

FIVE

TO GET READY

An Evangelism Training Workbook

by
Andrew Young

Grace Theological College
Auckland, New Zealand

Introduction

We've just got to look at evangelism again. In the Western world anyway, the vast majority of churches are not growing through unbelievers coming to know Christ. Along with that, most Christians aren't actively involved in efforts to win unbelievers to Christ.

Consider these recent statistics from the USA:

- a survey of more than 500 evangelical churches (including 130,000 members) indicated that over the last 10 years, the average church saw 1.7 non-Christians come to faith in Christ for each 100 people in attendance.
- as things stand, 95% of all Christians in North America will not win one person to Christ in their entire lifetime¹

What lies at the root of this crisis?

One thing is clear. **Many of us aren't active in evangelism because we are in no shape for evangelism!** We don't have the *attitude* we need to be *involved* in evangelism, and we don't have the *skills* we need to be *effective* in evangelism. Consequently, opportunities pass by unrecognized and untapped.

Christianity Explained author Michael Bennett writes

"The spiritual preparation of yourself is everything in personal witnessing. As individual believers, we need several types of preparedness:

- *Praying for opportunities.*
- *Looking for opportunities.*
- *Equipped to take opportunities.*

*...If you are not praying and looking, then by and large, the opportunities will pass you by."*²

At least five things are needed to get ready for evangelism:

- **a proper attitude** – we've got to get our thinking straight about evangelism and the part we have to play in it
- **a prepared testimony** – we need to be able to tell others clearly and simply how God has worked in our lives and what being a Christian means to us
- **a gospel outline** – we also need to be able to tell others clearly and simply what the Christian gospel is all about
- **a conversational skill** – we need to know how to bring Jesus into conversations in a natural way that will encourage others to consider him seriously.
- **a defined mission field** – we need to realize where God has placed us and the opportunities he has given us

The studies that follow are aimed at helping you get ready and get involved in the great task of sharing the gospel with others. They are made up of a brief explanation and supplementary exercises. You must put time into doing the exercises if you want to gain anything from them.

Andrew Young

Grace Theological College
Auckland, New Zealand
August 2000

¹ Taken from *Planting Growing Churches*, Aubrey Malphurs (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) pp. 207-8

² *Christianity Explained* (Scripture Union, 1985) p. 7

1 - Alter Your Attitude

Many Christians aren't evangelizing because their attitude is wrong. Here are some common ways people think about evangelism:

- "It's not my thing"
- "I don't have the gifts for evangelism"
- "I've tried and failed"
- "I'm happy to witness when God brings people to me"

We've got to shake off these killer attitudes if we are to reach others for Christ.

Here are four ways you can develop a healthy outlook and get prepared for evangelism:

- **Be available** – This is where preparation for evangelism begins. We don't belong to ourselves, but to Christ (1 Cor. 6:19,20). He wants us to offer ourselves to him to be used as he has planned (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 2:10). He doesn't use everyone in the same way, and doesn't intend everyone to be doing the same thing. But he does have a special place for all of us in the task of gathering and nurturing disciples. The first step to discovering what he wants you to do is to offer yourself to him – without conditions or strings attached. Tell him that you are ready and available to do whatever he wants you to do. Don't do this just once, but make it a daily act. Make yourself his bondservant – someone sold out to live for Christ.
- **Be interested** – Evangelism is about making Christ known to people. If we are to do that, we've got to develop an interest in people. Someone has said that evangelism is 90% love. I think they're right. One thing is for sure, we will never reach others for Christ if we don't learn to *see* people and *care* for people. Serving, ministering Christians are people-centred Christians. They notice people and take an interest in them. They touch the lives of others by being genuinely concerned about them and by getting to know them. And in doing so, they convey the love of Christ to them. Many of us suffer from being too self-absorbed. We just don't notice people, or when we do, we don't stop to take an interest in them. It's amazing how many opportunities to share Christ open up when we begin to notice people.
- **Be active** – Christ wants us to be active in the task of making disciples. Relying on him doesn't mean we have to wait for him to do things for us. He puts us in places and among people and wants us to use our initiative in reaching them. Of course, he wants us to depend on him to make our efforts effective. But that doesn't mean we are to sit still and wait for him to present us with opportunities. We are to be active in developing relationships and creating openings for making him known. He is always ready to direct us in special ways when either our needs or his purposes require it. But from day to day he expects us to use all the means we have – always in prayerful dependence upon him – to reach others for him. We are to be up and about the work, not waiting for him to do everything for us. Passivity kills evangelism.
- **Be prayerful** – Make your role in Christ's kingdom work a matter of daily prayer and you will soon discover what he wants you to do. Many of us are not active in disciple-making because we are not praying about disciple-making. Our prayer lives centre around our own needs instead of Christ's work. Begin to pray daily about being used to reach and teach others and see what the Lord will do! Ask him to help you see people and care for people and you will find doors for witness and work open before you. Evangelism begins with prayer and must be bathed in prayer. A prayerful attitude will be a prepared attitude.

