

Persuasive Evangelism

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Preacher: David Robertson

[0 : 0 0] Well, good evening everybody, and there may be some folks still drifting in at the door there, but I think we'll just make a start now, and first of all, on behalf of the Presbytery, welcome to this Evangelism Conference. It's been dreamt of and talked about and planned for a long time, and we're really delighted that it has come together. It has come together according to God's plan rather than ours, and we're very sorry that one of our speakers has not been able to come today. Robin Sitsen has taken unwell, and while we were concerned that the weather might be a factor for people, it actually wasn't in his case. So we are very sorry that he won't be able to come for this weekend. So there will be a slight change to the advertised programme, and we're very grateful to David Robertson and I need to pass down about being willing between them to cover the four sessions. So hopefully the themes of the conference that we wanted to address will be addressed in a slightly different way. So preliminaries, first of all, most of you are very familiar with the layout here, but if there should be a raging fire at some point and fire alarms sound, then you can exit either by the door you can in or the fire exit at the back of the hall, and the toilets of course are situated above the elephant. I do have to plug the books, and I will be saying that over and over and over again. There are books by our speakers and books recommended by our speakers. And they are all at this country classes. And if you don't have money with you tonight, then we do have ways of getting money from you. And please just leave a note of the book that you would like to take and you can make an arrangement to pay tomorrow. But it is a very good bookstore. David, of course, as many of you know, is not only the free church minister of WDE and a thousand other things, he is also the director of Solas, one of the best apologetics think tanks that we have. David will be making a presentation first thing tomorrow introducing the work of Solas. And I can't recommend enough the magazine that Solas produces. David will have some copies of that available if you are charged, but there will be a sign-up sheet at the first column at the back if you are interested in signing up for news items and for the magazine.

Now, there are one or two other notices that I will give at the end. We have coffee served at 9 o'clock in the room next door. I know some of you may be wanting to get away at Shamp because of the weather.

I thank you so much for bringing the elements to come here today. And I made that particularly to a speaker and his wife who landed in Stormoway Airport at 3 o'clock this afternoon in a horrendous storm.

And when his plane touched down, that's when we stopped praying at the last time. We were just glad that he made it. But seriously, we are really delighted that he made it. And it's really a great pleasure to welcome David, along with Annabelle, to be with us for this conference. He's speaking here at this conference. He's speaking in Shabbos tomorrow evening. He's preaching in Harris on Sunday evening.

And at Kennedy Street on Sunday evening. So it's a full schedule for him. And we're delighted that he's with us here. So I'm not going to take up any more time. I'm going to read a few verses from the New Testament. And then I'll have a word of David.

[4 : 0 1] So I'm going to read from 1 Peter chapter 3. Reading from verse 8.

1 Peter chapter 3.

1 Peter chapter 4.

1 Peter chapter 4.

1 Peter chapter 4.

[6 : 4 1] 1 Peter chapter 5.

1 Peter chapter 5.

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1 Peter chapter 5.

[9 : 11] 1 Peter chapter 5.

1 Peter chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5.

1 Peter chapter 5.

1 Peter chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5.

1 Peter chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 5.

[11 : 41] 1 Peter chapter 5. 1 Peter chapter 6. 1 Peter chapter 15.

You must get a lot of wind on this island. Dawkins came in. We had a very, very interesting couple of days with him here. Now, I wasn't actually at his event at the book festival.

But what struck me about it was something quite incredible. The event that I did at the Arts Centre, it was quite sober and so on. Although Dawkins was actually there. I didn't know that until the very, very end.

Packed. I really benefited from it and enjoyed it. But I listened to his event the following night. And it was like an evangelical rally. There is no God.

Yay! I'm going, this isn't Lewis. And you're hearing this and there's just the violence with which he spoke and the applause which he got. And I thought, you know, there are people who really do hate God.

[12 : 57] And there's also a reaction against things. So again, I'm thinking about that as we come here. I'm also thinking about how our culture has changed.

And how churches change and everything. Now, some of us will be, the temptation is we want to retain things as they always have been.

Or as we remember how they were, though our memory is probably not that great. It's usually very selective. And we just, we see ourselves as being in a storm and we want to retain the church as a kind of safety net.

We remember what it was like. And so I've spoken at evangelistic meetings. I can't remember even what we call them in Gathe. But you know, they're a week of meetings in a church.

And I was just amazed that the only people who came to them were church people already. And yet they were still called evangelistic meetings. And I was thinking, okay, how do we reach the community in this?

[13 : 59] But our society has changed so much that sometimes our tendency is for us in the church to get very afraid and become very inward looking. And there's an elder, who I won't name, who's from this island.

But not on the island anymore. And he's a good, good man. And a godly man. And a prayerful man. And he's been a big influence on my life. But for a long time, you know, he thought some of the things that I was doing in the church, oh, this wasn't good and so on.

But a few months ago, he sent a message to me. Just a very simple message. And he just said this. I no longer recognize the country I was brought up in.

Everything has changed. I don't understand it. And he's an intelligent man. And a good man. And I think a lot of our people, that's kind of what's going on.

You know, and it's going to change a whole lot more. I mean, a lot of us don't recognize how much things have changed. Some of you were brought up in an era when homosexuality, for example, was illegal.

[15 : 08] It's very soon going to be illegal to criticize at all homosexuality. That's a phenomenal change. And just when you think we're getting to terms with the whole idea of homosexual and heterosexual and so on, the new thing that's coming in is the idea that there isn't such a thing as sexuality at all.

That people can pick and choose. The disintegration of the family and so on. There are all these different things occurring. How do we communicate the gospel within that context?

And I do think that's a key issue for us. Now I wrote, I was almost tempted just to give the talk I gave at the assembly here, but you're all, I don't know if you're all free church people, if you're from other churches you're very welcome as well.

But if you read the record, which I'm sure you will do in the future, or if you watch the assembly online, I mean, how cool is the free church to watch the assembly live?

That's really riveting. Actually, it can be at times. But you would have seen my assembly sermon there, and if not, I'll refer you to it because I'm just not going to repeat it. But I want to give you two instances of change that have occurred, and particularly within the church.

[16:23] One was I was a minister in Brora in Sutherland for a while, and I did some research for the presbytery there, Caithness in Sutherland it was at the time. And I was particularly concerned with Ascent, because Ascent had a population of 800, it had five churches and a fisherman's mission.

All the ministers were Westminster Calvins. Now when you think about it, it's insane. The amount of money that was spent on that. And yet, the church was dying. All the churches were dying. And I went and did some research in the pre-church. Over a period of, I can't remember how many years, maybe 15 years, 51 people had been baptized, children, mostly, had been baptized within that church.

One was still in the church. Now you've got people moving away, you've got depopulation, and that's always the thing that was said. But the population hadn't changed all that much. People who had come in perhaps hadn't come. But when I dive even further, many of those who had been baptized didn't go to any church whatsoever. Let me put it this way. In the year 1945, end of the Second World War, the free church had roughly around 20,000 members, adherents, children.

[17:39] There was a new church that started in the Netherlands, called the Freigemacht, the Liberated, where we were a sister church of that church. We recognize there was a good reformed church. Spring forward to the 21st century, or at least the year 2000, the free church at that point had about 10,000.

So it basically halved. The Freigemacht had about 180,000. Were they great at evangelism? No, they weren't great at evangelism. They struggled with evangelism.

But what they were very good at was they kept their children. When I went to Dundee, half the office bearers' children who came to Dundee to study never came near any church, and the other half wouldn't touch the free church.

