

INCORPORATING AND USING
RELATIONAL
EVANGELISM
IN YOUR
SPHERE
OF LIFE AND INFLUENCE



JOHN HENDEE

All verses are from the NIV and are used with permission.

Copy right 2018 John Hendee

How to be a Disciple Making Ambassador in your Sphere of Life using Relational Evangelism.

By John Hendee and Jackson Ndecheck

“Evangelism is not an optional accessory to our life. It is the heartbeat of all that we are called to be and do. It is the commission of the church that gives meaning to all else that is undertaken in the name of Christ.” Dr. Robert Coleman, Pg. 89, Master Plan of Evangelism

The purpose of this book is to share how Relational Evangelism developed, what it is, how it works and how Christians of all personalities types, length of time as a Christian, giftedness and careers can learn how to effectively engage people in a conversation that can lead to sharing four lessons with them in their home that will clearly and calmly explain what Jesus is all about. It shows how we can make disciples regardless of what Sphere of life we live and work in is.

Endorsements for IAAR from 3 Global leaders in Evangelism

Josh McDowell

"It's all About Relationship" is a personal evangelism tool that provides a strategic framework for sharing the Gospel with others in a non-confrontational but comprehensive and respectful way. If you are one of the many who needs to be equipped to share the Gospel, this is a powerful tool that is easy and effective to use."

Josh has spoken in over 80 countries and 700 Universities around the world. Author of [More than A Carpenter](#) and many other books.



Dr. Robert Coleman

"I am glad to see how Relational Evangelism, and It's All About Relationship utilizes so many of the concepts I believe and teach. It will help you put effective, fruitful evangelism to work in your life and ministry."

Dr. Robert Coleman is an expert on evangelism, a professor, scholar and author. BILLY GRAHAM wrote of his book "The Master Plan of Evangelism":

"Few books have had as great an impact on the cause of world evangelization in our generation as The Master Plan of Evangelism."



Loren Cunningham

"The Millennial generation is longing for lasting, authentic relationships, especially as so many of them have come from dysfunctional families, and society generally.

This Relational guide (It's All About Relationship) will serve your group in their outreach to others. "It's All About Relationship" focuses on relationships with language this generation uses. It will make for fruitful, and friendly sharing of the love of God by explaining how His Son Jesus, made relationship possible with our Father in heaven. Yes, how they can be in our Father's very own family. Take it--use it-- and enjoy fruitfulness."

Loren Cunningham, YWAM Founder and University of the Nations Chancellor.



And others;

Chong Ho Won; IT expert with YWAM. A self described evangelism addict.

RE/IAAR is Power Evangelism through love.

Jackson Ndecheck, global traveler, evangelist, teacher, works with YWAM

RE/IAAR is Profoundly Unique

Raymond; African pastor of mega church as well as overseer of 120 other congregations

I've been searching for these materials for 21 years.

Tom Kayser; Businessman, educator, mission worker;

This course is light years ahead of any course or class I've taken in the church my whole life.

Woman student;

In this course I have found the 'secret ingredient' to my life in Jesus.

Educator, associate Pastor;

This is the missing link in our ministry.

Bruce Logan; architect; life long leader in missions, district leader in Perspectives, and much more.

Learning the information in this course has given me the will to share the gospel that I didn't have before. It has lit a fire.

Since taking this course three years ago Bruce has been introducing it to world leaders in missions and evangelism. He is a one man promo movement.

OUTLINE

PART 1
What is RE/IAAR?

- 2 Purpose of this book
- How to be an Ambassador in your Sphere of Life
- Jackson's request
- John's response
- My Story; I'm a Turtle
- The Principle of the Turtle and Peacock
- 15 How did Relational Evangelism develop?
- What is Relational Evangelism?
- 17 What makes RE Profoundly Unique?
- 19 Does this really work?
- 21 The Principle of getting trained before you GO
- 22 What RE Training includes
- 23 How do you get RE/IAAR training
- 26 The Principle of 'you don't have to be...'

Part 2
The Heart of it all

- 27 The Principle of the VILE

Part 3
Making this work in your Sphere

- 30 The Principle of Go; Your Worn Paths
- 38 The Principle of being an Ambassador in your Sphere or world
- 42 The Principle of Avocation over rides Vocation
- 48 The Principle of Sphere for those hired by ministries
- 50 How to share the Gospel with those in your Sphere
- 51 The principle of getting off to a good start.
- 55 The principle of the Golden Key
- 59 The principle of the Curious Interviewer
- 62 The principle of the Snake and the Dove
- 64 The principle of the mid-wife
- 65 The principle of the speed of a relationship
- 66 The principle of being a friend vs. being friendly
- 66 The principle of muddied waters
- 68 The principle of divine appointments
- 69 The principle of being ready and willing; the 5 second rule
- 72 The principle of in season and out of season
- 73 The principle of the rabbit trail
- 76 The principle of not everyone will be interested
- 78 The principle of you don't have to do it this way
- 80 Who I've been able to do IAAR with
- 81 Changes you can see in your life and ministry
- 82 Endorsements....
- 87 Closing thoughts; Why the reluctance?

- 90 Jesus called them, trained them, sent them
- 91 Other less effective models of personal evangelism
- 95 un-principle of misguided 'Disciple making'.

How this book came about.

JACKSON NDECHECKS' REQUEST;



It started with Jackson.

I first need to tell you a little bit about Jackson. I met him through a mutual friend, Bruce Logan. Jackson is from Cameroon, was a powerful crusade preacher as a young man (he is still only in his 30's), now works with YWAM all over the world in many different projects. He lives with his wife Anneke and four kids in Kona, Hawaii. He is a man of vision for God.

I have traveled to African countries with him in the recent years. He is an inspiring man. After becoming familiar with Relational Evangelism he said that it is "Profoundly Unique." He has traveled the world, including the U.S., and said there is nothing quite like this. He has become a HUGE fan of it. Oh, and many times when he preaches it is by 'simply' quoting Scripture from the 10 N.T. books he has memorized.

