

# Evangelism, Evangelization, Outreach, Proclamation, and Witnessing: A Perspective for Vancouver

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[ 0 : 00 ] You start talking with them, you start speaking with them, and in 5 to 10 minutes, take the conversation, and stare up to Jesus Christ, and tell them about the gospel of our Lord.

I learned how to speak with people about the love of Lord Jesus Christ with her. The first two years, whenever I was sharing the gospel with someone, I would follow her routine to the latter.

Until eventually, I got some confidence and started doing something of my own. But I think it's incredibly important, and sometimes overlooked, to learn how to, and to teach our people how to speak the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the church I worked, I was sometimes surprised how hard it is for people, young and old, to articulate the gospel. If you come to somebody and ask, what is the gospel of Jesus Christ? Or if you come to an even simpler question, who is Jesus Christ? I came to a broad spectrum of answers. And quite often, quite love hearts full of love, but quite inaccurate, quite far off, quite hard to answer, as Peter teaches us, be ready to answer the reason of our faith.

[ 1 : 26 ] And the reason of our faith is the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. And I think it's incredibly important for us to teach one another, and to be ready, and to be prepared, and to be properly equipped to articulate the gospel.

It's not easy. That's why things, for example, like the four spiritual laws was famous for so long. It's a perfect script. It's an incomplete script. It's not at all the most efficient ever, but for many years worked because anybody with little training could take a pamphlet with the four spiritual laws and be able to share a core aspect of the gospel with a friend or whoever.

However, the core of the evangelism, as I see it, is exemplified in Acts chapter 3, the Peter discourse at the Pentecost.

What he does, if you look to his sermon, he points to what's happening, saying, this is not drunk people, this is the fulfillment of the promise of the Lord.

And what he does is he takes the Jesus they know. Like, you know Jesus Christ, a man full of power, sent by God, and full of power and miracles, and all these things happen.

[ 2 : 49 ] And he stirs the look of the people to the Jesus they think they know, to the risen Lord and Christ. And if you look at the end of his sermons exactly like this, this Jesus Christ that you killed, God has made him Lord and Christ.

And the sermon basically ends there. Whenever we evangelize, evangelists, we should be trying to present the gospel and take people from the Jesus you think you know to the risen Lord and Christ. I give an opening here. I have a friend of mine, a lovely man, very smart, very dedicated, a master, a teacher. He struggles with evangelism quite a lot.

Because he says that if you don't have a gift of evangelism, it's quite hard. He would testify that I would sit with a guy, tell him about Jesus, explain the scripture from Genesis to Revelation of Jesus Christ, talk with him over and over, and the person would not react in any way.

Then come my friend, who is a gift for evangelism, and say, Jesus loves you. And the guy starts crying and says, Jesus loves me. I need to confess my sins and turn my life and give myself to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 4 : 05 ] And this point of gifting and how these things work out in the church is what takes me to the second concept this morning, evangelization.

I struggled myself for quite a while with the concept of evangelization. Distinguish it from evangelism was quite hard for me.

I, over the years, talked with many, many different people. And until this week, I couldn't actually separate them. But I came with an interesting definition that Catholics prefer this term over evangelism.

And they think this term in a broader sense. It's not just the sharing of the gospel of Jesus Christ with somebody. It's actually the intentional, strategic approach towards sharing the love of Christ and testimony of Christ with other people.

So, if evangelism is a simple act of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, I understand evangelization as the communal effort towards being capable to share the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 24 ] If, in the basic level, this can be done, evangelism can be done one-on-one. Evangelization is something that only the body of Christ together can do.

Only when the body of Christ, with all its parts articulated together, all the gifts serving together, all the different ministries in the local church working together, we are capable of being intentional in reaching others as a community, as the ecclesia of our Lord, sharing with others the love of Christ. I try to work this in my church. God gave me the opportunity in Brazil when I was quite young to start working with evangelism.