So we weren't very good at retaining people, and I don't think we were very good at evangelizing either. And then one of the things that bothered me about Lewis was I had a little bit of research about Lewis as well.

It's an elder in Smithton who was very, very good at that kind of thing. And this was about 1996. And between the years 1990 and 1994, Lewis Sunday Schools, free church Sunday schools in Lewis rather, went down 25%.

[18:54] That's a huge drop in a very short period of time. And I thought then the church in Lewis is in deep trouble. About 20 years ago, 70 to 80% of the population of Lewis and Harris said, whether they did, but I'm sure they did, said that they went to an evangelical church.

Evangelical church of Scotland, free church, free Presbyterian, whatever. That figure, I don't know the Agen figure right now, but a couple of years ago, it was 40%.

And I suspect it's less than that. So this last stronghold of the pure gospel and so on doesn't hold true anymore. And where Scotland has gone, I think that Lewis is following very, very quickly.

And all of us need to rethink where we're at and what we're going to do now. And saying all that, there's an instant, almost kind of pietistic reaction that people have.

Oh, we just need the Holy Spirit. We just need the Bible. We just need prayer. I agree completely with that. That's my whole stance. But I find often that people will use that and even use the sovereignty of God as a means for not doing things, as an excuse.

[20:13] And we can't, I think that word is very close to blasphemy, to do that. If you believe in the sovereignty of God, obviously I became a Christian through the, well my parents were Christian brethren, left all of that, became a Christian through various things.

But I was a total Arminian. And if you don't know what that is, not someone from an area north of Turkey, you can find it out, I'm sure. Or you maybe heard it as a kind of, you know, when you hear the ministers' vows and ordination, do you renounce all Arminians, Socinians and so on.

It's really interesting to see how many of you knew what's the Sinians were. But I was an Arminian. And I, when I was in Edinburgh University, I went around like a headless chicken trying to convert people. And then, just through reading the Bible, I didn't even know, well I didn't know who Calvin was, but I didn't know anything about Calvin and Calvinism.

Through reading the Bible, I came to believe in the sovereignty of God. I became, what in theological terms, you'd call a Calvinist. Though I didn't know what a Calvinist was. And instead of, that, instead of me saying, well, the Lord's going to convert them, He's going to convert them. That precisely, the opposite thing. Because I suddenly thought, God has many people yet in this city, and it's not up to me, and the Holy Spirit can do it.

[21 : 33] But rather than clamp down on the evangelism, it made me think, I just have to go for it, even more, because God will bless, it's not up to me. And here's the thing, if we genuinely believe, that what we've got, is the pure gospel, then why don't we share it?

And how do we learn to share it? And that's where, Ian's father's point, hit home to me. How do you have revival in a place, and yet contain it? That's not the way, that the Holy Spirit works. So, that was a typical free church introduction, lasted for too long. Let's think about this. These are just some questions, I want us to think about, and this is kind of a hopefully, second thing for the weekend.

I run this thing called Solas, and of course, we call it Solas, because it's a Gaelic word, and nobody knows what it means, and it sounds cool. We were going to call it, the Centre for Public Christianity, but Solas sounds so much better.

And everyone would ask, what does that mean? Is it the Solas of the Reformation, or it's Spanish for sun, or it's an Islamic group somewhere, it's a Kentucky folk band, it's a beer in Spain, in Switzerland, but no, it's a Gaelic word, I'm told, for life, I just believe that.

[22 : 54] I don't know Gaelic at all, apart from Makisho and Agus. This, so we set up Solas, and we set up really, to try and help, and encourage, what we call, church-based persuasive evangelism, because, it's not just individuals, maybe, maybe this doesn't happen here, but sometimes when, we say an evangelist, people think of a guy, who's wandering around the street, handing out tracts, or is asking someone, how's your soul?

But we're saying, how do we, I'm thinking of my Muslim neighbours, I'm thinking of, my non-Christian siblings, I'm thinking of, the people that are just on the buses, in my city, how do we reach them?

I'm thinking of, the fact that, the vast majority, if not all of the children, in my children's classes, in school, were not Christians, never went to church, had no knowledge at all.

I'm thinking of, the fact that, 95% of people, in my city, grow up, not rejecting, the gospel, because they've never, ever heard, the gospel, they don't know, what the gospel is.

So, we did that, with Solace, and we used this kind of mantra, just a very simple thing, contact, connect, and communicate. How do you meet, with non-Christians?

[24 : 19] I used to have, a wee poster, on my office wall, which says, you can't talk to people, about Jesus, unless you're talking to people. In other words, if the first time, you talk to your neighbor, is when you're, handing them an invite, to the, little communions, there's something wrong.

It's like, shopping online. We, I'm a future minister, so, I don't, earn a massive amount of money, and, my wife works, across from Fife, and, she works about 30 miles, from the house, I work about 2 miles, from the house, so, she refused to walk to work, I thought it would do her good, and, just help her cycle, you know, she'd be really fit, but, she takes the car, so, I thought, well, maybe cycle, or I'll walk, and, the interesting thing, was in doing that, just getting to know, some, same people, when I do that, getting to know my city better, but also, the simple thing, and I'll give you an example, of, of what I'm trying to say, about, connecting with people, or contacting people, it's dead easy, you've got into Florida, it's an anniversary, or it's something, you go on the computer, you click the button, turns up the next day, it's just wonderful, it's just great, I don't know if they do it in Lewis, but, I'm sure they will, but Amazon, or something like that, and then one day, I went, to get some flowers, and, I realised, I'd forgotten to go into Florida, the day before, or so, just literally, two minutes out from the church, to the flower shop, and I went in, to the flower shop, and I said to the lady there, I want some flowers, and she said, what kind of flowers, I said, I have a clue, the kind my wife likes, and she said, okay, what does your wife like, I said, nice ones, she said, okay, how much do you want to spend, so, animals, she said, look your ears, I said, 15 pounds, is that reasonable, and she said, yeah, that's pretty reasonable, she said, go away, come back in 15 minutes, and I'll get some, a thing made out of you, so, she'd broken her leg, and she was sitting there, plastering it, and just, she made this flower thing, and I went in to collect, and pay for them, and she said, are you from the church, up the road, I said, yeah, I said, I'm actually the minister

there, she said, that's a great church, I said, oh, have you been in, oh yes, she says, I go in every Monday, to Weight Watchers,

I said, I said, well, you need to, no, I didn't say that, I didn't want to say it, I said, no, I said, oh, that's amazing, she said, but I've seen inside, the main area, you know, where you all meet, on Sundays, and that, she says, it's beautiful, it's great, I said, this is, but that's not what I meant, I said, what do you mean, she said, I meant your church, I meant new people, I said, oh, well, have you ever been to a church, no, she said, but in this community, you've got a really good reputation, and I just talked for a wee while, she said, if I went to church, I'd go to your church, and I came out, and I was just, I couldn't believe how angry I was with myself, I thought, what am I doing, ordering things online, and I could be talking to people, and I know, there's a guy called Steve Timmons, in Sheffield, who writes some wonderful stuff, but he has this thing, where he talks about gospel intentionality, it's the reason why you go into the same news agents, because you get to know people, and this whole idea of contacting people,