So after a couple trips to Africa God gave him the vision to see 1,000,000 leaders on the 7 continents trained in using Relational Evangelism Using It's All About Relationship. After God gave him that he asked me to write a book about its development. Here is what he says about that:

JOHN HENDEE'S RESPONSE;



My first response to Jackson's request was an internal, "No way." I will explain why and what turned it around for me.

At the time of this writing I live east of San Diego with my wife of 51 years, Carla. We have worked in churches in California and Arizona before going to Chile, S.A. at the age of 45 to be missionaries. After 12 years there we returned to California and I started and lead Project New Hope International and commuted to Peru for 10 more years.

Following that I became Chair of World Evangelism at Hope International University which I am still serving at as of the writing of this book.

Then a few years ago Jim Phillips asked me to go to Africa with him and see what was happening in the use of Relational Evangelism where he was working. It was a course changing trip. During that trip he asked me to commit to help train 4000 African leaders over the coming 5 years. That challenge was accepted and the doors to training opportunities keep opening up. Since that first trip I've been to Kenya, Uganda, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Nigeria. More countries are on the map. We are eyeing Tanzania, and have contacts in Ghana, and another friend has leads in Zambia. Jim has already been going to Europe. Steve Holsinger has trained people in South Sudan and other places. It is growing. More to come.

BACK TO THE STORY OF THIS BOOK

So Jackson asks me to write the story of my life as it pertains to the development of "Relational Evangelism and It's All About Relationship."

My first reaction to Jackson to Jackson's request was **"What are you talking about? My story? Are you serious? I don't think anyone would want to read it. How boring."**

I thought about it for a couple days. Then I realized **my first reasons for NOT wanting to write it became one of the main reasons why I needed to write it.** I will be sharing how Relational Evangelism developed and how it changed my life and ministry. It even had an effect on my personality.

PART 1

HOW DID RELATIONAL EVANGELISM DEVELOP?

It starts with my story; I'm a turtle. (My turtle transformation)

I was not raised in a home of Christian influence. My dad was a skeptic until he was 79 years old. My mother was a 'nominal Christian' but I silently took my stand with dad. She occasionally went to some church near the places we lived and often invited me to go but I normally faked a stomach ache, leg pains or something to avoid going with her. I wanted nothing to do with church, God, Jesus, or anyone who had much to do with them.

When I was a teenager God started letting me know he was there and that I needed him. There were a number of ways I became aware of my need for him and started seeking him out. Fortunately I did find Jesus, accepted him and was baptized into him. That is another story. I've been active in the church ever since.

In those early days as a new Christian I became aware through preaching and teaching in the church that I was supposed to 'witness' to others about Jesus. The problem was I had no idea what that really meant other than share the 3 point outline I was shown on how to develop my testimony. The desire to be faithful in this and my feeling God's amazing love led me down a long road in learning how to share the Gospel with others. The church that helped guide me in my experience in becoming a Christian was a fine group of believers but sadly no one there provided any training or equipping for me in how to actually GO and share the Gospel. I will share a little bit later the many things I did try in my efforts to be faithful to Jesus in GOING and witnessing to others.

I had two major problems in wanting to achieve the goal of learning how to share the Gospel. I was not offered training in personal evangelism in any church I attended for many years. I have found that is a common experience of most Christians even today. Even when I did find some kind of trainings it was most always through some 'external organization' that specialized in that rather than something offered through the local congregation. That was one problem. I had a second problem that was maybe even a bigger issue.

Maybe you have heard the phrase "Plain Jane"? That is a woman who is defined by our culture as just plain, ordinary, doesn't stand out in a crowd, isn't beautiful by societies standards, isn't a star singer, performer, athlete or actress. She's just the normal 'plain' woman living next door or maybe quietly working at the desk next to you at the office. There is Nothing Special about her in the eyes of most of society.

Well, there is also a “Plain John”. That would be me. 😊



Growing up and as a young man even after becoming a Christian I was quiet, shy, timid, fearful, insecure, introverted, not good looking, no star athlete, not talented, couldn't sing or dance, not an intellectual, not rich, famous, had acne, broken nose, skinny and got the dry heaves going into most any new situation.

I recall being the only player sitting on the bench at a basketball game before a game we were about to play holding a towel to throw up into. I was gagging. Nerves. When the coach took me home I overheard him talking to my parents out in the kitchen suggesting that I get counseling. I didn't get it.

I remember clearly when I stepped out of the line of students on our way to the stage for our 8th grad graduation ceremony. I went to the nurses' office. I listened to the ceremony over the loudspeakers while lying on a bed in the nurses' office to avoid having to go out there in front of everyone. I even received an award I wasn't there to get. I could hear them calling my name and trying to figure out where I was. All I could think of was what my parents were thinking. “Where is John?” Oh, it was painful for me.

I remember my short mother dragging me down the street to go to a dentist; she dragged and I gagged. It was a new dentist and the gagging hit me again.

I remember walking back to high school after Christmas break gagging all the way.

Then there were the ‘to be avoided at all costs’ having a give any talk or speech in school. So if I had to pick two words to describe my early life it would be ‘fearful turtle.’

I WAS THEN AND I AM STILL A PRETTY COMMON, PLAIN PERSON. I'm not what would be described by anyone as colorful, dynamic, the life of the party. I am not an extrovert.

The PRINCIPLE OF THE TURTLE/PEACOCK

I guess in one way you could say I am a ‘turtle’. I could not be described as a peacock. Peacocks are colorful, attractive, brave, confident, have a loud call, they can fly, people gather around them and ‘oooooh and ahhhhhh’. They can be aggressive. They are not fearful of much. Then they do their thing; they open their beautiful tail feathers and it gets even better. Out come the cameras. People even get copies made to frame and hang in their house. Oh we love peacocks. They add a lot of color and joy to our lives.



A peacock I'm not.

I finally accepted being a turtle, but for a time way back I thought I really wanted to be a peacock. I think it is worth the time to share a little about that experience.