2 – Sharpen Your Testimony

Telling others about how you became a Christian and what it means to you now is one of the most natural ways of introducing them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is especially true if your testimony is Christ-centred. It's one thing to talk to others about yourself, and another to tell them about how God has worked in your life through the Lord Jesus. It is Christ-centred testimonies that are effective testimonies.

It takes clear thinking to prepare a Christ-centred testimony. The four headings below will help you think about how God has worked in your life:

- **What I was like before I became a Christian** – your attitudes to God, your lifestyle etc. Don't go into details about individual sins, but do make it clear how your spiritual history began. It may have begun in a Christian home where you were bathed in an atmosphere of faith and prayer and grew up sheltered from the worst of this world's ways. Or it may have begun in a completely godless home and led to an early life of open rebellion and self-centredness. Make it clear where you were at with regard to God before he worked in your life to bring you to himself.
- **What God used to bring me to himself** – the event, person, experience God used to make you think about him and return to him. Emphasize God's work in this in order to make it clear that he is the one who saves people.
- **What I understood then that made the difference** – the truths about yourself, God, and the way of salvation that God helped you see at that time. In this way you can help show others how people come back to God, and how they can become a Christian.
- **What being a Christian means to me now** – your new relationship to God and the goals and objectives of your new life. Don't give an exhaustive account of what you've done since becoming a Christian. Concentrate on showing how your life has changed. Highlight especially the new direction, new values and the new relationships that have resulted from becoming a Christian. You may find it helpful to summarize your new outlook in with a verse (or a paraphrase of a verse) from the Bible – e.g., “For me, being a Christian means daily saying no to myself, facing whatever hardship or suffering comes upon me, and following Christ.”

When you've thought about these things, write out your testimony just as you would tell it to a non-Christian friend. Avoid religious jargon, and don't become preachy. Let the facts speak for themselves. Above all things, write in such a way to convey to your friend how real God is, how ready to forgive he is, and what it takes to become a Christian.

Once you have written your testimony, go back over it and identify its main points. You need to memorize these so that you are always ready to share your story with others. You don't need to memorize the exact words of your fuller, written testimony, but you do need to remember its main points. With these clear in your mind, you can adapt (and expand if necessary) your testimony depending on the person you are talking to.

Someone might protest that they don't have a testimony to share with others. That might be the case if you are thinking of a testimony as a dramatic conversion experience. Many of us – especially those who were brought up in Christian homes – haven't had that kind of experience. But that doesn't mean we don't have a story of God's love and grace in our lives to share. All of us do have a spiritual history, and what is more, most of us can point to particular events or moments when the Lord has made himself real to us in a way that has changed our lives. To share this is the essence of a testimony.

SAMPLE WORKSHEET

(These notes and the written testimony accompanying them are the actual testimony of the author)

* * * * *

1. Write notes under the headings below to help you think clearly about how God has worked in your life, and what it means to you to be a Christian today.