I remember talking to somebody from Sky, and they were saying, well, 60% of the people who live in our area, are white settlers, are green settlers, and I'm sorry if that phrase offends you, but you know what I mean, they're incomers to the area, and he says, they're just not the kind of people, that come to our church, why would they ever want to come, I said, have you ever talked to them, not really, they're not our sort of people, but a Christian, does never ever think like that, you know, you've got to contact people, and that's, to me, that's just a very, very simple thing, to ask the question, how do you meet non-Christians, because one of the things, that's happening in the internet world, is we're actually becoming more atomized, people are just focusing, and we're all too busy, aren't we, here's a very simple principle, if your diary is 80% full, it's way too full, when do you actually have time, to meet with non-Christians, I don't know what it's like here, I will never have, a Kirk session, in St. Peter's, as far as I'm concerned, where all my elders, are able to come, everyone's really busy, as a Christian, when do you have any time, to meet with non-Christian friends, now I have to say, that I love, when I was hitchhiking around here,

[28 : 58] I love the fact, that the, there was a guy, in a laundry van, who said, come on, I'll make you, I'll make you a cup of tea, and something, and he just stopped his work, and he was able to do that, and I just thought, wow, that was just really, really great, but most of us, we're all way too busy, we've all got too much, and we don't really, have any meaningful contact, with non-Christians, and that's why, things like, five-a-side football, we're going to start, a church plant, in an area, called Charlesman Dundee, and one of our guys said, I'm just going to go, and start five-a-side football, in the sports center, and invite a few of the guys in, and it's a great thing, do they have prayer, before and afterwards, no they don't, do they have a wee gospel talk, no they don't, but it's getting to know people, it's contact, with people, so, that's the first, connect, we actually run a course, called connect, and what that is about, is how you, join the dots, in terms of, how do you connect the gospel, to where people are at, and that's a really, serious question, there are some people, who you do just connect with, isn't there,

I think it was, Annabelle, was, we did some door-to-door, we haven't done door-to-door, for a while, but we did some door-to-door then, and, and he placed, just along from the church, one of the plants, just along from the church, Annabelle and somebody else, knocked on the door, and the woman who came to the door, and being a former lady, promised of Dundee, and was, a complete socialist, you know, and really into politics, and so on, and Annabelle came back, and said, well you need to go and talk to her, because, you'd get on really well, so I did go and talk to her, and we did get on really well, and I, I told her she should be a communist, and I, we just, we just argued, and discussed, and we talked about the church, and so on, and there was connect, straight away, you've got to think about, the kind of people, that you connect with, or, say your neighbours, or others, and you're thinking, well I, I can't really connect with them, and I think sometimes, in churches, we need, for me it's better, to be out of the community, doing it, but sometimes we need, to create events, which help that, so let me give you an example, we have, a woman speaking in our church, which is a lady's bible study, good thing I have, good Christian thing I have, yes it is, but some people, won't touch that, with a bar's phone, some, because they already, go to other bible studies, they're in the Christian union, or, they're in our house groups, and they go, and they don't really, see the particular need, we started on something, about four weeks ago, because some people, thought it would be a good idea, and it's called, knit and natter, and it's a knitting group, now, it's not my cup of tea, okay, you're not going to find me, and knit and natter, unless I'm serving

the tea, really I, knit one and purl one,

I don't see the point, but anyway, but for some people, it's just wonderful, and so it is, because what happens is, that people, you can invite a non-Christian, along to that, it's not threatening, at all, but it is evangelistic, in a sense, it's pre-evangelism, because they're meeting, with the Lord's people, I don't think they're not meeting, as the Lord's people, to pray, and study the word, and so on, but they're getting to know Christians, and that means, if they come into the church, they'll recognize some people, and not every Christian, is suddenly weird, remember, a lot of people think, that we are really, really weird, and especially, if you're from the free church, in Lewis, watch out for them, they're really heavy, they're really, oh, you know, it's just, people have this, very strange impression, so, you're looking at things, what do you have in common, and you can find, a way, you can find something, that you have in common, with people, you can find things, that you're genuinely, interested in, that you share,

Douglas Macmillan, late Douglas Macmillan, when he was, just being licensed, went up to Benny Hill, and it was difficult, for him, to make contact, with the people, in that area, who, very few of them, went to church, and then one day, he went out, and he had his dog collar on, and, some of the guys, were at the sheep shearing, well Douglas, was a shepherd, and he was actually, a very good sheep shearer, so, he just, whipped off his collar, and said, can I help you, and he went in, and he just, and they were absolutely amazed, and they started talking to him, he, now what you don't do with that, if you don't say, okay I have to learn she or she, it might be useful, here or somewhere else, but you, what do you have in common, what are the things that you'd like, how do you, how does that work, and it's not, the church is creating, lots of things for everybody, it's that just me, as normal Christians, are involved in normal life, and we learn to connect with people and then communicate.

How do we communicate the gospel? What do we have to say? And that is very difficult because too often we're speaking completely different languages. There's a wee training video I used to show which had a Christian in the house and a workman came in to do plumbing in the house and was up in the loft and this video shows the Christian popping up through his head into the loft and going excuse me, are you washed in the blood of the lamb?

[34 : 25] And of course the plumber just jets it out of there as fast as possible. What are they asking? And you'll know that you'll say that's a caricature and I remember in our church kitchen and I remember an American lady saying to a complete stranger have you been washed in the blood of the lamb?

I'm thinking, oh, I have to rescue her. But that's an extreme example. But just think of lots of other ways. Are you saved? Have you repented of your sin?

Or even do you believe in God? What does that mean? When we use the word God I think we know what we mean. I hope we know what we mean. But do the people who are listening to us they know?

Would you like to come to church? We think we're asking one thing they're hearing a completely different thing. So we have to think about what we're communicating.

And the danger is of course to go, well, a lack of a can't say anything. And far too many of us are like that. But it just means that it's hard work. And Scotland has changed enormously in that regard.

[35 : 26] Billy Graham came here in the 1950s. And I think he actually did really good work. But you could get 50,000 people for six weeks in a row in Glasgow.

Even if he was able to I think if he came today he wouldn't even fill McDermott Park in Perth. You'd do really, really well to get a couple of thousand people.

Things have changed phenomenally. Most of the 50,000 people who came were people who'd grown up through Sunday school. Sociologist Callum Brown who is an atheist has written a couple of really interesting books on the decline of religion in Britain and in Scotland.

And I met with him in the 1990s and he said to me, David, by the year 2011 don't we know Sunday school's left in Scotland. Now, we knew statistically, that was the statistical model.

We knew in reality it wasn't going to be the case. But I'll tell you this, for most of Scotland it is the case that the vast majority of children are growing up in a context where they won't hear about God in school and they won't hear about God in Sunday school and they won't hear about God on the television and they won't hear about God in the church.

[36 : 40] So who's telling them? I mean, I'm very interested to know what the statistics were for Sunday schools now. There was a time in this island, I wish it were still true, it may still be true,

where you'd go to school, you'd learn catechism in school, you'd learn Bible in school, you'd learn exams in school.

You may still have some of that, but it's changing more and more. The vast majority of people I meet who are brought up in Scotland are completely ignorant of the gospel. And therefore, the language that we use is meaningless to them. Now, I don't think we're saying we shouldn't use that language. Repentance, sin, redemption, regeneration.

I'm not saying we shouldn't use that language, I'm saying how do we explain it, and how do we communicate it. And that is really important. I'll give you an example. A retired Lewis minister worshipped in our congregation, and I remember one particular morning that there was a Norwegian punk that came in, complete black clothes, the eyeliner, the black eyeliner, the nose studs, the ear studs, and everything.

And our minister went up to him and introduced himself to him, which was great. And he then said to him, second question, how is your soul? And I'm not joking, the Norwegian went, and I said, look, I think, I think they're okay.