Let me tell you about my story with Tim Coop. Tim Coop is with the Lord now. I had the incredible opportunity to work with him many years ago. Tim was a peacock among peacocks; loving, outgoing, dynamic, likeable, etc. It was such an honor to work with him. He taught me so much about opening up to people and he helped me get out of my shell more just by watching him live life.

I knew him before I worked with him. He was a leading youth pastor in Southern California at the time. I was a newer Christian, attending Bible College and a weekend youth pastor. Oh, I admired Tim; that never changed. I remember the day I was sitting in my little cubby hole office and I was praying with tears in my eyes. I prayed "Oh God, help me be like Tim." He was everything I wanted to be in order to be a better youth leader. That was another of those prayers that God didn't answer in my life; at least not the way I wanted him to.

A few years later Tim invited me to come and be the first associate in the church he had just become preacher at. I couldn't understand why a peacock wanted a turtle to work with him when he could have gotten anyone he wanted to go work with him. That is another story. But after working with him a couple years God taught me a powerful lesson. God didn't want me to 'be like Tim.'

I learned so much from Tim. To know Tim was to admire and love him. But here is what God had to teach me. And I wonder how many other turtles need to learn the same lesson. God taught me "John, I don't want you to be Tim, but I want you to become the best John that you can be. If I had wanted you to be another Tim, I would have made you that way. Now learn from his passion and love for people. That is what I want but be YOU." What a lesson to learn. It is o.k. to be a 'turtle'. Now I was a turtle who had to stick his neck out of his shell for Jesus. God showed me how to do that without going through a personality transformation; God could use me as a loving, kind, gentle turtle. OH and guess what I learned. There were some people Tim could reach that I would never be able to get close to. But then there were people I could reach that Tim didn't get through to. It takes all kinds to get the job done.

I learned to be o.k. with being a turtle. I still admired and was inspired by Tim and others like him.

But God uses turtles too.

Let's back up for a moment. Let me tell you what I'm not.

I'm NOT:

Outgoing

Extroverted

Dynamic

Life of the party

Popular

Rich by U.S. standards

A powerful leader like John Maxwell

An intellectual— thinker like Ravi Zachariah

Philosopher theologian like Gregory A Boyd

Apologist like Josh McDowell

Powerful speaker like Francis Chan

Great ministry builder and leader like Loren Cunningham of YWAM.

Smart scientist, writer, debater like Dr. Jonathon Sarfati,

Bible Scholar like (take your personal preference)

Talented; can't sing, dance, have no rhythm

And on and on it goes.

Plain John.....A COMMON TURTLE.

So HOW IN THE WORLD does a turtle carry out or fulfill its job as a Christian witnessing to others?

Years ago I thought you had to be all the things I wasn't to be able to GO out and successfully witness or share the Gospel.

It was a long journey for me but I never gave up and God led me down the path to learning how to become effective in making disciples of others in spite of being a turtle. It took quite a while but I found out that I can be normal turtle and I can be 'plain' John and still be an effective disciple maker.

My story explains how I have gone from being a 'fearful, frightened turtle' to a **confident turtle**.

If you are in any way a 'plain John or plain Jane' and a Christian who wants to help share the Gospel with others there is good news.

I must explain that a person can be a plain John or Jane and be very talented, intelligent, skilled, gifted, etc. All plain Johns and Janes aren't like I was with all my deficiencies and challenges.

For those who are Peacocks, outgoing, dynamic, etc. there is good news for you too!!!

For ALL, the good news is **Relational Evangelism using It's All About Relationship**

I will often refer to it in this book using the abbreviation RE/IAAR.

Once again, when I was a child growing into adulthood I was quiet, shy, timid, insecure, fearful, introverted, and got the dry heaves going into many situations (I didn't get butterflies, I got flocks of eagles). When I learned after becoming a Christian that I was supposed to 'witness' and share the Gospel with others I was 'all in' in spite of what I perceived and experienced as being my inhibitions and shortcomings.

Oh I tried Campus Crusades Community Religious Surveys in many places, I learned a version of the 4 Spiritual Laws, I went to the Billy Graham School of Evangelism, I took the personal evangelism class in Bible College. I was trained in Evangelism Explosion. I went with others going door to door and I handed out brochures. You name it I tried it (most of the time trying to cover up my gagging).

I tried them all but most of them seemed to have been designed by peacocks. They also seemed to be something you did with unsuspecting strangers you met (or better say 'corner or trap') at a park, beach, mall or at their front door.

In my experience most of those we trapped really didn't seem to appreciate the experience at all.

Most of them seemed annoyed.

Few of them made any positive decision.

I'm thinking many of them were convinced they would never want to be a Christian if it meant they had to go out in public and do what they saw us doing.

Few of them contacted out in public were followed up on in any way.

It was always a one-time encounter and presentation if one even happened.

It was too brief and too fast for most people to make any serious or intellectual decision about giving their life away as they were being asked to do.

As I was working on this book I thought of a phrase that describes many of the models of evangelism I became familiar with in the past. They are what I would call

HIT AND RUN
evangelism.



We approach some unsuspecting person. They don't even see us coming or have any idea this would be the day they get HIT by a passing 'evangelist'. It was not part of their expectation as they left their house that day. We run into them INTENTIONALLY and hit them with the Gospel often before they even have a chance to say much (or get out of the way). We try to get whatever response we can out of them and then we RUN, maybe to never see them again.

HIT and RUN evangelism doesn't work very well with strangers much less with family, neighbors, friends and associates. On top of that very, very few Christians will even ever give that a try. The experts tell us that 95% of Christians, the folks sitting in the pews in your church on Sunday, never share the Gospel with another person their entire life, anywhere much less 'hitting and running' from people on the street.

In spite of all the different trainings I attended and attempted to use for many years after becoming a Christian I never learned how to confidently and effectively share the Gospel with other people. I didn't know how to approach people or even begin a conversation much less keep one going. I certainly didn't know how to approach people in a polite, respectful way to find out if they were interested in learning about Jesus.

Even though I gave those early methods a serious try for some time none of them seemed to work for me. I didn't like the styles and it didn't seem like my victims liked it much either. And then on top of that it REALLY didn't seem to be the way to approach my relatives, friends and others who were part of my daily life.

