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Getting Out the Good News

Michael P. DiCuirci

Cedarville University, dicurci@cedarville.edu

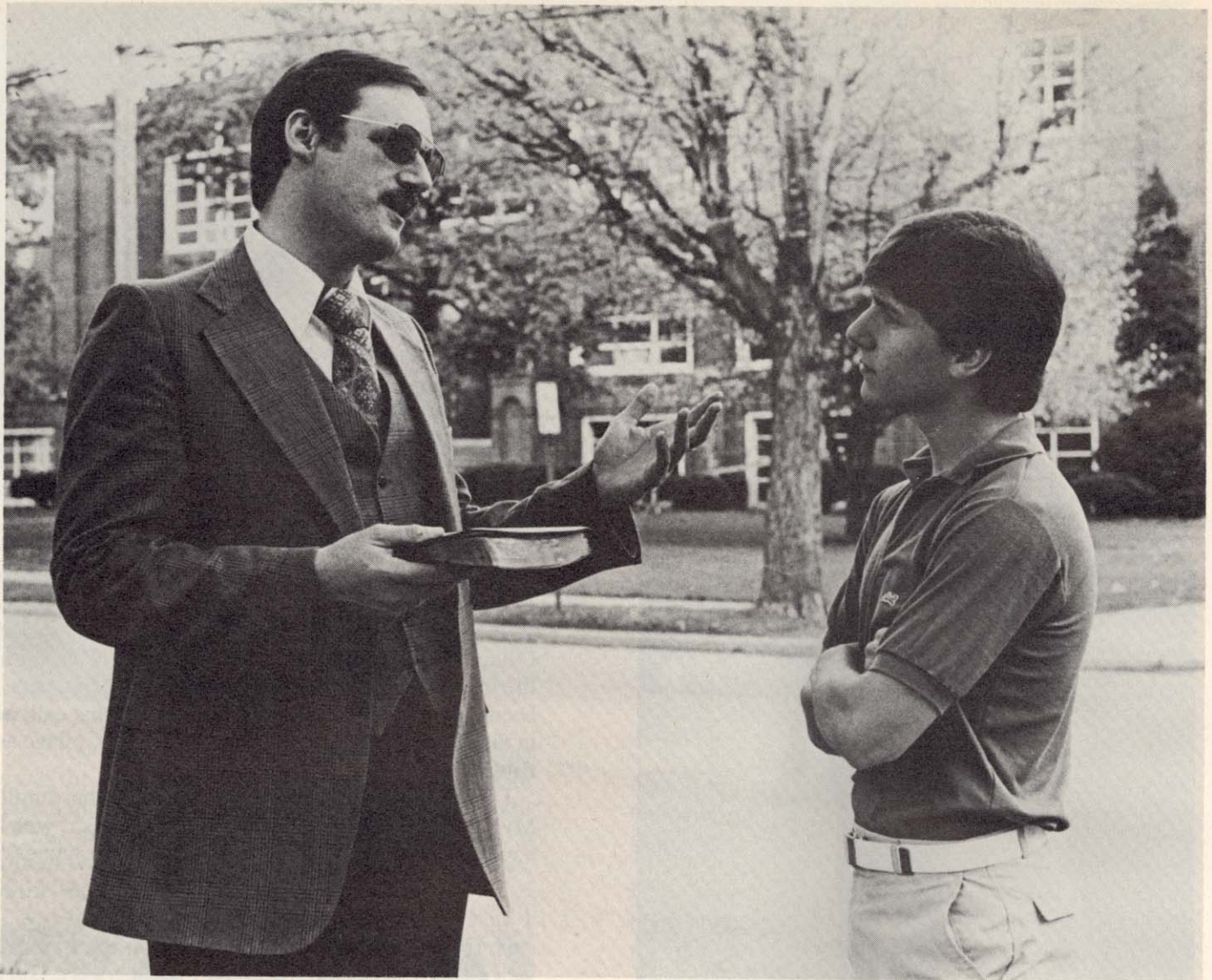
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Getting Out the Good News

by Michael DiCuirci

A lady in the library, a preacher, a gospel singer, an elderly member of Alcoholics Anonymous . . . What do these four people have in common? They are four Christians who weren't afraid to share their faith in Jesus Christ. God used these people to present the Gospel to me. This method of people to people is God's best means of evangelism. I know; it worked in my life.

What qualifies one for personal evangelism? "Isn't it just for pastors—the so-called 'professional Christians'?" Nothing could be further from the truth. All born-again Christians are accountable to the Lord for their witness. Nevertheless, because of fear, unyieldedness, lack of concern, and even ignorance of how to effectively share our faith, the ranks of Christendom are filled with malingerers, God's purchased ones, who have shirked the Commander's orders.