[38 : 07] And I thought, oh, this is an absolute trailway. You know, how are these two ever going to communicate? But actually, let me give credit to that minister. Because the following week, he went up to him again, and he said to him, how's your granny?

And the Norwegian was completely bowled over, why? Because, I was going to say, oh yeah, Murdy, because Murdy had asked him before about his family, and Murdy was great.

He could always find, supposing you were from Zimbabwe, and you'd find a connection with Lewis. You know, you're a black African, and he'd still say, oh yes, oh yeah, people were from Grabber or something. But he got this Norwegian, and he, the Norwegian had said to him, his granny wasn't well.

And Murdy said, I'll pray for your granny. See, when he said it, he meant it, and he did. And so when he saw it, he said, how's your granny? And I thought, wow, that's brilliant. Because there's something that overcomes sometimes barriers of language.

Of course, that is just basic human love and compassion. So we need to think about that. I want to suggest we live in a culture in which there's an open door. Now I want to use a concept here called the philosophical marketplace.

[39 : 16] Now the simplest way to explain it is this, that in many parts of the world, people grow up in a traditional culture. These are the traditions that you're expected to keep. So my friend who gave me a lift when I was hitchhiking, the tradition is that when it's a communion, on a Thursday, it's a fast day, and the shops aren't open and the store anyway.

That's fine. Now people grow up in traditional cultures. Over the past couple of hundred years, in Western societies, we talk about people growing up in a modern culture.

And modernism has this idea that the reason and so on will lead you to truth, that there is such a thing as absolute truth, that you will find it through reason and you don't need revelation from God. And there are a lot of people who live in that modernist culture. So for example, Richard Dawkins is a modernist. But then, there's a post-modernist culture. And to make it worse, there's a post-modernist culture, but we'll not go there.

We'll go there tomorrow. A post-modernist culture says, well, there's lots of truths. There's a band called the Manning Street Preachers. Never mind, they've got nothing to do with preaching, but a great name.

[40 : 22] And they have an album, well, this is my truth, tell me yours. So all truth is relative. So you see, a lot of people don't mind if you're a free church or if you go to church on Sunday.

The fact that they happen to believe in pagan gods, that's fine for them too. The fact that they have to be atheists, you choose whatever truth you want. You choose whatever bits of whatever religion there is that you want.

And so that whole post-modern thing where there's no absolute truth is this idea that we pick and choose, it's what we feel, it's where we're going at the time, and, you know, one morning I woke up and I felt like a free Presbyterian and the next morning I woke up and I was a raving charismatic and then a couple of months later I became a Catholic.

Or an atheist. Or, what's happening in our culture just now? Are you a bit confused? Are you a bit lonely? You're a 14-year-old boy and maybe you're a girl. Maybe actually there's a woman inside you so you discover yourself to be transgender.

You choose your own sexuality, you choose your own gender, you choose your own religion. This whole post-modern idea is of the ultimate choice. And, I think this is an advantage for the Gospel. [41 : 36] And I'll tell you why. Because we have, by far, it's as if there's a whole bunch of stalls with ideas and philosophies and so on there. And we have, by far, the best product.

Now, I don't like referring to the Gospel as a product. But, by far, it is the best product. And I'll tell you how this works in our culture. I was a fellow from Aurora and I went to, at one time, to Gossby High School where the kids from Aurora went to speak to the religious studies teacher who absolutely refused to let me have it come into the school.

And I looked on her wall and it had the Salvation Army, it had Muslims and it had everyone. But it didn't have the free church and I said, the free church is the second largest group of people, religious people, that you have in this school.

why wouldn't you have the free church? And she said, well, because you believe that there's only one way to God. And I said, yes, because that's true. And she said, well, I don't believe in absolute truth.

And I said, but I'm sorry, you believe there are many ways to God. She said, yes, I do. I said, do you believe that absolutely or not? Could you be wrong? Could there be one way? And she just got angry with me for being smart.

[42 : 47] Threw me out. So I wasn't allowed anywhere near school. And she was a professing Christian, by the way. Morgan Academy in Dundee. Ten years in Dundee, I get a phone call.

It's the head of the religious studies department. David, can you come in and talk to our sixth years? Sure. Why? I'd like you to talk for four to five minutes on why you're a Christian and then we're going to have four to five minutes in which they'll grill you.

And he said, they will grill you. I said, why do you want me to do that? He said, I'm an atheist, but I think they should get to hear what a real Christian really thinks. And he said, I'm fed up asking bishops and ministers and priests who come in and they keep apologizing for being Christians.

And I just thought, where can I get somebody who actually believes it and won't apologize for it? And he said, I think I'll try the free church. So anyway, whatever. I don't know what you'd expect. I had a great time. I loved it.

I mean, for me, it was just manna. But you'll see the difference in attitude. You've got to run. The God Delusion, when Richard Dawkins wrote The God Delusion, I ended up writing a response called The Dawkins letters.

[43 : 56] I remember being in a bookstore in Edinburgh and it was an unusual event because most of the people were Christians. A lot of the events I go to, people are not Christians. And this was mostly Christians.

And one man stood up and said, isn't it terrible? Isn't this a dreadful thing that The God Delusion book is so popular? And I said, well, please, sir, we need to stop. Please look over.

What's the number one book in this store? And he said, The God Delusion. I said, right, a million people in this country will probably have read it. It's a book about God and the Bible. It's a great opportunity for you to present the truth.

And that's why I wrote The Dawkins letter, not to counter Richard Dawkins, but to be able to present the gospel. And I would suggest this to you, that if you have this attitude that says, do you know what, Lewis was the last stronghold of the pure gospel or whatever, the Western Isles or Scotland, and we've just got to hold in and maintain this, and if people come in with other faiths, other religions, or my neighbours are atheists, or they're lapsed, whatever, and you circle the wagons, what you're doing is not faith, it's profound disbelief.

Because you're thinking that God could save you, but you couldn't really save them. And that's just wrong. We've got to have much more faith that, I mean, anyway, I'm sorry for using so many personal illustrations, please forgive me for this, but it's the only way I can, I did a debate on the Da Vinci Code, and as we went in, there were 200 people there, strange thing, people had purchased tickets, half of them were non-churchgoers, and Jim Spence, who's the BBC Radio Scotland reporter, he said to me, David, I'm really sorry, and he said, I'm an atheist, and the other people on the panel are atheists as well, he says, you're the only Christian, I'm sorry you're on your own, it's not fair, and I liked him, and I said, Jim, honestly, I don't mind, and I'm not on my own, and he looked out in the audience, and he was kind of, wow, has he got hip men in here, sort of tartan Taliban, and I said, no, no, and then he looked and I went, you mean, and I said, yeah, and you know, it was so interesting just seeing his reaction to that, we're not on our own, for me,

[46 : 18] I'm much more concerned about whether what I say and how I live is in accordance with the Christ of the scriptures than whether it meets the approval of either Christians or not Christians, we're not on our own, and we have got this, we've got the gospel, and if you really believe the gospel, you cannot help but communicate, I've noticed this, that if you go to churches where people become very inward looking, they'll say they believe the gospel, they love hearing good health by our sermon, but I don't think they do believe the gospel because they never seek to communicate to anyone else, whereas if you go to a church where someone's just become a Christian, you never have to tell them to witness to you, they just do it naturally like the woman at the well, become, see a man who told me everything I ever did.

Why is it that the older we get as Christians, the more theological knowledge we get, which is right, the more Christian practice and experience we have, we seem to grow colder and less confident about the gospel.