The church where I grew up, it was a strong evangelistic church, opened many, many works, but over the years, people got tired of going out and start trying to call people in.

And the Lord put in my heart a strong love to reaching out to other people and sharing the love of Christ. God provided me then two amazing peers to work with me.

[ 6 : 40 ] One was a woman gifted in spiritual discernment, a woman of prayer, a woman of strong dedication, and another a man with a gift of serving.

And we served there for almost five years, trying to help the church to reignite the love for reaching people and sharing the gospel of Christ, teaching people how to evangelize, putting the church intentionally towards evangelization.

But in nowhere I lived it so well structured and so intentional as when I was in intervarsity. Basically, because in Brazil, that's what intervarsity is about.

We used to say that we are like an arm of the church inside university. So the only purpose we are here is to reach out to other people, other students with the love of Christ.

So anything we would do, if we would gather together to eat, if we would gather together to study the scriptures, if we would gather together to pray, if we would gather together to make administrative decisions, whatever we're doing, we're intentionally doing it so that, or in order that, or for the purpose of sharing the love of Christ with our fellow students.

[ 7 : 56 ] This can take many, many, many shapes. This can take many, many formats. But this intentionality, this heart for it. Of course, not everybody is going to be evangelizing or working with evangelization every time, every 24 hours.

But this intention, this care for, this structure of the local church itself, this articulation of the body of Christ itself towards reaching others with the love of Christ is what I understand and what I experienced as evangelization.

I tell that I work with this ministry with a weird name called Evangelist Ministry. I use this term because I don't know which better term to define it.

But over the years, I noticed that, obviously, the same time, the same way the worship team does not exist, so they worship and we watch them worshipping. Evangelist ministry does not exist, so we do the evangelism while the church or the rest of the community do whatever else must be done. But just as a worship team prepare themselves to help we all together as a community worship God together. Evangelist ministry, whatever it might be, exists to serve the church in being prepared and to be ready and to be equipped and to have opportunity to, as a body, as a community, as a single body, reach others with the love of Christ.

[ 9 : 37 ] And as I mentioned, this can take many forms, and this is what I understand as outreach. Evangelism is when we share the gospel of Jesus Christ with somebody.

Evangelization is the intentionality of we looking forward structurally, with a structure, sorry, to do so. Outreach is when we reach to others with the love of Christ.

In my personal experience, it is striking in three major experiences. Obviously, outreach can be done creating a comfortable and welcoming environment for people to come to us.

We did it during college year for a time. We created something, a Christianity Week. We prepared lectures, presentations, artistic presentations, and we would have a whole week inviting our fellow students to talk about faith, to discuss about the cultural inheritance of Christianity in our culture, to listen to good Christian culture, and to reflect on the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ in all these things.

This model of invitational outreach, it's very lovely, it's very effective, actually. It's important for us to create a welcoming environment for people from outside to come and listen.

[ 11 : 12 ] However, I agree with an Argentinian evangelist that I read many years ago. I couldn't find his book in English, so I don't know if it was published in English, but he mentions that it's quite different when there's somebody walking in the desert.

And you come to them and say, Look, five miles from here, there is an oasis. Walk with me there, and there you have water, and then you have a party, and you can eat and drink and stay in the shade.

The person may look at you and may believe you or may not believe you, and may go or may not go, depending on how thirsty and how desperate the person is. But it's quite different if there's somebody walking in the desert, and you come in with a truck with the aircon on and cold beverages in the back, and say, Hey, hop in, I have cold beverages, and I'm going to a oasis down the street five miles from here, I drive you there.

The appeal on the second one, it's way more convincing. He used to say to this man that, I believe at least, I would be more tempted in the second one.

His basic concept is that, yes, people do need Jesus Christ. That's what they actually do need in their lives.

[ 12 : 36 ] The problem is that they don't know they need Jesus Christ in their lives. They think they need food on their table, or a shelter over their hoof, or a roof over their head, sorry.