The model of a few people in my life, the love I had for the Lord, the desire to learn how to effectively share the Gospel with others and God leading me down some new roads 'drove me on'.

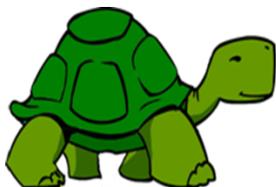
There were discouraging moments and frustrations but I just didn't stop. In spite of all I'm not or all I lack, God has taken me down a path where by developing RE/IAAR I have grown to the point where I have learned how to confidently approach people and effectively share the Gospel with them. It is a different kind of approach. It basically never happens on the spot of the first encounter with another person. You will be reading about how it is done with RE/IAAR.

There are hundreds of different kinds of people I've been able to share the Gospel with and I've had the opportunity to help train hundreds of other Christians in how to effectively use RE/IAAR.

So this is a story of how God helped me come out from hiding in fear in my shell



to become a confident turtle.



That transformation or liberation is basically a result of having and using RE/IAAR. What God helped me develop will help all other Turtles and Peacocks gain the same confidence in how to engage others in a conversation that can lead to discovering if they are interested in sitting down with you to hear a presentation of what the Good News is all about.

SO TO ALL YOU OTHER TURTLES OUT THERE, as well as you wonderful PEACOCKS, I'll be sharing how you can use Relational Evangelism Using It's all About Relationship to make new disciples for Jesus throughout your life.

It is amazing how many people out there are interested IF approached right. I've done these lessons with intellectuals, scientists, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, criminals, play boys, transvestites, university students, street people drug addicts, alcoholics, Satanists, religious people, etc.

Don't miss this. I'm still a turtle and God and I are just fine with that. I'm not a confident, colorful peacock. I'm a confident turtle!

SO TO ALL THE PLAIN JOHNS AND JANES OUT THERE (And that is most of us).....THIS BOOK IS ESPECIALLY FOR YOU. And to all of you wonderful PEACOCKS, this can really help you too.

According to Paul, the early church was full of 'turtles'. Paul wrote in [1 Corinthians 1:26](#) "Brothers and sisters, think **of** what **you** were when **you** were called. **Not many of you** were wise by human standards; **not many** were influential; **not many** were **of** noble birth."

Not famous,

Not outstanding in something by human standards,

Not influential,

Not Noble by birth, position, etc. but on such was the Kingdom built.

Not many famous, outstanding leaders, influential due to wealth, looks, power, positions, talent or personality, not born into it all.

I hope my story will be one of encouragement for
plain John's and Jane's, as well as
Powerful Peters and Paulas.

You all can do this.

And if you don't currently have a way
to effectively share the Gospel

with those in your Sphere or world, I encourage you to give RE/IAAR a try.

I will be sharing in this book what I have learned and what thousands of others have learned and as a result have felt RELEASED, freed, unfettered to be able to connect with people they know and meet in their life's journey and actually be able to engage them in a respectful conversation that can lead to their sitting down with them over four weeks and sharing four lessons about life with Jesus. It works.

What I'll be sharing with you will be very helpful to all Christians; men and women, young and old, preachers, associates, elders, missionaries, doctors, dentist, lawyers, engineers, social workers, politicians, teachers, and all kinds of professionals working in every SPHERE OF LIFE out there.

I will explain further on in this book what is our

SPHERE OF LIFE.

We will take a deeper look at your Sphere of life later. Just so you know, you have one. You are in one. You are there for a reason, God's reason.

Let's look at how Relational Evangelism developed in my life.

As I shared earlier RE/IAAR developed out of a desire and desperation to find something that worked for me in sharing the Gospel with others. Remember I'm a turtle. In the process of developing RE/IAAR I believe I found something that will work for most everyone, turtles and peacocks. Hundreds of people have proven that to be the case.

I developed RE/IAAR as I took bits and pieces from what some others had in their models of evangelism. Gene Rogers got me going down the right path with a tool he had. I obviously learned the bulk of it from the Scriptures. I learned a lot through trial and error, going out and connecting with people and then going home and evaluating what worked and what didn't. That will be part of the process for everyone, even those who take the RE/IAAR training and then work to 'make it their own'. You will have your trial and error time also, but you have the basic tool to start working with. Most of the trial and error and development has been done. You have to learn how to use it and make it your own. I have 'made it my own' but I am still learning too.

As time passed I and others made revisions, corrections and newer editions. Way back at the beginning it was called "A Peace Treaty with God". I still encounter people who are using that early version and have been for 20-30+ years. Several years back we changed the title to, ***It's All About Relationship***. Jim Phillips was the one instrumental in encouraging that change. I was slow to buy into it at first but I'm glad we made the change.

WHAT IS RELATIONAL EVANGELISM USING IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

and how does it help me in my Sphere of life?

Let me start by briefly saying what RE/IAAR is isn't.

- Relational Evangelism is not street evangelism. While there is a place for such, RE/IAAR isn't going to the streets to preach the Gospel with passing strangers.
- Relational Evangelism is not getting into apologetic debates, arguments or presentations. While there is a place for apologetics that is not the beginning approach in RE/IAAR.
- Relational Evangelism doesn't mean you have to become an expert on every subject under the sun; including all other cults and religions.
- Relational Evangelism is not handing out tracks to people on the street. While there is a place for that, this is not what RE/IAAR is about.
- Relational Evangelism is not inviting people to church. Ed Stetzer, a leading expert in evangelism has said, "Inviting people to church ISN'T evangelism." While there is a place for inviting some people to church, that is not what this is. Or I should say we don't start there.
- Relational evangelism isn't something you invite people to attend a class at 'church'. While it is a great tool to use when you follow up on prospects it is best to share IAAR in the privacy of people's home with them, not 'at church'. I would suspect that less than 1% of all the people in your city will ever be interested in much less attend a class for interested people at a church facility. While there is a place for that for a very few who will be interested, that is not what this is about.
- Relational Evangelism isn't trying to show others how their religion is wrong and yours is right. You just share the Gospel if they are interested. That is what we have been called to do.
- Relational Evangelism and IAAR aren't lessons about 'church'. Church is important but that is not the place to start with unbelievers.
- **Relational Evangelism** is not forcing a Gospel presentation on people in private or public settings trying to convert them. That is not effective.
- **Relational Evangelism** is not being aggressive, judgmental or condemning people for their bad morals. That does not help us make disciples of them.
- **Relational Evangelism** isn't a one shot model where you meet and try and convert someone on the spot. If they are interested we will meet with them 4 times to share the four lessons. We usually do one lesson a week for four weeks. It is amazing what can happen over those four weeks.