- **What I was like before I became a Christian**
 - *Raised in a church-going home*
 - *Grew up knowing about God and the need to trust Jesus to be forgiven my sins*
 - *Gave my life to the Lord as a boy but drifted from him during my teenage years*
 - *Still regarded myself a Christian; prayed occasionally and did want to serve the Lord though I didn't really understand what that meant*

- **What God used to bring me to himself**
 - *Drunken party of a group of senior students during my first few days at Lincoln College in 1969*
 - *Made me think about God; led to me writing an article on the Billy Graham Crusade the previous year*
 - *This was published in the College newspaper*
 - *Leaders from the Christian Union visited me and urged me to give my life to Christ*

- **What I understood then that made the difference**
 - *I became aware in the shower afterwards, of the Lord challenging me to devote my whole life to him*
 - *I realized that I couldn't serve two masters – I was either for Christ or against him*
 - *there and then I gave my life without reserve to him*

- **What being a Christian means to me now**
 - *from that point on, I have simply wanted to know Christ, do his will, and help others to know him*
 - *this has led me to a life of serving others as a pastor and teacher*
 - *my single goal remains to know the Lord Jesus and to help others know him and live for him in the world*
 - *Paul's motto is mine: "For to me, to live is Christ." (Phil. 1:21a)*

2. Write your testimony out in full on a separate sheet of paper.
(see attached)

3. List the **four main points** from the notes above that you need to memorize to be prepared to share your story with others.

- Raised in a church-going home where I learned of my need of a Saviour as a boy
- Challenged by the lifestyle of fellow-students at Lincoln College to think more deeply about God and what it means to be a Christian
- Realized that the Lord required the complete surrender of my life to him
- Devoted to knowing the Lord and helping others know him and live for him in this world

---oOo---

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

Andrew Young

What I was like

I was raised in a church-going home and can never remember a time when I didn't know and love God. Every Sunday our large family squeezed into the car and made the five-mile journey to our nearest Presbyterian Church where it was Sunday School for kids and church for mum and dad. Strange as it may seem, I genuinely liked these times and learned a lot from them. I can distinctly remember asking the Lord "into my heart" as an eight year old boy, and reading my Bible pretty regularly after that for about three years. For some years I toyed with the idea of becoming a minister and practiced for that by arranging family weddings and preaching to sheep from one of our farm haystacks.

However, during my teenage years those ambitions faded. I didn't forget God but I did drift away from him. I did my best to dodge church as much as I could and only prayed and read my Bible before exams or when I was in trouble. And that was how things were when I arrived at Lincoln College in the summer of 1969 to study for a degree in Agricultural Science.

What God used to begin to open my eyes

That is when I had a rude awakening. Suddenly I was surrounded by a horde of peers who didn't share my principles. Drunken parties, filthy language, sloppy lifestyles – this was typical student life in the residential halls of Lincoln College in the late 1960's. It was all so strange to a big-family country lad who had led a pretty sheltered life. Early one morning, unable to sleep because of the tumult in the corridor outside, I began to think deeply about what life was supposed to be about. Scarcely knowing what was happening, I began to think about God again. My brain began to teem with ideas, and, too stimulated to sleep, I decided to set my thoughts down on paper. I ended up writing, of all things, a critique of Billy Graham crusade-type evangelism, arguing that you didn't have to make a decision at a big meeting to be a Christian. Next morning I showed what I had written to a cousin who had started College at the same time I had, and he promptly insisted that I publish them in the College newspaper. This I begrudgingly did, little knowing that it would set in train a series of events that would turn my life upside down.

What it was I saw or understood

No sooner was that first issue of *Caclin* (the Lincoln College newspaper) for 1969 off the press than I received a knock on the door of my room. Two leaders from the University Christian Fellowship (the Evangelical Union as it was called in those days) wanted to talk with me. These ardent Christian men had read my article and decided that I was a prime candidate for conversion. For two hours we talked. I insisted that I had given my life to him as a boy, and they were convinced that I needed to become a Christian. They eventually left with things at a stalemate as far as they were concerned. But unknown to them or to me, the Lord himself intended to continue the discussion. He tracked me, as it were, from my room to the showers after my visitors left. There, as I enjoyed the piping hot jets of steamy water he confronted me in the depths of my spirit. As clearly as though I heard an audible voice I was aware of these words in my mind: "No man can serve two masters... You are either for me or against me." I had a profound sense that it was the Lord Jesus himself who was speaking to me through these words I had read in my Bible long ago. I knew, what is more, that he was calling me to respond to him right then and there. I knew he was saying that it takes more to be a Christian than a Sunday School faith – it takes a complete surrender of will to a life to faith and obedience. Without hesitation or doubt, I responded to the Lord by devoting my whole being to him. I told him that I would follow him wherever he wanted me to go and do whatever he wanted me to do. The step was decisive and the effect instant. I stepped from the shower a new man - clean on the inside as well as the out. I knew I had met with the living Lord Jesus Christ, and that I was now no longer my own person, but his. Whether that was the point of my conversion I don't know for certain. Perhaps I had become a Christian as a boy as I had argued so strongly to my visitors early that same evening. But I do know it was the turning point of my life. I have never been the same since.