Or maybe they think they need to solve their teenage kid problem, or they have to get together with their wedding, or maybe there is the work that's killing them, and they need to find a different job.

That's what they think they need, to have a happy, fulfilled life, and thriving human experience. So unless we are capable to reach out to them, not to evangelize them, but to reach out to them in love, and serve them, so that in being served, they know that, oh, I don't actually, what I need to be fulfilled is not a roof, is not a plate, is not a better wedding, I need something else.

We will hardly be able to make people listen to the gospel of Christ. The strongest experience I had with that was also in college.

We had this, the LGBTQ+, I'm never sure if I get in the letters straight, but I think that's the proper term now.

[ 13 : 58 ] Community in college was being strongly politically active in my first years in college. And they prepared a week of discussion about the LGBTQ+, situation in society, and etc.

A friend of mine, better gifted than me, to take action quickly, notes it on Friday. We have an intervested meeting on Saturday. On Monday, he had shirts ready for us to go there.

It was one of the hardest and most shaping experience I ever had. We spent one week getting every morning to pray and going every afternoon to talk with them.

Not trying to evangelize them in the sense of presenting to them the gospel of Jesus Christ. But because they're inviting them to discuss the situation, we reached out to them in love.

We said to them, we learned, we heard what they had to say. We asked questions. We presented what we think about it. God acted in marvelous ways.

[ 15 : 15 ] They invited us, the leadership invited us to go with them to eat. We talked with them for many hours. We were hated by some, accused, and some people not even look in your eyes.

But some people would sit with us, talk with us, and only, it was mostly three of us. Other people from intervested came, but the core were three of us.

Three engineers, straight, male, who never dated in their lives, were going, reaching out, in the love of Christ, to LGBTQ community, largely situated in the philosophy building.

But, the leader of them, one of the leaders was a transgender woman, and one of my friends had the opportunity to actually evangelize, sit with her, present her the gospel.

Among them was the son of a pastor from a large church in Brazil, and he was sharing with us the struggle of being, grow up in the church, and how he was feeling accepted or not accepted.

[16:21] There was an important LGBTQ representative from the United States, worldwide famous speaker. Luckily, I don't remember his name, but it impacted me by the end.

He called the three of us. He grew up in the Bible Belt, so he also struggled with faith and sexuality. And he said, many years ago, I wrote a book about religion.

I think that's the theme he used. And I have to say that you were the first ones I ever seen doing what I believe was the right thing to do towards the LGBTQ community. And I'm going to testify about what you guys did wherever I go and talk about this experience here in Brazil.

The contact didn't last long. We tried to keep in touch with these people. Eventually, we would. Eventually, we would not. But we reached out to them, not creating the environment for them to come to us.

But we put ourselves in a perilous, dangerous situation, humbling ourselves and going to them in their need. They were in need to talk. They were in need to discuss.

[17:32] We sat there. We discussed. It was by Friday. The three of us were half dead. We were desperate. There were some times we'd get in the morning to pray and we were so exhausted that we could only cry and pray and stand up and go for another day.

But the Lord was gracious with us. Finally, the last one. A year later, a girl came to our university. We heard from her from a friend from Intervesti. She was the leader of the Secularist Alliance, something like that. She looked at this girl, searched her social media and freaked out.

Wow, Intervesti has an opposite now. It's a group of secular students to get together to discuss secularism and these kinds of things.

And there we had the perfect opportunity. We had the perfect enemy. We could spend the next years or college years fighting against this group and discussing with them, having hot debates with them and fighting back and forth.

[18:55] However, God graciously give people with different gifts and this girl came in another meeting and said, I was looking at this girl's social media and I think instead of going against her, we should pray for her.

And that's what she did and put all of us doing it and all of us were praying for her. She was coming to Intervesti groups to discuss.

