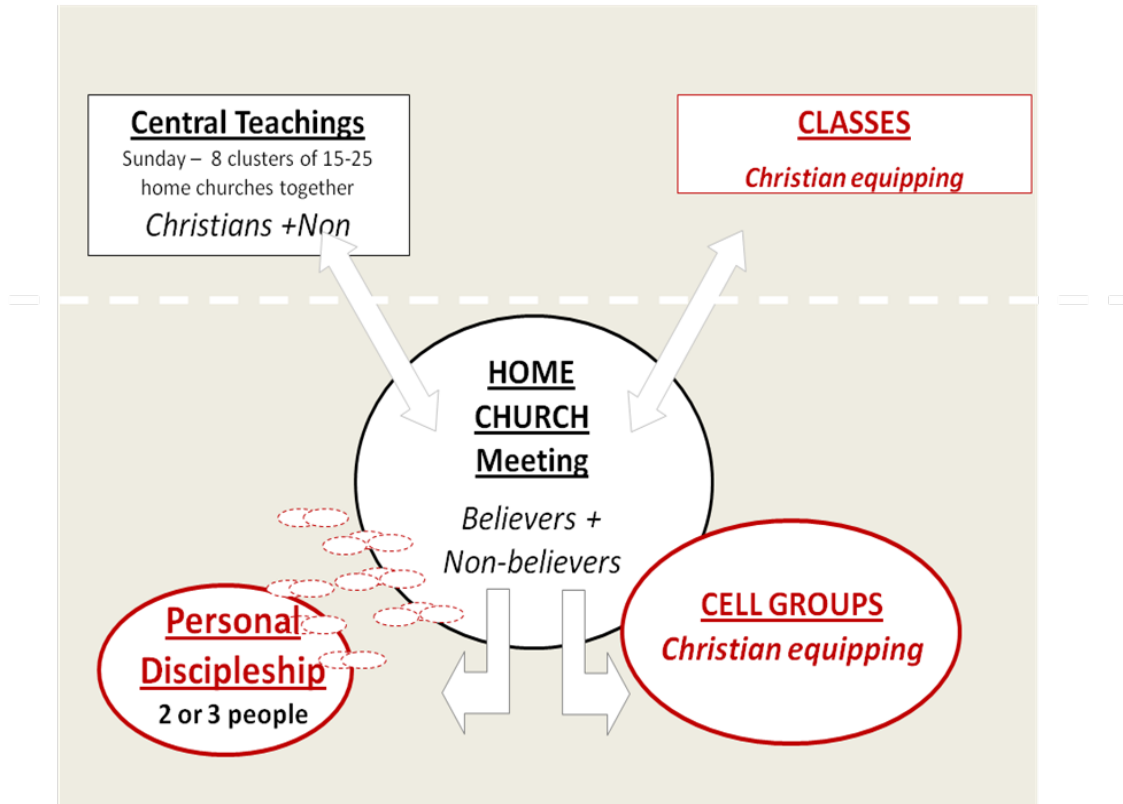


DIAGRAM: → everything above dashed line is programmatic (CT – Sunday services & Classes – we have more but these are particularly relevant); *BELOW* dashed line = typical “meeting life” of home group. Home group meeting & discipleship usually weekly; cells every other week in post-college + weekly corp prayer!

- A. **HEART:** Equipping believers to develop a deeper understanding, appreciation, & application of God’s grace – especially as it applies to their lifestyle of investing in the lost & witnessing to them.
- i. **Cell group**
 - “Faithful Evangelism” series (from 2010-11 Leadership Training Workshops) applies this.
 - Teach Romans 6 - Dennis McCallum’s “Walking in Victory” unpacks this rich chapter.
 - *Grace Transformation Chart* (back of your notes) wh/ visually helps s.o. walk thru Romans 6 as it applies in general and to our need to repent of omission in evangelism & appropriating grace to enable us to do it. (see our Christian Growth class)
 - “The Gospel Centered Life” (World Harvest Mission) - <http://www.whm.org/gcl>
 - Teach hermeneutics (<http://www.xenos.org/classes/christianministry/usingyourbible/index.htm>) & how to mine Word for His promises of grace (EG. Rom. 8; Eph 1,2).
 - ii. **Weekly Corporate Prayer** – much intercession for lost & petition for deeper trust of God’s promises to take care of us; spiritual warfare
 - iii. **Personal Discipleship:** discuss ea. person’s evang weekly (barriers, idols, specific facets of grace, prayer, read good content)
 - iv. **Christian Growth** & Christian Ministry 1,2,3 classes
 - v. **Books** that unpack grace beyond forgiveness; others that connect *doing* evangelism w/ God’s grace that motivates it: “The Gospel Primer” “Faith Worth Sharing” “Powerful Evangelism for the Powerless” “Outgrowing the Ingrown Church”
 - vi. **E-group:** believers-only – prayer requests b4 weekend / “reports” after weekend