How Christ has/is affecting my life

The immediate effect of that event was a total change in my life priorities. I had gone to Lincoln College with the dream of becoming a research scientist. I still cherished that prospect, but was ready to give it up if that's what the Lord wanted. For a time I thought he might have wanted me to become an agricultural missionary, but that didn't turn out to be the case. Instead, the Lord had me spend several years among students, first as a fellow-student then as one of their teachers. He gave me a love for his Word, and a heart to talk closely and intimately with others about their personal and spiritual lives. Scarcely knowing what was happening, he was preparing me to be a Christian pastor and teacher. As much as I enjoyed the research and teaching work at the university, it didn't compare to the joy I found in helping others know Christ and live for him. One step after another, the Lord himself clearly opened doors for me to meet people (the most important of whom was my wife), read books, and find opportunities for service. Eventually in 1980 I left university teaching to devote myself fully to teaching and pastoring Christians, something I have been doing ever since.

Following Christ hasn't always been easy. It has often meant doing things others thought crazy. It has meant being misunderstood by parents and family members, losing financial security, turning away from positions of influence, and at times, has resulted in loneliness and the loss of friends. But through it all there has been a sustained sense of the reality of the Lord Jesus Christ and God our Heavenly Father. Deep in my heart I have known - and still know - that there is nothing more important than knowing God and helping others know him and live for him as well. Some words of the apostle Paul have become my life motto. While in prison in Rome he wrote to his friends in the church in Philippi saying in effect, don't worry about me because, "For to me, to live is Christ..." (Philippians 1:21a). That's exactly how I feel about life, and how I hope to feel about it until Jesus comes back again or I go to be with him.

---oOo---

More Tips For Writing & Sharing Your Testimony

When **writing** your testimony, take care to

- begin with an interesting, attention-getting sentence
- tell your story in a natural way that takes people back into your past and helps them see you in the present
- avoid going into sordid details about your sins and your past life
- provide enough details to make it life-like and interesting
- include a Bible reference or two, but no more
- revise your first draft until you are happy with the finished result

Also, be sure to **avoid**

- using Christian jargon
- being too wordy
- drawing unnecessary attention to yourself
- speaking critically of others – especially church groups and organizations
- giving the impression the Christian life is a bed of roses

Share your testimony

- with love – don't force it upon people. Share it out of concern to help them, not to be heard.
- with sincerity and enthusiasm – speak honestly and humbly, but with joy and eagerness.
- with naturalness and ease – don't preach at people and don't pressure them. Speak with them to win them.

3 – Get the Message Clear

Could you give a clear, simple presentation of the gospel message if someone asked you to do so without prior warning?

Perhaps more to the point, could you turn a conversation about sport, or art, or music to the Christian gospel?

To do so we need to be very clear about the basics of the Christian message. We don't necessarily need to have a "gospel presentation" memorized off pat, but we do need to have some things always on call in our mind.

- **That God is a loving, personal Creator.** We believe that God has *always existed* and that he is *the source and sustainer* of all things. We also believe that he is a *loving and personal being* who made us (mankind) in his own image in order that *he might relate personally to us*. In this respect we differ from those who think matter and life has come into being by natural processes (evolution etc.), and from those who believe that God (if there is such a being) is an impersonal force or influence.
- **That mankind is in rebellion to God.** We believe that *God* made mankind both *good and pure* to live with him in an intimate relationship of love and service. We believe that the first man and woman *rebelled* against God and chose to follow their own wisdom rather than his will. We also believe that as a result of that, the whole human race came to know *death, moral corruption, and alienation* from God. We believe that this is the original cause of all *suffering, injustice and evil* in the world today. We also believe that it dooms men and women to *condemnation* at the coming judgment unless they are pardoned by and reconciled to God.
- **That Jesus Christ is Saviour and Lord.** We believe that Jesus Christ is a *real person*, the Son of God who became man and *lived on earth* for a time, but who after his *death*, came back to *life* and *returned* to be with his Father in heaven. We believe that he *died for the sins* of others, that all who trust in him might be *pardoned, restored to fellowship* with God, and become his *sons*. We believe that through him God is *establishing his eternal kingdom*, that he now *rules over all things* from heaven, and that he is *coming back in the future* to *judge* the world and bring this present age to an end.
- **That salvation is a free gift.** We believe that *no one can earn* or obtain salvation themselves, but that they must receive it as *God's gift* resulting from the *death of his Son Jesus*. We believe that God gives this gift to all who come to realize their sinful rebellion and turn back to him (*repent*), *accepting* Jesus as his Son and the Saviour of the world, *trusting* alone in his death for them, and *submitting* to him as their King.