We are going to her group to discuss. But more than anything, we are praying for her. God gave us an amazing opportunity. Me, Barbara and a great friend, Barbara with her amazing pastoral skills, one day invited this girl to come to a Bible study with us.

Not a college Bible study but a church Bible study. She said, okay, why not? It was in the house of this friend. Very practical man.

We were studying Acts. She came two times and he knows that she was completely lost because we have just finished Luke and we're studying Acts and she was sitting there hearing all these things about the Holy Spirit and sharing the gospel with others and she never heard the gospel.

[20:09] and he said, would you like us to go back and study the gospel with you again? He said, sure. And we spent the next three months maybe studying the gospel of John with her.

It was an amazing experience. Barbara select John put me and my friend freaking out because we have a perfect Luke study ready to go there with all the questions answered and they select John which is obviously the perfect gospel to start with secularist students, right?

It starts with the word was with God and was God and came and became flesh. That's the perfect right statement with secular people to start with.

They get that totally. But what was was lovely over the course of time she came and said, can I prepare one of the studies?

Because I was praying and we looked and she said, what do you mean you were praying? Oh yeah, I started praying a few weeks ago. I said, yeah, prepare the next study. We have the booklet with the things and after a few weeks then she said, no, because the Holy Spirit was talking with me and look, we never talked with this girl about the Holy Spirit.

[21:36] Where did she came from with this Holy Spirit talk? And and that's what take me to the next word which is proclamation.

Proclamation would be the announcement literally proclamation of the word of God. Even when we are not evangelizing, whenever we are being intentionally evangelistic, as much as possible when we reach out to other people, we must always faithfully proclaim the word of God.

Because it's the word made flesh that revealed God to us. It's the word that testifies about Jesus Christ in whom we have life.

This girl was not transformed because we talked with her about the Holy Spirit. It was because through constantly hearing the proclamation of the word of God faithfully, God revealed himself to her.

And she came to know about the Holy Spirit. And she started praying. And eventually my very practical friend did what none of us would and said, would you like to make a prayer of confession of Jesus Christ in the very evangelical way, at least so we can take this formality off the way?

[ 23 : 00 ] She said, sure. And we prayed with her, and after that she started confessing herself as Christian, we must always constantly proclaim the word of God faithfully.

Of course, there are people that are more gifted than others to do so. Luckily, sometimes have priests, teachers, people who train and equip themselves to do so.

It can be a sermon, it can be a Bible study, it can be reading the scriptures out loud, but we must never cease to proclaim the word of God. This is the madness of preaching truth with God chose to save those who are selected to be saved.

The last word, and then I'll finish my first half, and the second half is a little bit shorter. During the years, there was only two people that I knew that me serving the Lord towards evangelization had result.

One was this girl, we walked with her over many years, she's still our friend to this day. the other one was in the church when I was younger, serving with my two other friends.

[ 24 : 38 ] We were doing evangelism in the streets, we would do Bible studies in houses, we'd go to the slums, we'd go helping people when the flood destroyed their houses, we'd do all sorts of things.

But one day we were in a public square, literally, and we were doing an open service. I learned to dance so I could dance the gospel to people.

I tried theater but I could remember the lines very well so only mute theater could work for me. And this day the worship team was serving, the priest, the pastor there preached the gospel.

And I was there and I turned to one man, this one man was there and I said to them the classic phrase, Jesus loves you. And I was praying for the people around me, just look to this man, put my hand on his shoulder, look in his eye and said, Jesus loves you and went doing my stuff.

Three years later I was in a congress of churches, I was there praying and was in the worship section, a man come to me, called me and said, do you remember me?

[ 25 : 53 ] I look at him, I have no idea who you are and said, a few years ago your church was doing evangelism on the street. And I was there because I was transporting drugs and the police was around so I hid in the crowd, not big crowd but at least it was somebody there.

And I was there waiting for the cops to go away so I could go my way. And you came to me and said to me that Jesus loved me. And that started me thinking.