When I went to Dundee, there was um, half of the people in the congregation and the old elder there, who's just died, a faithful and godly man, was so discouraged in lots of ways.

The second Sunday, we're standing at the door and I said, we'd open the church building, which you can see 750 people, we wouldn't meet in the hall because it's got 1950s curtains and pictures of dead ministers on the wall, it's just all the wrong image.

you know, and he said, you know, I said, we'll meet in the church, we met in the church, there's only a handful of us, but we'll sit together and we'll, you know, and so we're standing at the door, we put the heating on, open the door, front door, and the usual handful of people came in and then in walked a man with a regimental tie who, one of the other guys who doesn't even recognize as such and spoke to him and he said, I look to me, and he's a good Westminster Calvinist, but he said, wow, the magic started.

[48 : 22] Now, it's not magic, it's a holy spirit, but you know what he meant and he was encouraged by it. Do you know what I think most of our churches are not growing is because most of the people within it don't have the encouragement that they really believe the gospel can actually, they believe the gospel can work in China and they believe it worked in the first century and in the reformation, they believe it worked in the revival in Lewis in the 1940s and the 1970s, but all those days are gone.

But isn't the gospel the gospel? Isn't God still God? Isn't the word of God still the word of God? Isn't the Holy Spirit still the same Holy Spirit? What hope do you have except that?

But once you've got that and you really believe it, how can you not want to communicate that?

There's an American comedy couple called Pen and Teller, comedy magicians and magicians, and there's a wonderful YouTube clip in which Pen, they're atheists, they're military, they're atheists.

And Pen says, I want to talk about the subjection that some of my fellow atheists have to Christians who try and tell them about Jesus. And he said, all I want to say is this, if you believe the Bible is true, how much must you hate someone not to tell them?

If you really believe that, how much must you hate someone not to tell them? See, I see a great deal of confusion and a great deal of hurt and a great deal of mess all over the place.

[49 : 46] And our politicians are all over the place and our society is all over the place. And Christians should not be towering down going, oh no, the Bible's true, the world's a mess and people are sinners.

We know that. But that's why we've got the gospel, we've got good news. So, we've got this philosophical marketplace, a huge area for me is witness through work, how we do our work, where we do our work, all the connections that we have.

Many of you here, the vast majority of your time will be spent working with people who are not Christians. Now, maybe we'll say more about that another time, I just want to mention it just now.

I also want to suggest to us that what we're trying to do is present the whole Christ to the whole person. Christians have tended to fall and trap this culture of compartmentalizing. So, I'm going to do mercy ministries, I'm going to pray, I'm going to praise.

I'm going to do Bible teaching. I'm sorry, but where did you get that from? The church is compartmentalized or Christians compartmentalized. The whole thing goes together. Of course you're going to feed the hungry.

[50 : 52] And of course you're going to preach the gospel. And of course you're going to pray. Because it's all going to go together. And you're trying to present the whole Christ, not the little bits of Jesus, but Jesus is a real person.

I found that a really interesting thing that I met to write *Magnificent Obsession* as a response to Christopher Hitchens and it ended up being a book much more about Jesus because I was really struggling to find a book about Jesus that I could give to my non-Christian friends.

Most of the books I knew about Jesus were written to Christians and to be honest quite a few of them were quite dull. And that's like a sin to make a book about Jesus dull. And yet I want people to be introduced to Jesus if they can just understand and see who Christ is.

I think it takes the whole church to do that. Now I'm just going to mention these three things. The means of grace because people say evangelism is... Listen you've got to have these three things as the basis for you.

I don't understand people who say they do theology but they don't do evangelism. In that case your theology is rubbish. And I don't understand people who say we do evangelism we're not bothered about theology but your evangelism is rubbish then.

[52 : 10] Because you're trying to present Jesus to people you need to know and understand. And that's why these three things are really important. The Bible the more I go on the more I realise how little we really know the Bible.

And it's our food and we really need to grasp it and understand it and apply it. We have house groups and one of the studies that we wanted to do was a Tim Keller study on Mark's gospel and what it is to be a Christian.

And I remember one or two of the older Christians there saying we don't need that we know what it is to be a Christian. And halfway through the study some of them were going okay maybe we didn't know what it was to be a Christian. What it is to be a Christian is the most amazing thing.

And if Mark the Luther said that we have to as Christians we repent every day but I want to say this that you will never preach the gospel or communicate the gospel to other people unless you're communicating it to yourself.

If you are not overwhelmed by what Jesus has done for you how are you going to show that wonder to anybody else? You preach the gospel to yourself.

[53 : 14] You don't preach at people you're sharing with people the good news that you yourself are seeing your life being transformed. Prayer obviously is absolutely essential and please it's a cliché and you know it but you don't pray for the work prayer is the work.

And when we do something like *Christianity Explorer* one of the things I find really helpful is before we do it maybe have six people who are not Christians that you pray for. You regularly pray for. I can think of a time when we did an outreach in Livingston Pre-Church and one time my wife came back with Principal Boyce Sam Kenny and they mentioned a lady called Mandy whose door they knocked at and for some reason and I think it was the Holy Spirit Mandy was the one person who we always prayed for at every meeting.

No, we told us to. We just did. And Mandy was the one person who became a Christian. Mandy actually phoned up a few months ago asking if my wife would go and speak in Livingston.

But, why? Sometimes God gives you a burden in prayer. And we do need to pray. And the church. People slag off the church. And here's the problem, see? Maybe you do want to do evangelism but you feel the church in Lewis is not really suitable for taking your non-Christian friends to.

[54 : 33] Then you have a real problem. The problem might be with you and your judgmental attitude or it might be with the church. But you are the church so you have to help the church change. And those of us we're in church leadership we need to think about this.

If your people are saying to you I couldn't invite my friends, neighbours, family and so on to this church you need to find out why. And is it something that's wrong with your church?

Is it something that's wrong with them? Is it preconceptions and so on? But that's a major issue.

Because here's the bottom line. If everyone in our church wrote one person to church each year our problem would be where do we put them all?

But so many of the people within our congregations have given up. We need the church.

Questions? I'm just going to put these down as for you to think about and please do for you to come back with them.

To what extent do you think the members of your church have an adequate understanding of the gospel? How equipped are they to communicate it? That is difficult to think about.

[55 : 40] What do you mean by adequate? What is the gospel and how can we communicate it? I personally do believe that every church should seek to train its members and do what we're doing here almost as a kind of regular thing.

How do you think you could equip your church to be evangelists? Because the communicators of the good news are not going to be no matter how brilliant a preacher they are and of course the Lord can probably be born but you know the analogy the old analogy of no fisherman ever called fish by opening up a shop and putting a sign outside and saying old fish welcome here.

We have to go out. So how can our people be evangelists? How can we be evangelists? That's a huge issue. What are the dangers in encouraging people to go all into all the world?

Because I've met Christians who are really into evangelism and they go into all the world and then they find themselves backsliding. I'll give you an extreme example. A friend of mine when I became a Christian he became a Christian as well and he was a we were teenage boys and he was a bright lad and he said I'm going to go down to the pub and just tell them all.

I said I think that's probably not a good idea. Anyway he disappeared. I didn't see him for two weeks and then I caught up with him and I said where you been? And he said I don't want to talk to you.

[57 : 04] I said tell me what happened. Is this to do with the pub? He said yeah. He said I went down and I started telling them about Jesus and they bought me a pint and I told them more about Jesus and they bought me another pint and then they bought me another pint and I ended up standing on the pool table singing hymns and totally drunk and he said I made a complete fool of myself and a complete fool of the gospel.