These are the four great pillars of the gospel that must be cemented in our minds. We must be able to recall them instantly and express them simply. Sometimes we will be able to present them in an orderly manner beginning with the idea that God is a loving, personal Creator. At other times, our point of contact with people will mean we begin with the idea that salvation is a gift, or that Jesus is the Saviour, or that man is a rebellious creature. The starting point won't really matter if you understand the total message clearly. You will always know where you are and where you need to go.

With the main points clear, you can gather Bible verses, personal examples, quotations, and illustrations from life to put "flesh upon the bones" as it were. Well supplied with these, you will be ready to share the gospel with all sorts of people in all kinds of situations at all moments in time.

WORKSHEET

1. **Getting the facts clear.** Use the italicized words to identify the main facts within each of the four gospel pillars outlined on the previous page.

Main Point	Sub-points
God, the loving personal Creator	
Man, the condemned and sinful rebel	
Jesus, the Saviour and Lord	
Salvation, God's free gift	

2. **Padding for the bones.**

Main Point	Bible Verses	Illustrations/Examples
<i>I. God the Creator</i>		
<i>II. Man the Sinner</i>		
<i>III. Christ the Saviour</i>		
<i>IV. Salvation the Gift</i>		

3. Writing it out.

Imagine you are talking to someone about the problem of child-abuse so public and current in the nation at the moment. The person you are talking to has made the comment – “I just don’t know how people could do such a thing!” In response, you have said, “I’m a Christian, and what God has told us about ourselves helps me understand it. Can I share with you what the Bible says about our human race, and why these sorts of things happen?” Perhaps to your surprise, your friend says, “Yes. Please do tell me.” Away you go. Starting at this point, write the rest of the conversation – your explanation of the problem of human sinfulness and the remedy God has supplied for it.

4 - TURNING CONVERSATIONS TO CHRIST

Telling people the gospel is one thing; talking with them about Jesus is another. Both have their place and both demand certain skills.

Turning a conversation to Jesus is making him the subject of a discussion. It's getting another person to consider him and think deeply about who he is and the implications he has for life. Just presenting the gospel seldom does that. It acquaints people with certain facts about the Lord Jesus, but it doesn't necessarily help them to think and talk about him. It can even turn them off talking about him.

Sometimes people are ready to talk about Jesus, but that's not usually the case. More often than not we have to interest them in him first.

How can we do that?