And it was like all these people are here singing and talking to me and telling me about the love of Jesus Christ and I'm here transporting drugs. What am I doing? He left, he threw the drugs away and the next day he walked in the first church found.

God provided that this church had a service for drug addicts. He went to their camp and he was telling me that and said, look there and there was a group of people.

I said, that woman is my pastor now, those are people in this group of recoveries from chemical addiction and now I serve there, ministering the word of God to others.

[ 27 : 10 ] And this is what takes me to my last word that is witnessing. Because there was this man telling me this story.

There was this girl telling us that one of the things that amazed her most is that she was at one point in a house of male, what's the proper name?

Roommates. Yeah, only male roommates, all Christians, where the Bible studies, a community house of male people, where the Bible studies were taking place when she started.

And he was there once, it was past midnight, we were playing magic together. gathering, and she was amazed because after many hours we dared together, none of us attempt anything with her.

And she told us loudly, well, I'm amazed. This is something that I've never seen before. we came with her with love, shared with the gospel of Christ with her, prayed for her, not against her.

[ 28 : 27 ] My point is, whether we evangelize, if we're intentional evangelistic or not, when we are out reaching, and when we are proclaiming, all these things only make sense, and people will only be touched by it, if and only if we are true witness to the love, the power, and the character of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

And only if they can witness in us the love, the power, and the character of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was not that Jesus loves you that shaken that man and made him take the steps towards the church and try to become drug free.

It was that he witnessed it in all that we were doing, the love, the power, the character of Lord Jesus Christ, and it shaken him to his face. It was not just reading about John, it was not just coming to the Bible study, it was not just staying in the house safely, but it was the witness of the love, the power, the character of our God that take this girl who did not even believe God exists in the first place, to talk about the Holy Spirit, and to give her life to him.

It was not because we are very nice behaved kids, it was not because we have very beautiful words, it was not because we have very nice t-shirts with all kinds of cool things written that made those who listen to us in the LGBTQ community have empathy for us, and actually sit with us, and take the time to listen to what we had to say.

It was because by God's grace, we could be witness to his love, to his character, to his power to them, and they witnessing us that.

[ 30 : 39 ] Given all that, given this body I was thinking then about, so what do we do now? How do we take all this and move forward, right? What they could present to the community of St.

John's in Vancouver? four points. Remember that we are the body of Jesus Christ. God equipped his body with all sorts of marvelous gifts and ministries and parts.

There is not the work of one of us to do it together. We must do it as a body, as a community. We must learn how to work with different gifts. We only were effective reaching for this girl because someone had the gift of mercy and told us we must not pray against her, we must pray for her.

Because someone had the pastoral sensibility to invite her when she was in need. Because somebody else had the gift of administration to notice that studying acts may not be the most effective things, we must do something else, right?

Let's study a gospel. Only because these things were working together, we were working as a body of Christ, we could be effective, in witnessing, in outreaching, in proclaiming.

[ 32 : 02 ] Be ready to walk the second mile. I have a newborn. The house has been amassed for three months, only because my mom is here now that we are putting things together.

When we talk about reaching people with the love of Christ, we are talking about people being born again in Jesus Christ. we are talking about newborns in faith, people who don't know how to feed themselves, people who don't know how to barely know how to see, barely know how to breathe, definitely don't know how to behave socially.

This girl that came to faith over the next year, she had a maniac depressive attack. over the next year, we would receive calls in the middle of the day, in the middle of the night, she wanting to go back to her old life and talking with us about it.

She threatening to kill herself. She having an attack in the middle of the streets and people threatening to call the police against her. I wish they once called the police against her.

We would, her mom would call us not knowing what to do because her daughter was through this really hard time. And Barbara and I would there secret her mom, talk with her through the second mile.

[ 33 : 35 ] People will come and the restoration process will start. But just like newborn babies, they will need us to be there. Not just say Jesus loves you, the person believes that and that's it.