B. Concrete outward steps of faith: Investing in the lost; Broaching spiritual conversations

- i. **Corporate Prayer Meeting**
- ii. **Cell Groups** – “apologetics”; books on witnessing & sharing your faith; share experiences Include apologetic series/readings (Mittelberg “Questions Christians Wish No One Would Ask” is good introductory; Stroebel’s “Case for... (“...Creator” – VERY helpful for Creation/Evolution/Science discussions, “...Faith”, “...Christ”, (“...The Real Jesus”); Rochford’s new book “Evidence Unseen: Exposing the Myth of Blind Faith” is excellent
- iii. **Home group meetings** – Inviting non-Christian to them (NO SHEEP-STEALING) solid expository teaching/discussion w/ clear gospel for non-Christians, vibrant energy, other-centered conversation, great food! CAUTION: if people aren’t well invested in the lost & willing to invite people yet → might set a date in the future & get some prayer & equipping going first.
- iv. **Discipleship** – Prayer for opportunities & boldness; COACH one another on engaging neighbors, the next step, praying for outreach by name, etc. READ BOOKS; Go w/ one another
- v. **Egroup** pre-weekend outreach prayer requests & post-weekend stories of what happened
- vi. **Social outings** by home group (euchre tourny, local sporting events, Fri evening n’hood Happy Hours, cookouts, invite parents from kids’ activities over)
- vii. **Deeper content parties** – *Conversation & Cuisine (Dessert & Discussion)*
- viii. **Topical series in Home group that are attractive to non-Christians:** “Common Objections”; “Building Closer Relationships”
- ix. **Church sponsored events:** “Pub Night”; Care Group (parenting help); Sports leagues; Central Teachings
- x. **Classes:** inviting to “Investigating Christianity” class; getting equipped via “Apologetics Class”; “Sharing Your Faith”; Christian Growth & Ministry classes;

5. Vision: Conclusion of home church worker meeting

Conclusion → paint a vision that God *will* bear fruit through you & grow you if faithful (John 15:1-12; 1 Cor. 3:5-9)

Q/A

Faithful Evangelism

Doug Patch 2014

“Joyful & energetic investment in and witness to the lost, motivated by God’s grace”

*Do the following traits describe you?
Are these what people in your home church & your discipling relationships see in you?*

Inward qualities which come when our heart is continually being transformed by grace:

“Joyful” means... joyful. Building relationships with the lost is not done out of guilt nor a sense of burden or drudgery. You are not resentful of how outreach invades your schedule. But rather you experience a gradual increase of excitement and anticipation as an opportunity approaches (whether planned or spontaneous).

“Energetic” Diligent & consistent – not dabbling. We see words like “labor,” “striving” and “zealous” in the Bible when associated with ministry. This, too, comes from the heart. You, with the power of the Holy Spirit, are an ambassador - one who is *constantly* on a mission among the lost.

Outward qualities; the actions of a faithful evangelist:

“Investment in” – we must be *with* the lost for God to bear fruit through us. This means at least two things by a follower of Christ:

- A *lifestyle* of building relationships with the lost, both by your taking the initiative and being responsive to opportunities. One can look at our schedule and see the priority we place on those who don’t know Christ.
- Consistently stewarding the resources God has given you in concrete ministry roles, especially those that place you among the lost (Romans 12:1-13). These include spiritual gifts, time, finances, your family, talents, hobbies, etc.

“Bold witness to the lost” – of course, how will they believe without hearing? (Rom. 10:14) A faithful evangelist frequently broaches spiritual conversations with the lost to learn of their spiritual beliefs, and often leading to invitations to Home Church and Central Teaching, or to pre-evangelistic events, and ultimately to a witness of the Gospel itself (which is true evangelism). They do this whether feeling confident, or “in weakness, fear, & much trembling” like Paul when witnessing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2:3).

The above inner and outer qualities can *only* grow by feeding oneself on His grace.

“Motivated by God’s grace” – The four qualities above result from and are empowered by the Holy Spirit. This is part of our daily and ongoing walk (Col. 1:5b-6; 2 Tim. 2:1-7; John 15; 1 Thess. 2:8-14; Rom 1:16) and is what the “Faithful Evangelism series” is all about.

God promises us the joy, energy, and boldness to invest in and witness to the lost, if we walk in the light of His grace!
When this describes our faithfulness in evangelism, He will bear fruit through us!

When?

We don’t know.

But He will grow us!

We must learn to take joy in faithfully building friendships with and communicating the gospel to the lost regardless of their response.

Leader Responsibilities

BECOME & DEVELOP FAITHFUL EVANGELISTS

HEART

Equipping them to deepen *understanding* → *appreciation* → *application* of Grace as it applies to

EQUIP FOR ACTION

Equipping by providing practical methods to improve time stewardship & ability to witness (apologetics, conversation starters, etc.)

Monthly Lead Team topics – evangelism, follow-up & discipleship

Provide vibrant HC meetings

Urge importance of attending CT & same one

Weekly Corporate Prayer mtg focused on evangelism

Cell Groups

Discipleship

Classes

PROVIDE DIVERSE EVANGELISTIC WINESKINS

Provide vibrant HC meetings

Urge importance of attending CT (same one)

Lead/promote service min in community

HC sponsored pre-evangelistic events: C&C

Utilize Xenos' pre-evangelistic events: Pub night, CARE groups,