- **Meet them on their turf.** Start with their interests and activities, not yours. Introduce Jesus into their world, don't ask them to come into yours. Don't expect them to respond to an invitation to talk about the Lord - usually they won't. Enter their conversations and interests and introduce Christ into them in a natural and challenging way. That's what Jesus himself did with the woman he met at the well of Sychar in Samaria. He began with their mutual interest in water and led the conversation from that point to himself, the water of life.
- **Get below the surface.** Most conversations skate around on the level of common interests and events. It's hard to introduce Jesus naturally into conversations at this level. It's much easier when you dip below the surface into the realm of values and beliefs. It's when people are talking about what they feel and believe and like - what they think is right and wrong - that you can usually find a bridge to the Lord Jesus. The challenge, then, lies in getting beyond talking about surface events and interests. Asking questions that get people to share *why* they like or believe what they do is the best way of doing this.
- **Show how Jesus makes a difference.** Knowing and serving the Lord Jesus should affect every part of our lives. It should determine our views on social issues, on child-raising, on using money and on how to spend leisure time. If that is so, we will be able to introduce him into conversations as we talk with others on these issues. The key to doing so naturally lies, of course, in the reality of the Lord Jesus in your life. If you are not living in him moment by moment, and consciously letting your mind be shaped by him, introducing him into discussions will always seem staged and artificial. People will smell a rat and immediately guess that you are trying to preach to them.
- **Aim at understanding.** The goal of introducing Jesus into conversations is to get people to consider him seriously. We want them to realize that he is a real person, the Lord of heaven and earth, who offers forgiveness and life to sinners. We are not just interested in getting people to make a decision, or to come to our church. When people come to know who Jesus is, they will understand what they must do to respond to him. If they don't, we can help them to see it then. We don't need to pressure or manipulate. Our task is to introduce them to the Lord. He will do the rest.
- **Don't push when the door won't open!** If your attempt to introduce Jesus into a conversation meets a brick wall, don't push. Serious conversations about the Lord have to develop spontaneously. If a person doesn't want to talk about Jesus, trying to make them do so will only harden them and damage the prospect of them thinking seriously about him at some other time. Recognize God's control in evangelism. He can open hearts and does so in his own time. It's our duty to knock - to introduce Jesus into conversations - but not to batter down closed doors.

All this must be done in a spirit of genuine love for people. To make a game of snaring people into talking about Christ is abhorrent. We turn conversations to the Lord because we genuinely care for people and want them to know the One who made them, loves them, and will one day judge them.

WORKSHEET

1. Self-check

Answer these questions honestly and commit yourself to doing what you believe the Lord would have you to do.

a) How real is the Lord Jesus in your daily life? Do you take time to talk with him and learn from him each day? Do you take your problems to him? Do you seek his strength for the tasks of each day?

b) Does his word shape the way you think and the things you do? Give two examples of things you do out of conscious obedience and love to Christ.

c) Are there major weaknesses and lacks in your relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ? What are they, and what can you do about them?

2. Make a **list of topics** that commonly arise in your conversations with non-Christian friends, workmates and family members.

Friends	Work/school mates	Family

3. Choose **three** of these topics and think of questions you might use to turn conversation from a surface level (of mere activities, events, news etc.) to a deeper level (of values or beliefs).

Example: Topic – Gardening.

Friend: “I spent all day gardening yesterday and I’m sore and tired.”

You: “What made you keep at it so long? Do you like gardening?”

Friend: “Yes I do. I would spend all day every day in the garden if I had time and the money to do so.”

You: “I’m really keen to know what makes you like it so much. I like it myself, but I haven’t met many other people who do. Please tell me what you get from it that makes it so special to you.”

Topic	Questions to get below the surface
1.	
2.	
3.	

4. For these same **three topics**, state briefly how Christ affects the way you view them (in terms of what you think, enjoy, value, or do).

Topic	How Christ makes a difference in my life
1.	
2.	
3.	

5. For just **one** of these topics, write out a full conversation beginning with your friend's comment on an issue, up to and including your introduction of Christ into the discussion.

6. Can you think of a recent conversation where you missed an opportunity to bring Christ into what was said? Write down what you **did say**, and what you **might have said** instead.

5 – Your Mission Field

You don't have to go overseas to have a mission field. You don't even need to make new contacts to have people to pursue with the gospel. God has already set each of us among unbelievers that we can take steps to reach for him.

Stop and think about it for a moment. Almost all of us are in touch with non-Christians at five different points:

- in our **families** – most if not all Christians have immediate family or near relatives who don't know and serve the Lord.
- in our **neighbourhood** – our next door neighbours and street contacts almost certainly include non-Christians
- in our **workplace/school/university** – again, unless we are in a workplace/learning environment that's exclusively Christians, we are sure to rub shoulders with non-Christians.
- in our **social/recreational/community** activities – sports clubs, community committees, political organization are usually points for contact with non-Christians.
- in our **occasional contacts** – we meet non-Christians at petrol stations, in super-markets, in doctors' surgeries etc.

These people are our natural mission field. God calls us to reach them just as certainly as he calls others to preach the gospel in Ecuador or Malawi. Looking for new contacts to evangelize is fine, but is that where we should start? Can we expect God to bless our efforts to contact new people when we aren't doing anything to help those he has already given us? Evangelism falters when we don't see our mission field, or when we don't get busy and do something with it.