As believers, it is necessary that we possess a plan of evangelism, and it must be a thoughtful and Biblically accurate one. It is difficult to say one method is better than another. Throughout the corridors of time, it has pleased God to use a wide variety of methods. Yet, there is only one dependable "how to" book on the sub-

ject of witnessing—the New Testament. Within its pages, we discover that God used Andrew in one way and Peter in another. He used Stephen, Paul, Mary, and Martha in special, individual ways. Thus, it is clear that God is willing to use us in our unique environment.

Let me submit two important aspects of witnessing that I am convinced apply to all methods of evangelism: tactfulness, and a knowledge of the Word of God. Just as an airplane needs two wings in order to fly, so the Christian requires these two key “wings” in his witness.

When I was new in the faith, I possessed an ample supply of enthusiasm; however, it was not tempered by tactfulness. As a result, I barraged many “victims” in an attempt to convince them to accept Christ. Only a six-month-old Christian, I actually turned off my mother and sister to spiritual things as I witnessed to them. I felt I had to twist every conversation into a sermon. I even left tracts in all the drawers around the house. Having matured in the faith, I now realize that many natural opportunities abound, and I really don’t have to fabricate them.

Just the other evening as I was journeying home from a day of ministry in Sandusky, Ohio, I was forced to stop behind several cars idled at a railroad crossing. Initially, I was somewhat irritated, having the desire to be at home after a long day. However, after a few minutes, I realized that the cars ahead of me were driven by people who needed Christ. After a season of prayer, I put my flashers on and went to the car ahead. The man who saw me coming rolled down his window. I immediately thanked him for being gracious enough to signal the stop with his emergency lights. We began a conversation. He invited me into his car; and for a short season I was able to comfortably share with him the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. If we allow the Holy Spirit to fill our appointment book, we will be actively busy. There are folks all around us who are within our sphere of influence. We don’t need to ambush anyone; just allow the Spirit of God to direct.

The second wing of our witness must be a workable and accurate knowledge of the Bible. There is no substitute for the inspired Word of God. The proper use of it is essential to effective evangelism. Romans 10:17 tells us, “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” It is foundational to know key passages concerning the sinfulness of man, the grace of God, and the salvation offered in Christ. The Bible needs no defense or supplement. If we speak the Word and live it, God will use us.

Through my five and one-half years as a Christian, the following additional items have been helpful to me as I have endeavored to share His glorious message. In no way is this an exhaustive list, but it merely suggests what I have found to be beneficial.

- 1) Be friendly - Cultivate bridges of friendship with people to open doors of sharing, both short and long range.
- 2) Avoid arguments - No one has ever been badgered into God’s family. Argumentation with an unbeliever reaps few benefits.

- 3) Share your testimony - Tell how you were saved. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so . . .” (Psalm 107:2).
- 4) Hand out sound and attractive literature - Many have been saved through careful use of good gospel tracts.
- 5) Pray - As Christians, we need to avidly and persistently pray for the lost. When the Spirit of God puts a person on our hearts, our obligation is to witness to such a one.

E. M. Bounds wrote: “What the Church needs today is not more machinery or better, not new organizations or more and novel methods, but men whom the Holy Spirit can use—men of prayer, mighty in prayer. The Holy Spirit does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not count on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men—men of prayer.”

Sometimes I wonder if Christians realize that the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18-20) is still in effect today. While many believers sit in their churches Sunday after Sunday, service after service, the unregenerate all around are perishing without hope. It’s as if they are waiting for the lost to “come and hear.” Providentially, there are those who do come, hear, and respond by receiving Christ; however, the majority of sinners never darken the door of a church. Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, . . .” (Matthew 28:19) to the job, to the school, to the health club—go and tell. Tell them of the good news of salvation. People need to hear it.

My friend, I challenge you to get excited about this matter of evangelism. God can touch many through a life lived in obedience to His Word. What the Church needs today is men and women, girls and boys who will eagerly declare the mercies of the living God to others. Don’t be a spectator; be a participator. Be convinced that knowing Christ is the greatest knowledge that anyone can possess, and be excited about communicating this truth through evangelism person to person. □

Five and one-half years ago I put my trust in the Biblical claims of Jesus Christ, and by faith I began a personal relationship with Him which I have never regretted. Prior to receiving the Lord, I led the life of an alcoholic-agnostic. In my search for satisfaction I tried many avenues of human folly: alcohol, immorality, self-improvement, and even religion. It wasn’t until I trusted Christ at the age of 25 that I found true satisfaction. Through His Word and an amazing variety of circumstances, the Holy Spirit opened my blinded eyes to see my desperate need of Jesus Christ. I am thankful—very thankful—for His forgiveness, for His cleansing power, and for the purpose He now gives to my life. I have become a new creation in Christ. The Bible says: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). Do you know Him?