There is a long mile to walk with them. We saw her father come to pick her from the police, the absent father who she hated for many years.

But we were glad because we could see and witness the power of Christ because on the second year she was baptized and all her family was there and all her family was glad and all her family could see the power of Christ in the life of their daughter.

And they were just glad. Be ready to love. It's very easy to pick up an enemy and go against that people.

It's very easy as a church. Take a political party, take a specific social group, take a specific neighbor who is very, very angry at us, take him, make us our enemy and let's do our community

life around this enemy.

[ 34 : 52 ] It's the practical thing to do, very effective. Everybody loves the enemy to hate. But that's not the Christian way, that's not what Jesus taught. Be ready to love especially the most hateful ones.

Be ready to pray for those who curse us, for those who despise us, for those who have more reason to dislike us. Be ready to love especially those.

And of course, be ready to be hated and despised. I told you guys all the good parts of the testimony.

Of course, there was all the dark parts of the testimony. The people who would not look us in the eyes, the people who would actively take action against us, the people who would...

And I believe that that's just because the nature of the gospel. I wrote a paper for Ross. I'm finishing a few last semester about missional church and my thesis was that the message of the cross, the message of the Bible, the gospel is a threat to any human society.

[ 36 : 06 ] And he said, yeah, but the gospel is the best news for the people. And let me clarify, yes, the gospel is the best news for the human person, but for the society, for the structures, for the orders of power, is a threat.

And whenever it threatens someone, they try to respond violently if they don't see any other way around. Picture this in your mind. Imagine a lovely Sunday morning.

People from the rich north Vancouver take their cars, pass through Westside Hastings, pick some people up and come for service.

However, they are not just serving them like superior to inferior, they are talking with each other as brothers. They come to service and a little bit before service starts, a powerful CEO come to a former homeless man asking for prayer and advice because he desperately needs to take some decisions on his company and he doesn't feel secure.

And these men advise him and these men pray for him. On the Sunday, at the time the child comes out of the service for the Sunday school, the lovely mothers and fathers deliver the kids to former porn stars and call girls for them to teach the word of the gospel to the little kids.

[ 37 : 38 ] after service we're going to have a lunch together and a Korean man, Punjabi woman, a lovely Canadian woman prepared a multi color and flavor lunch for all of us.

And we are all celebrating because on the previous Saturday, a man, Japanese man, using his western suit, married Indian woman, Indian girl, wearing traditional Indian wedding ceremony dressing.

Celebrated by a priest who not only struggles with homosexuality but was called to serve God and has been doing so faithfully. this simple picture goes against many values that our social order or Vancouver who is very respectful of many things believe to be right.

And if anything I said sounds weird to you, imagine how it sounds to our neighbors who doesn't know Jesus Christ, the love of God, the power of Jesus Christ. my point with all these things is basically be ready to die.

Not just individuals get ourselves to the cross, but even as a group, as a community, as an institution, St. John's Vancouver needs to be ready to die, to let itself get a little bit more messy, a little bit more disordered maybe when people start coming in or giving up some of its credibility, some of its credit because when we start sharing the gospel, when we start talking with people, when we start testifying about the power, the love, and the character of our God, we will be both loved and hated.

[ 39 : 44 ] And if they called the Lord by also who, imagine what they call us who are his servants. I'd like to pray.

Lord, you called us into this ministry, you called us into this service, and I pray, please let us be the ministers of reconciliation.

There are still many questions and answers, there are still many steps to be taken, there is still so much about how to reach this generation. I pray that you may guide us through the steps, I pray that you may guide us, give us the wisdom we need, give us the love for our neighbors, love for these people who you love, people who you gave your son for them, people for whom you died on the cross, Jesus.

and have mercy on us, help us to overcome our fear, overcome our pride, to overcome whatever it might be in your way to serve these people.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.