We need to work or cultivate the field God has given us. That means

- **identifying** non-Christians we have contact with. Don't presume you know them all without thinking about it. Take time to work through the categories of contacts listed above. You will be surprised to see how big your field is. Once you have done that, develop a personal profile for three or four of these people. Focus on them initially.
- **praying** for them regularly. The first and most important thing we can do to reach people for Christ is to pray for them. God is the great evangelist – he is the One who opens doors and hearts - and prayer is the means he has given for us to keep in touch with him. Start by praying for the three or four people you have chosen to focus on.
- **thinking** prayerfully about how we can reach them. Don't wait for opportunities to arise. That's our biggest problem and the reason why so little happens. Think of ways in which you can take the first step towards them. Don't worry about devising ways to preach at them. Think instead of how you can love them. Always be ready to share the gospel, but don't try to ram it down anyone's throat.
- **doing** something. Just praying and thinking is never enough. The very best idea will come to nothing if it's not acted upon. Once clear about what you can do, get on and do it, looking to God to direct and empower you as you go. He is always ready to intervene when either his purposes or our needs require it. But he means us to be about the work he has given us to do and doesn't want us to sit still and wait for things to happen.

Work through this process with a friend or two. You will be amazed – and humbled – to realize how much more you can do to work the field God has given you. It may not yield a harvest, but that's not your concern. You may be sure of this: If we do nothing, nothing will happen. But if we do what we can, God will surprise us with what he does.

WORKSHEET

1. Use the following table to help you survey the mission field God has already provided for you:

Type	Name	Kind of Relationship		
		<i>Intimate</i>	<i>Casual</i>	<i>Acquaintance</i>
A. Family/ Relative				
B. Neighbour				
C. Work/School- mate				
D. Social/ Recreational/ Community				
E. Occasional				

2. **Choose up to four** of these people and prepare a personal profile for each (outlining their characteristics, interests, needs, religious beliefs, family circumstances etc.)

Name	Personal Profile <i>(Interests, needs, family, spiritual background, points of contact etc.)</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

3. **Prayerfully develop a plan** for deepening contact with these people with a view to sharing the gospel with them. Use the following suggestions to help stimulate your thinking:

- **Ways of helping them at their point of need**
 - practical help
 - friendship and care
 - special services
- **Ways of getting together with them**
 - helping them
 - recreating with them
 - entertaining them (hospitality etc.)
- **Ways of getting them together with other Christians**
 - inviting them to church
 - social activities as a group
 - in a Bible study
- **Ways of exposing them to the gospel**
 - at church
 - through books or literature
 - your personal testimony
 - through a Bible study
 - through personal conversation

Name	Plan for Deepening Contact and Sharing the Gospel
1	
2	
3	
4	

EXAMPLE:

Contact

Fred T
(Neighbour)

Personal Profile

Elderly (late 70's) widower. A very warm, old-fashioned, outspoken moralist. Not antagonistic to the gospel but not open either. Great lover of sport and gardening. Up to date with current events. Loves a yarn. Currently have occasional talk; have watched football with him three or times. Pray for him 1-2 times per month. Very good family relationships with.

Plan

Capitalize on mutual interest in sport and his interest in our family. Plan to watch football with him at least once a month. Pray weekly for him with Nola. Ask advice re- gardening/maintenance. Give copy of Grace Alone; write brief devotional/gospel studies for.

4. Put your plan into action!

- identify something you can do right now
- make a definite commitment to act
- seek God's direction and blessing, submitting your plan to him
- act promptly – don't procrastinate!

---oOo---

Key points to remember:

- i) **Be an attentive listener** – don't barge into people's lives or impose yourself upon them. Start where they are at, not where you are.
- ii) **Relate to their needs** – Christian love aims at helping people at their point of need. Care for people and help them at their point of need.
- iii) **Wait for God's time** – don't force gospel issues upon them. Always be ready to share your faith, but don't force it on people. Be alert to receptive periods and take the opportunity when it arises.
- iv) **Use simple, understandable language** – get rid of Christian jargon. Explain the gospel simply in everyday language.