Yeah he did. There's an arrogance in there. A lack of awareness of the dangers that are involved. So there are dangers in going into all the world.

Of course there are. Persecution and many many other things that can occur. Stumbling. It's why we need to do things I think as a church we need to pray for people. But there's just as many dangers in the Christian ghetto mentality and that is let's all stay together in as holy a huddle as possible even though we're all sinners.

And the only evangelism we ever do is hold special meetings and maybe occasionally give people an invite to. That is not evangelism. Not in any sense is that evangelism.

And the Christian ghetto mentality is one of the most dangerous mentalities that we can have.

Because here's the problem. The problem with human sinfulness is not that there are sinners out there and we are here in the church.

[58 : 25] As Alexander Solzhenitsyn said the problem with evil is that the dividing line between good and evil was right through the middle of every human heart. So actually the biggest problem in the church is not the sin that's out there but the sin that's in here and in you.

And that Christian ghetto you're not going to be pure within that ghetto. I'm going to Alistair's going to say something about these kind of things tomorrow. I'll mention it just some of the ways that we can communicate I'll come back to that.

I want to give you a name here. This is from Uncle John Stackhouse. Since the heart of God's revelation of himself is the figure of Jesus Christ and since the heart of the Christian story of salvation is the career of Jesus Christ Christian apologetics like everything else in the Christian religion from worship to mission from prayer to handsgiving rightly focuses on Jesus Christ.

The heart of the Christian religion is personal relationship with Jesus Christ and it is this to which apologists hope to point their neighbours. Whenever we can therefore we aim to focus on Jesus Christ not on Christian metaphysics or Christian morals or Christian church membership although each of these can help the case as Christ is truly known through them.

And another aspect of engaging with the gospel do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind then you'll be able to test and approve what God's will is his good pleasing and perfect will.

[59 : 58] I think the biggest need for evangelism in the church in Lewis today it's the same as in my church and it's the same as in the church in Scotland is actually not revival and renewal in the wider community it's first of all revival and renewal within the church.

I'm a football fan and I support the MD but therefore because I support the MD I have another team I'm like one of these guys who drives around a B4 PSU and has a sticker on the back and my other car is a Porsche well my other team is Barcelona and I went to see Barcelona play that the United ones wasn't the fact that they beat them 4-0 encouraged me so much because I don't like them at the United but kind of petty rivalry that occurs all over Scotland but it was the way that they played I just couldn't believe it I was just it was just beautiful it was poetry in motion and those of you who don't understand football get a laugh come and see it it was just wonderful and I'd go on the bus to go home after seeing it listen I don't care if you were a little old granny just coming away from your

narrative I don't care if you were a Muslim or whatever anyone on that bus I was so excited about what I'd seen that whoever I sat beside

I was going to tell them guess where I should be that's just cool wouldn't it be wonderful if people came out of churches and they were so excited they had to restrain themselves from telling people instead of the other way that we do evangelism we compel ourselves on better say something as though we're Jehovah's Witnesses you tick our card for the 15 hours that we've done outreach that's wrong it's got to be that you know the beauty of Christ so overwhelms you that you want to tell people I mean the other example I use of that is and I'm sure you have many high quality restaurants in this fine town but we don't have all that many in Dundee but across the wall we're in the five there's a wee place called Pete Inn and a wee restaurant called The Pete Inn you can't miss it when you go to Pete Inn because there's like six houses and you go to that restaurant and it's expensive but it's worth saving up for and you sit there and it's the whole experience it's all the posh words the foodurbs and all that kind of stuff and it's the little bits of food that you think that wouldn't be a mess but it tastes gorgeous and the whole experience everything that happens and you go away and if you're on Facebook you're immediately going on Facebook to a rubber grab because you know this is not a can of big beans you're putting out for you make sure you can't this is the most extraordinary meal you've ever had in your life you want to tell people there is a Danish film put into English as well about the feast it's just an incredible film which is how this woman in this rather gloomy town fishing town in Denmark the French lady turns out to be a chef and she cooks this phenomenal meal for the local people and that's what the film's about it sounds dead boring and arty it is at one level but it's an extraordinary analogy and parable of the gospel because the gospel is this that we have received the most wonderful feast and when you have that you want to tell people so I think the main problem with our evangelism is this is that we ourselves don't feel and don't grasp enough of what Christ has done to us because you want people to know

I'm in the church of Royal Crown McShane I've done a lot of work on that and I think my favourite story ever about McShane is a servant girl in Andrew Boner's mans in Calais that after McShane died she said to Boner see that man he was eye dying to see people come to Jesus that was his passion and that was his concern you know I have a sneaking suspicion that some of us here have a belief in hell as a correct doctrine but we don't really see people as lost I think if we did it would change I don't think I think we don't see the beauty of Christ instead of being transformed by the renewing of our minds we're transformed by the pattern of this world I'm just going to mention some evangelism starters some of them may be a bit strange beauty for example I think beauty is a great apologetic for the gospel the beauty of the scenery people used to say that nobody was ever an atheist in a foxhole well that's

I don't think that's true but I'll tell you this it's very hard to be an atheist when you're holding a newborn baby in your arms or listening to Bach that's quite hard to be an atheist when you listen to Bach we had a group of Russian monks singers from Valam Monastu when they sang first half of the concert they did was Russian Orthodox church music and you weren't allowed to clap and the church was in more or less darkness so that second half they did folk music and the lights were up and you were allowed to clap but it was the first half what I remember was they had a basso profundo whose bass was so deep that the pews actually physically shook it was just such but the music was so beautiful and I remember a woman coming up to me and she stated I am not a Christian at all I am not religious but oh my goodness you have to believe in God after that and I said to her we do acapella singing every Sunday here maybe not to that quality or standard but beauty is a great apologetic for the gospel and actually think about that in terms of the church as well you ever go to a church with a noise board it's so shabby you wouldn't put anything like that in your house but you leave that in the church that's crazy beauty is a very important thing and we can think about that too community is really important because more and more as communities are disintegrated when they see community within the church people are amazed a guy came we get a lot of resurgence in here and a guy came in and afterwards he said to me and I said amazing it was just great and I said well thank you well it was great and of course

[66 : 09] I'm a typical preacher I'm wanting him to say oh your sermon was just oh wonderful he didn't mention the sermon not at all what he said was this he said the letter oh the letter just that was fantastic I had no clue what he was talking about I said what are you talking about he said the letter the letter you read out and then I realised and he said it's even better that you don't know what I'm talking about and what it was was when a woman in our congregation gives birth people in the congregation provide meals for about a week ten days two weeks and there would be a woman

who had she had two children ready she had twins and people in the congregation provided food basically every a full meal was taken to their home every day by different people within the church that was great by the way we had virtually no one getting birthed now it's just about pain because everyone is getting birthed it's like an incentive for food get pregnant you'll get a meal

I think we'll just get a McDonald's out anyway they were so grateful they wrote us a letter and I just read it I thought it was similar to this thing I'll just read it out so I just read this paragraph letter and he said to me I don't know anywhere where that would happen it's wonderful that you're like that see they'll know we're Christians by our love not by hatred gossip bitterness we've got to watch these things community is really really important family is really important and I'm using that in the sense not just the family of the church I'm using it in the sense actually of no matter what in our society people still want to belong there's an advert get it on YouTube a German supermarket I can't remember it's Ehlers something get John Lewis and all that Christmas advert there's this German advert about a man who an old man who has Christmas on his own and it shows him having Christmas on his own having Christmas on his own having Christmas on his own I'm going to spoil it for you but you know and you watch this and then it shows his children because they send letters phone calls Papa we'd love to be with you at Christmas but we can't be and he has a lot to come but next year and so he has all these Christmases on his own and it shows his son who's a brain surgeon and his daughter who's a business woman and his other son he's some technical genius whatever different parts of the world and it shows them on their phones getting a message or a letter saying basically your dad's died and they're very upset and they're crying and so on and they go back shows their funeral then they go back to the house and they walk into the house and there's the table set with candles and play settings for all of them including the grandchildren turkey and everything and then the old man steps out and he goes what? Papa? You're lying and he goes yeah it's the only way I could get you all here by announcing my funeral ain't that the truth? When do you be in your family?