- **Relational Evangelism** is not a presentation you have to memorize. You have to learn how to share it but you have a printed copy for you and your listeners.

RE/IAAR is very different, PROFOUNDLY UNIQUE as Jackson Ndecheck put it. I have found that most Christians love the difference. I know most unbelievers like the RE/IAAR approach better than most of the others I have seen. Yes, God can work in many different ways and he does, but he also told us to be smart in the way we approach people as we try and make disciples out of them.

I'd like to share something out of the story and writings of Nabeel Qureshi. Nabeel was raised Muslim. He had memorized the Koran by age 5 and eventually became friends with a Christian while studying at the university. Their friendship over time resulted in Nabeel becoming a Christian. He was a doctor and died of cancer in 2017. He was married with kids. He was in his early 40's. Before dying, he became a strong apologist for the Christian faith.

The following is a quote from his book, **Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus**. This is a great read. It is the story of his becoming a Christian.

The following is a comment he makes following his talking about 'stranger or street evangelism'; that is a Christian trying to share the Gospel with him 'on the street' and thinking he can convert him after a brief presentation.

Unfortunately, I have found that many Christians think of evangelism the same way, foisting Christian beliefs on strangers in chance encounters. The problem with this approach is that the gospel requires a radical life change, and not many people are about to listen to strangers telling them to change the way they live. What do they know about others' lives?

On the other hand if a true friend shares the exact same message with heartfelt sincerity, speaking to specific circumstances and struggles then the message is heard loud and clear. Effective evangelism requires relationships. There are very few exceptions.

In my case, I knew of no Christian who truly cared about me, no one who had been a part of my life through thick and thin. I had plenty of Christian acquaintances, and I'm sure they would have been my friends if I had become a Christian, but that kind of friendship is conditional. There were none that I knew who cared about me unconditionally. (Until he met David.) Since no Christian cared about me, I did not care about their message.

That is quite a commentary from a very hard man to reach. He was reached through a 'relational' kind of love and evangelism. Read his story. While his story didn't involve RE/IAAR his point about relationship and showing interest in others as real live people is very strong. RE/IAAR can and will help us learn how to connect with people and seek the opportunity to share the Good News with them.

There are 'Nabeels' in your world. There are colleagues, relatives and neighbors in your Sphere.

What makes Relational Evangelism “Profoundly Unique” as Jackson called it?

RE/IAAR deals with two vital areas for our work as Ambassadors for Jesus.

1. The training shows how to approach people you know and meet in life and how to engage them in a conversation that is designed to bring up IAAR and see if they are interested in hearing the four presentations.

It is not designed to ‘witness’, to share the Gospel, give our testimony, try convert them or invite them to church on the spot, **but simply see if they are interested in hearing the IAAR presentations.**

We call this the principle of their

TERMS, TURF AND TIME.

We make the offer to go through the IAAR presentations on:

- a. THEIR TERMS; that is if they are interested. It is only if they want to and are interested. We explain in the training how to find that out. It is really very easy. If they aren’t interested we don’t do it. Plain and simple. We can’t force it on them and we don’t try to. That would be a mistake.
- b. THEIR TURF; We don’t invite them to ‘church’, which is our turf. We offer to do IAAR at their home or a location of their choice, maybe a restaurant. I always offer going to their home first and look for another option if that doesn’t work for some reason. Most of them won’t feel comfortable on our turf like they will on their own, and I want them to be comfortable so they can hear what I’m sharing.
- c. THEIR TIME; We offer to get together with them at a time that fits in with their schedule, not at 3PM Sunday afternoon at church. We make the offer and we go to them at a time that is convenient for them. That is most often evenings for working people or maybe weekends.

We take all the pressure off of them and in the end it takes the pressure off of us too.

It is amazing how this works with so many people who will never accept your invitation to church.



Their terms; if they are interested and willing.

NOT



Against their will if they are not interested.



Their turf; their home, office, etc.

NOT



At church facility



Their time; when it is convenient for them.

NOT



4PM Sunday afternoon.
Food and child care!!!!

2. **Then if they are interested our training will show you how to sit down with them and share the four IAAR lessons with them. This will give them a thorough overview of the Gospel, in a non-pushy, calm manner as you meet with them over the four weeks.**

Being nice or friendly to people without at some point offering the Gospel if needed is totally incomplete. Offering the Gospel to people in a forceful way without being polite and respectful of their desires or interest is most often counterproductive.

RE/IAAR puts these two elements (how to engage someone in a conversation and how to share the IAAR lessons) together in a logical, working fashion.

You will learn how to do this with someone you just met or someone you have known for many years.

You will be shown how to start and guide the conversation to that end. IF they are interested (and a lot of people are) you set up the studies, normally starting the following week and best done in their home at a time that is convenient for them.

The four lessons are printed and you take your copy and a copy for each person involved in the study. **You don't have to memorize the lessons.** Whew! They are your guide to keep you on track as you share the wonderful Good News.

If they aren't interested we don't (actually we can't) do it, but we leave the door open in case in the future something happens and they decide they would like to hear the lessons and that does happen.

This approach is low key, not high pressure. It is totally based on other's willingness and interest in meeting with you the four times.

DOES THIS REALLY WORK???



Let me share just ONE story with you. I have hundreds if you need more. In fact at the end of this book are testimonies of many Christians who have taken this training and what their experience was. But this is one of my favorites.

This is the story of a youth pastor in a large church who took RE/IAAR online. Near the end of the course we got to speak on the phone. Here is what he said;

“John, I have to tell you that when I started this course I didn't want to do it. I was totally negative. I didn't know why I had to take it (his preacher made him).