Wedding and funerals? Family is really important and we need to show that to people and help people see what that is equality and social justice I'm just going to mention that again because equality and human rights and things like that are the kind of gods of our society and what people have done is they've taken the Christian concepts and they've become means of oppressing whereas the Christian notion of equality is hugely important you know why?

[69 : 50] Because it means when I walk down whatever the mainstream store and I step over someone who's lying in their own urine drunk I can't go that's just the scum of the earth because my Christian theology tells me that they're made in the image of God the same as I am and I have to treat them like that and that you know the Christian idea of equality and social justice is phenomenally important and we need to show what that is so those are kind of some of the ideas I'm thinking about I'll say something just before the end but you see what I'm trying to say I'm trying to say that we've got this fantastic gospel that we want to communicate I can't give you a formula now here's a problem if you watch God TV and please don't but if you do I hope any session will have you up to the next immediately but if you watch God TV there's one or two good programs on it most of it's rubbish but you see the kind of thing that often comes in for American and there are many fine

American Christians and many fine American churches but one of the bad things that comes out of the American church is this constant there's a problem here's a program for it here's a program for evangelism and so on so we don't try and do programs for evangelism because that to me is like a program on how to love your wife if you need a t-shirt saying I love my wife and if you need a book telling me how to love your wife I think there's something wrong and I think that we need to be very careful maybe progress in helping some things but overall I think we come to rely on programs rather than Christ and for me evangelism is very very simple and it is prayer the Bible and the church and I just think that we get that wrong so much and our churches are not nearly radical enough we're not willing to face up to our own sin we'll talk about sin in general but sin in particular we won't accept and we need to do that and then we need to pray that we have the mind of Christ in terms of reaching out for people and so that for me is what all this is about now we're going to talk about some of the how to's and different things and different ideas that we can learn and I think that's really really important but for me the heart of it is just the heart what we feel what we think about Christ what we know about Christ and how we seek to communicate and I think there's something

I'll say at the end about where I believe you have a great advantage as well as some disadvantages but can I leave it there and if anyone wants to ask a question feel free and if you don't or a comment feel free simple thing to do is put your hand up or we can do like an auction if you scratch your ear or something no better I'll do that alright go for it David that was excellent thank you it was very challenging some would consider doors to go evangelism as default evangelism as a beach you said that you haven't done it in St.

Peter for a while why because how do you feel when the Jehovah's Witnesses turn up your door I'm sorry but most people are home and they're you know they've got enough hassle and trouble it's maybe the only time they get together and then two religious people turn up at their door and the way I explain it forgive me I hope this is not crude but I explain it to the American groups that come because they come prepared to do evangelism they slow them to us and door to door and I tell them they're not going to do it and I tell them why because I say imagine if someone came to your door if I came to your door knocking to your door it's a complete stranger and said hi my name's David I'd like to talk about your sex you go what so of course most people in our culture are complete stranger knocking on the door saying hi I'd like to talk to you about God it's as ludicrous as that so the even the Jehovah's Witnesses now by the way are stopping doing it they're now handing out things train stations which is a real pain but having said that

I'm a little bit more inclined to go back to it in our area thinking about it I'm thinking about doing a questionnaire and stuff we certainly leave in our areas a kind of advertising but or I'm asking a survey but I think just cold calling on people I'm not sure it's the wisest thing to do and I would also say in a community like Lewis if you don't know your neighbours there's something kind of wrong and rather than a systematic door to door why not have people going for a meal or if there's special service at the church why not invite people I think sometimes we think people would never be interested in coming you say my neighbours wouldn't be interested how do you know have you ever asked in Baroda we had a lady who had just been converted a fisherman's wife we had a guest service 50 people in the congregation each given 6 invitations not a guest feature but a guest everyone to bring a guest and each person got 6 invitations and Maggie

[75 : 05] I went into church at 6 o'clock and served her half six and there was Maggie sitting up in her usual seat in the balcony I said Maggie what are you doing here you're half an hour early she says I came to make sure I got a seat and I realised what she was thinking she was a new convert she was thinking 50 times 6 300 people church seats 400 someone might take a seat and I'd go oh Maggie I love you faith I'll tell you this all six people she invited came and nobody else because most of the normal Christians just thought what's the point they'd already given up so I think door to door I'm not saying don't do it but I'm saying don't do it as a default think about it think about how people react and whether it would work and we may well go back to doing it in our area I don't think we'll do it cold calling at all and when I think about how people live their lifestyles also for us we've got lots of problems with door buzzers and security things and what do you say at the beginning we give them Christmas cards at this time of year in fact tomorrow there'll be 1500 distributed in the area with invitations to things so but I wouldn't do cold calling door to door personally in our area so it's a good question how do you say about

Christianity and what do you do do should we do do the preaching all well the preaching is hugely important I think Tim Keller has this really interesting statement where he says I preach as though the husband wife workmates neighbour friends of the person the pew non-christian were with them and he said because in six weeks they will be now that's him so I don't think that's true for all of us but I do think that people in the congregation need to be given confidence first of all I think they need confidence that the gospel still works and it's still true and actually a new Christian that really helps and pray for the Holy Spirit for that but also I think that the church providing opportunities simple things that you can look at in your church for example when someone comes in I remember the first time I came to the store

I didn't mind it I was already a Christian I was in the seminary and I could not believe how speedily people exit the church it was like fire drill perfect and I was just like wow but nobody spoke to me and that's not good maybe that's cultural and different things but you need to think about stuff like that and I for me I'm still going back to the Bible prayer the Bible including preaching prayer that people would get hurt that I would get hurt really and I think I as a minister have to set an example now there are people who have different gifts and I love speaking to non-Christians probably more than anything else and I recognise that I'm not boasting I say I feel it's a particular gift I just find it

almost impossible not to do it and I'm not saying that everyone has to be and I really wouldn't want everyone to be like me but I do think that we need to give our people more confidence in the gospel and in Christ and confident if they bring people to church they're not going to have the cringe factor you know yes absolutely

I think training and also some of the great questions people think how can I answer that question how can I answer that question well I don't think you can answer questions in a formulaic fashion but if you at least know there are answers you know there's a guy who just wrote me just and I said how do I answer most of these I said I don't know but I know something else so I'm going to put you in touch with them and I just think simple things like for example if you've got someone who's saying I can't believe the Bible because science proves it all to be wrong well I'm not a scientist but I'm very happy to give people John Lennox's God's Undertaker I would always have in a church I would have some basic books that homosexuality Sam Albrecht his God anti-gay just a little booklet which is great biblical teaching it's clear and contemporary but biblical and so if you start giving people confidence in that way then I mean I don't have a simple answer I guess what I'm trying to say but I do think a lot of it has to do with confidence and confidence in the Lord and confidence in the word and just sometimes people wow this works of course it works