I could not imagine how four printed lessons could possibly help me share the Gospel with other people.

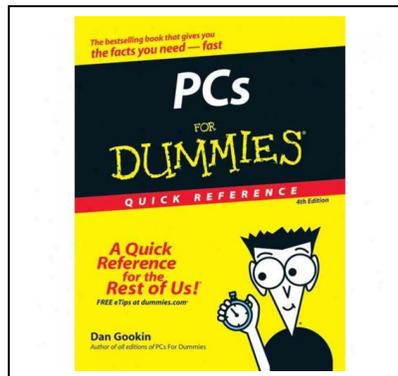
But things have changed. We aren't even done with the course but I'm finishing totally positive.

I already have seven different presentations going with people. And it is starting to interfere with my job!”

Oh, I love it. That was one great phone conversation.

GET TRAINED BEFORE YOU GO

There really isn't a **Personal Evangelism for Dummies** book.



We must invest the time and energy it takes to be trained and prepared for this great calling.

I Peter 3:15 says, “Always be prepared.” RE/IAAR is a way to be always prepared to share the Gospel.

Don't let your leaders send you into battle if they aren't seriously and actively preparing you for what they are asking, telling or encouraging to do. Their preaching about evangelism from the pulpit is not going to get it done. If they aren't interested in helping you get trained, then we are offering you help to get trained. Don't let their lack of interest or unwillingness stop YOU.

Would a general send his soldiers into war without offering the best training and equipment possible?

Would a CEO of an airlines knowingly send their pilots to fly their planes without seeing them get the best training possible and insure the planes are in the best condition possible?

Would you want a doctor to operate on YOUR heart or brain who hadn't gotten the best training and equipment available?

Would you want your sales force to go out and try and sell YOUR product without first offering them the best training possible? I remember reading years ago about a broom company that bragged about its **grueling 25 hour training** for their sales force which they had to complete

before they went door to door selling the companies brooms. We aren't selling brooms but the Gospel.

I wrote a book a while back. I unfortunately changed the title from what it had been. The original title was "The question most church leaders HATE to be asked, but Seldom Are."

The question? "How many of your people did you train last year to be able to GO and effectively share the Good News with the people they know and meet in life?" When I've shared that with many church leaders it seems as though they are immediately looking for a way out of continuing the conversation with me, as in "Oh, John, I think my wife is trying to reach me! I'm sorry, I need to go." It hits on an open, raw nerve for many.

Would a preacher send his people out telling them to GO and make disciples without providing the best training and tools they could find? Why would they do that? That is setting them up for terrible failure after failure. They won't even try it anymore after a couple unnecessary failures due to not having been trained.

What many leaders have done is redefine what the word "GO" means. Here is what many are really saying: "Yes, Go and invite people to come and listen to me. YOU aren't capable of clearly explaining what the Good News is. I am. I've been to Bible College. I spend hours each week studying the Bible. So GO and Invite them to church."

WHAT RE/IAAR TRAINING INCLUDES



If you take the Online course/training or the Onsite training you will:

1. **Watch a number of videos each week which are the heart or core of the training.**
 You watch a presentation of the four IAAR lessons three complete times over the course of the training.
 You watch a session on how to engage people in a conversation using FORM to see if they would like to listen to the four lessons. This is a highlight for most all taking the course.
 You watch videos that will help build your confidence and eliminate most of your fears about doing this. Some of the sessions are:
 You don't have to know it all.
 What if they ask a question you don't know the answer to?

What are divine appointments?

What are the advantages of using a printed copy to follow along?

And many more subjects.

These videos will clear us a lot of misunderstandings about what effective evangelism is and they will help you gain confidence and see that YOU can do this too.

2. You will practice doing the presentations with someone you know and trust. You can't learn how to swim by just watching a video or reading a book. Part of the training is actually practicing doing the lessons but you get to pick someone you trust and will feel comfortable practicing with. We call them our "Personal Consultant." They can even be other Christians you know.

We ask them, "I'm taking this course and I have to practice the lessons I'm learning in order to finish. Could YOU PLEASE HELP ME? All you have to do is sit, listen and watch me do the lessons and then you will fill out a very short evaluation on me. Could you please help me? I would appreciate your help and respect your feedback too.?"

People are surprised at how many are willing to help in this. They are often pleased to actually get to hear the lessons too. Some Christians even end up taking the training themselves. Some have done this with unbeliever relatives or friends and have seen them accept Jesus as they 'practice' the lessons with them.

3. We have three books that we ask people to read during the training. They are easy reading but very inspiring and helpful.

Dr. Robert Coleman is sort of like the 'grandfather' of teaching on evangelism in the 20th Century but the truths he teaches resonate into the 21st. He wrote *The Master Plan for Evangelism*. It is a must read for anyone interested in evangelism.

Josh McDowell's *More Than a Carpenter* is a great tool to use along with presenting IAAR and we want those in training to know the great information in the book. It is an excellent and basic apologetic book.

Dr. James Scott Jr. and John Hendee. James is the principle author in this book. *Discipling Christians in the 21st Century*. We have trainees read a chapter a week as they go through the course. The book corresponds with the training and is full of great insights and encouragement.

4. Those who take the Online course also participate in writing short responses to 3 questions provided each week and they interact online with other students about the questions.
5. Those taking the Online course also write a short Final paper which is basically their writing out a life plan as to how they hope to use RE/IAAR in the coming years.

6. Those doing the Online and Onsite training will also meet each week with a Mentor for about an hour to go over how the training is going, respond to some questions and pray together. The Mentor is a person of their choice, someone active in ministry. This has proven to be very important in the training process.

You will also be introduced to our web page; www.itsallaboutrelationship.org where you will find many articles that will help in evangelism.

HOW DO YOU GET THIS TRAINING?

There are several options.