I just think we give up too quickly and people need to learn perseverance praying for their neighbour I bet I buried him I did bury him as well I baptised a man who was 99 years old I don't know how long people have been praying for but he wasn't converted until he was 99 we don't give up when they're dead they're gone that's not our business but when they're a lamb that is our business and I think I would say that people in this island need a burden for the animal and a burden for the people and those of us in the church we need that more than anything maybe one more if anyone wants to ask right in the back there and then we'll do two then okay whatever yeah pre-evangelism pre-evangelism is what happens before you get to a stage where you tell something good news so that it can be anything it's a contact for example and a connection with people what's the scriptural word for it's Jesus with a woman at the well not saying hey listen you need to be converted it's saying can I have some work please he can only have work for himself what was he doing he was initiating something it's Paul as a tent maker it's Paul going into the [81 : 21] Areopagus and okay he's talking to the philosophers about their idols and so on when you look through that sermon but kind of in the very form the whole gospel's not there you know there's a whole bunch of stuff that's I think keys to the gospel but it's not there it won't do it's simply vengeance and getting them going so for me I'm not over-keeling to turn pre-evangelism by the way I like Steve Timmons' gospel intentionality and pre-evangelism is also for being prayer we're praying for people before we talk it's being a good neighbor it's caring for people not seeking to manipulate but the problem with pre-evangelism is often people say you know like remember we used to do youth clubs and you'd play table tennis and then the deal was the kids get to come to the table tennis as long as they listen to a five minute talk at the end and I always thought that was wrong because it's like you're saying to them this is the price you pay for coming to this youth club and we actually we actually reversed it at one point and we said to them right we're going to have a bible study you long get out and so they wanted to stay because they were what are you doing we're up in a bible study but you wouldn't be interested how do you know oh no you wouldn't be interested go away and they came so I

I probably don't like the term but what I mean by it is a lot of people you don't go straight in and say Jesus died for your sins you need to repent sometimes there's a long road to go before you get there now we have to be careful because we can be so cautious that we hold back but that's where the prayer comes in as well and sometimes you go straight straight I remember a Chinese girl came to our church and within a week she was converted she was just I've never read the bible I want to go to Christianity Explored and then when Christianity Explored she was crying because she said Jesus she's so beautiful great that's what I long to see for other people it's a long long slow road and we have to walk it with people at times so it's a great question and somebody else here yeah you mentioned it there I was just going to say that in my short times I can just do really one of the things in most of a lot of people here have been impacted on the Christian is to the course and it seems to be that the law has placed particularly he has a standing story before going to church and it would be that same of the experience and then he is at that course that the law has placed yes we've seen people converted through it the problem with Christianity Explored of course is even though you reduce it to seven weeks you're asking people a seven week commitment so they've

got to be pretty interested before they get to that stage

I think it's really useful one thing you can't explore though is sometimes it's almost better one to one I do think this course is good I think church if you can't run it it's better than Alpha all it is it's a basic New Testament principle hospitality in the word of God that's all it is and I actually think if our church has took more seriously the injunctions that you should be an elder unless you're a citizen or Christians took more seriously the fact that we are to have open homes not open people that are there all the time but it's a gift to us to tell us that we're going to next time so I think we'll probably start Christianity Explored again in January so we will we do use I just wouldn't I would want to be in a position where I'm saying this is our evangelism I think our evangelism should be everything we do and it's like one of the things a lot of the new people who come to St. Peter a few years ago we looked at this and why did they come and it was interesting why they came different reasons mostly because we're like that some because of the internet some some rather strange experiences but why did they stay most they wanted to hear the word so it was the preaching was very important for them and so people who have mad me say oh well it's your ministry and your preaching so actually that's not true the preaching of the word is hugely important but everything that goes along with it is just important and in my case myself and Annabelle are a team we work together and I think just as important for the growth of the church in Dundee has been the fact that every Sunday we have people back to the house and sit around the table we have fellowship together sometimes we talk about the sermon sometimes we don't go through light coal fire which you may think is not unique but for us it's just a high deal and we sit there and then people come back to the evening service I think that hospitality has been as key in building the church as the preacher I'm not saying them against one another so I think this is what I mean about the whole church being involved in evangelism you are kind to people and are cynical to people and find them to church or a stranger comes into your church you know I've not seen this happen so many times someone comes into your church and you know and you say I want to come back for a couple of years and I want to do what about ex-complete stranger come for a meal the blessing that comes from that some people have entertained angels and I know and it's a great thing about Christianity and I think all the Christianity explore is is the gospel of Mark with food that's all it is and I just wish that that kind of thing would be going on in our homes all the time with a course sometimes but sometimes without a course sometimes it's just a simple bag and go to someone else and they say grace and the conversation that happens there it's very important so I'm not physically crying at all I'm just saying don't rely on me as this is our evangelism I worry everything we do to evangelism that's a great way to do it can I just say before we go for coffee and deems we wanted to announce if you could think about questions and so on that would be really appreciated I'm an optimist right I keep being called a Jeremiah I like looking at what's wrong I'm an optimist my view is that I think the church in Lewis will die unless there is renewal and unless we wake up and strengthen what remains and is a better to die and I think it's a phenomenal mistake and a huge error for people to say we've got to maintain what we've got or we're going to lose it you're going to lose it anyway that's like saying we've got to look after ourselves because we're going to die sorry we're all going to die

[88 : 28] I'm going to die my wife is useless to fly with I'm never going to fly with her again she's going to play and go I can't cope with this I can't cope with this and she sees I never say I'm in she comes up with a wonderful comforting statement it'll be quick or you know we're going to Lewis so we're going to heaven it's not very comforting but the thing is we are all going to die all our churches are going to die the church of Jesus Christ will not die the bride of Christ will be in heaven and it is not your responsibility to preserve the church in Lewis it's your responsibility to communicate the gospel and the reason why I feel passionately about this I feel in Lewis you have phenomenal resources and phenomenal opportunities and you must use them Scotland needs you to use them not to preserve and protect Lewis or traditions of the church whatever but to be a light in a dark land and I'm an optimist I believe that God can turn and change things around we've seen a little bit of that

I mean a little bit in my area of Scotland just think what could happen if Lewis was renewed and revived in other words changing the cane all around I see doesn't have to be the way for the Christian church so that's just a thought that thank you well I think I think it's really been an excellent life we have a lot to think about and it will be our own and if you didn't get to ask a question please don't hesitate to put it to them personally as I've said there's copy available through in the room

there this is a conference so please confer as much as possible the bookstall is there please make use of it we're hoping tomorrow to start at 9.15 a.m.
with registration from 9 o'clock to 9.15 David will be giving a brief presentation on the work of solace and after that I will begin these two sessions on the evangelistic church and just so that you'll be aware the hall will be laid out differently tomorrow we'll have tables and we'll be seated around the tables both to facilitate the discussion and also to make it easier to eat the food when it comes at lunchtime so just be prepared for that and we will be setting up the hall that way if for some reason you can't get to the conference tomorrow then David will be speaking at a special meeting in Shavos tomorrow evening at half past seven with your emphasis and see how much I will give you the details these I think as we say in our tradition are all the traditions and I hope that you leaned a lot to think about and to discuss over the course of this evening so safe journey back home and hope to see as many of you as possible tomorrow let's just finish with the word oh my God we pray that you will bless to us all that we've heard and all that we've discussed be with us in our meetings and partings with us traveling mercies help us to do all things to your glory for Jesus sake amen
well good