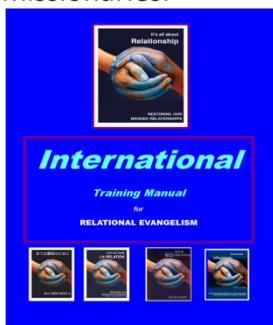
THIS TRAINING IS AVAILABLE AROUND THE WORLD.

1. To take the eight week ONLINE course go to the following link and follow the instructions
<http://hiu.formstack.com/forms/salt>
 Course name is Relational Evangelism
 Class number is EVG3810/EVG5840
 You want to sign up for audit; \$100
 Or if you want college credit it is \$300
 It is 8 weeks long. You don't have to be online at any specific time.
2. This is an eight week online course. It costs \$100 to audit and \$300 if you want to take it for college or graduate credit. The course is usually offered 5 times a year starting in January, March, June, August and October. You don't have to be on line at any specific times. You do the work at your convenience. We have had people all over the globe take it. You just need internet service.
3. If you take the Online course and you decide that you would like to start training others in your ministry you can start using the ONSITE course. This can be found at www.conduitfortheword.org This uses all the same materials but it is designed so you can lead a group of people through the training by meeting with them once a week.

You are the key leader. They don't turn homework in online but interact with the local leader and others participating. We have had hundreds use this option.

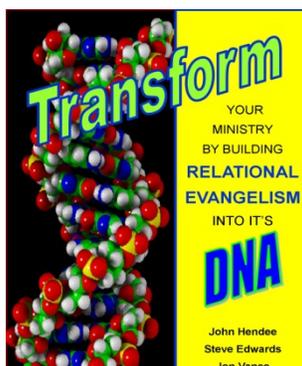
- Once you have started using IAAR and started training others you can start taking the training to other countries. We invite people to go with us on one of our International Training Trips and see firsthand how we do it. These are normally two week trips and we do the 2 ½ day live trainings in 2 or 3 cities.

Then they can help us on these kinds of trips in the future or you can go and start training those in other countries that you are already working with. Nationals or missionaries.



We are doing this training in many countries all over the world and the people love it. They say, "This is the missing link". "I've been searching for these materials for 21 years." "This material is saving my ministry." "This is power evangelism through love." "We have never gotten this kind of training before.

- I recommend that everyone who has taken the training read and study the book "TRANSFORM YOUR MINISTRY THROUGH BUILDING RE/IAAR INTO IT'S DNA. You can get it free at www.itsallaboutrelationship.org It shows you how to build RE/IAAR into the core of your ministry and start reaching more people for Jesus. You will see how to develop and build your own church wide evangelism plan, building it into the very DNA of every ministry.



- COMING IN THE NEAR FUTURE is a new App through which the training will be available anywhere in the world. Watch the front page of our web site for news on that; www.itsallaboutrelationship.org

You can get copies of IAAR free at the web site. www.itsallabutrelationship.org

You can see the four training videos free at the web site.

You can get lots of free books at the web site.

You can get lots of free articles at the web site. So what are you waiting for?

“NOT INTERESTED!”

THE
TOP 10
GOOD REASONS
a Church leader
wouldn't
want 'their people' trained in effective
personal evangelism....

1

2

3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10

Ahhhh, Hummmm.
I need more time to think.....

I remember when a missionary was talking with his leader a few years ago. I was pretty proud of the man for even sharing this with me. He is humble and honorable.

He had commented to his leader that he had some doubts about
"It's All About Relationship."

At the end of the conversation the leader said,
"Well, I like what John has better than what you don't."

Folks if you have a way to train you people in effective personal evangelism then keep using it. If you don't, well you know where to find something that is.

: -)

It is being successfully used all over the globe as well as here in the U.S.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE "YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE....".

FROM



TO



It was so liberating to me once I learned all the things I DIDN'T HAVE TO BE in order to be an effective Ambassador and use RE/IAAR.

All the things in this list aren't per se negatives if they do describe you in part but at one time I knew I was none of them and it paralyzed me in thinking that I couldn't be effective in carrying out the Great Commission because of it.

So here is a list of things you DON'T HAVE TO BE in order to be effective as an Ambassador.

You don't have to be a Bible Scholar.
 You don't have to have been a Christian a long time.
 You don't have to be a pastor, associate, elder or some other kind of church leader.
 You don't have to have attended a Christian College.
 You don't have to be an intellectual or philosopher.
 You don't have to be an extrovert.
 You don't have to be good looking.
 You don't have to be a star, talented.
 You don't have to be rich.
 You don't have to be successful in what you are doing in life.
 You don't have to be perfect, as in you never fail or sin.
 You don't have to have the perfect family.
 You don't have to be popular or well known.

This opens the door for all of us to be very active in carrying out the Great Commission as 'we go about life'.

I don't have to be all those things listed above but I Peter 3:15 does point out what I DO need to be: I need to Revere Jesus as Lord of my life and I need to be prepared. Reverence without preparation will result in a focus on us! On our growing, maturity, etc. In the end it will result in less fruit or converts to the faith. We get too busy with spiritual growth items that evangelism suffers or falls off the cart and gets shelved. No reverence will usually result in not wanting to be trained or prepared. If I don't revere Jesus why would I want to be telling others about him? Ah, I'll talk about our great church or congregation. No preparation will usually result in focusing on 'church activities.'

PART 2

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE

VIAL.

**Looking at our motivation or reason
 to even be concerned about all of this.**



It is really all about the 'Vial'.

My friend Jim Larsen first told me of this illustration. He seemed to recall this was first used by Dr. James Kennedy.

Here is the illustration: I've amplified it a bit.

A man learned one day that one of his neighbors had stage 4 cancer and was restricted to bed. He felt very sorry to learn that. He asked his wife if she would make a pot of her very special chicken soup so he could take some to his ill neighbor. She did and he took some to his neighbor. Now it just so happened that the man also had a vial he put in his pocket before he left the house which held the sure cure for the cancer his neighbor had. He headed off to see his neighbor.

After being escorted to the man's bed side he expressed his sympathy over hearing about his condition and said he wished he had learned of it long before now. He listened to the man's story of how it had all started and how it had progressed. At one point the man offered his neighbor some of the soup. He had to help feed it to him. And then he asked the man if there was anything else he could do to help. The man said yes. His yard needed mowing and the front door was broken. The visitor assured him that he would mow the yard the next day as well as fix the door. He also told him that if he needed anything else such as rides to the hospital just to let him know. He again expressed his sympathy and even asked the man if he would like him to pray for him, which he did. He prayed and then dismissed himself and went home.

O.K.

What is the problem?

Did the man need a visit?

Did the man need a show of support and sympathy?

Did the man need something to eat to lift his spirits?

Did the man need help with the yard and door?

Did the man need his neighbors' prayers?

Of course to all of those!

BUT, he really needed the Vial.

And it is interesting to think of the reasons why the man might have been hesitant to offer the vial.

I guess he could forget he had it.

He might have been fearful that the sick man could have responded by:

Doubting that the medicine would help, or

Mocking the man for offering it, or

Saying he didn't believe in modern medicine, or

Questioning why he waited till he was almost dead to bring it over, or

Challenging the man's motives, or

He might bring up how the man in the past had been a pretty lousy neighbor.

The man might have realized that the vial was his last and he might need it someday for himself!

There might have been any number of reasons why the man would hesitate or fear to offer the man the medicine.

But offer it he should have!

So what do the people around us without Jesus need?

Medical care?

Food?

Repair men?

Nurses?

Teachers?

Social workers?

Lawn service?

Legal help?

Financial help?

Someone to pick up their trash?

Someone to bring the mail?

A mechanic to keep the car running?

Bank workers to help protect their money?

Police to protect their house and family?

Government to advance their culture and society?

YES TO ALL BUT they really need the Vial.



As important as all the other things are people need the VIAL (Jesus, the Good News, the Gospel).

We have all probably known people who were popular, rich, talented, well fed, lived in really nice homes, had good jobs, a nice family, etc. but died without Jesus.

“What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?”

For us to spend our entire life alongside people offering or providing the best that we can to help them (our service or product), but then not offer the VIAL, life in Jesus, is very, very sad and unfortunate. I fear to say we have all done it at some point.

Granted, not everyone will be interested in the VIAL, but to not at least offer it is very sad.

We'll also discover that many will graciously and joyfully accept Jesus with all their love and all their heart.

We must offer the VIAL for them to know about Jesus. We can't force it on them but we really must offer it.

To not attempt to offer it would be derelict or negligent in our duty as an Ambassador.

It would be missing the mark.

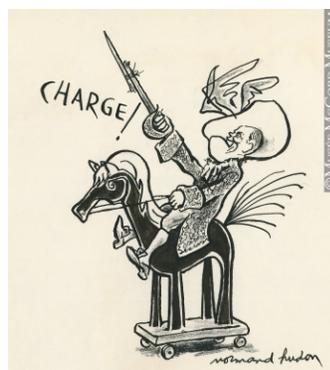


OUR CALLING IS TO OFFER THE VIAL!

All the other things are wonderful but without the offer of the VIAL all is lost. Again, how did Jesus put it? "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world yet forfeit their soul?"

To be in a position to offer the VIAL we must 'Go'.

THE PRINCIPLE OF GO. "Our WORN PATHS"



As we think about offering the Good News in the Sphere or arena where God has called us we need to take a closer look at what Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20

I'm quoting what Kenny Burchard wrote in: [Greek-Geeking the Great Commission in Matthew](#) by [Kenny Burchard](#) | Nov 7, 2013 | [Biblical Studies](#), [Hermeneutics](#), found at: [THINK THEOLOGY.ORG](#)

Okay, now how about those participles? What do they convey? There are three ideas.

Idea #1 – Going. The idea here is not “go on a mission trip” or “go somewhere.” The participle conveys a continuous action that is already happening right now, but that also continues to happen into the future. So, the idea is more like... **“As you’re going along in your life.”** The great commission is not a verbal command to go (stop, go back, and read that sentence again). It is a command to disciple as you are already going. **Going where? Answer: everywhere.** That means that the great commission is not about going on trips to evangelize people who speak a different language, even though that is a legitimate thing to do. The “going” in the great commission is best understood as a fact that is taken for granted. It would be more like, **“While you’re going through your daily routine, you, yes you – you who work there at the prison or the restaurant – as you are going along doing what you do, and going wherever you go... disciple!”** That means that every person can participate in the great commission without ever going on a trip, because we’re all involved in this Greek participle “going.” **We are all going through life in the every-day stuff.** We all have a well worn path that we walk every day, and that is the place where we do the great commission, which is to disciple.

I like that. God is calling **every one of us** to be an Ambassador for Christ in whatever Sphere of life we find ourselves living and working. We are Ambassadors to the people we encounter there.

We don’t have to

GO;

We are already there, going every day.

The question is, are we doing what we were commanded to do?

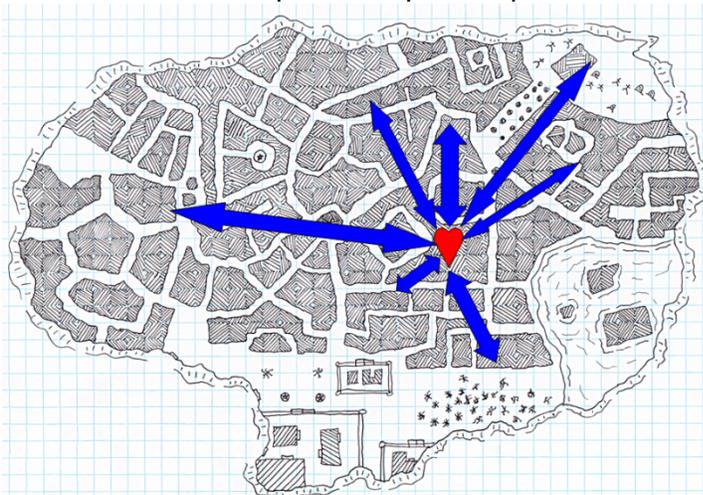
I like to call it the **PRINCIPLE OF THE WORN PATHS**.

We go to the same places most of the time. If we could see the 'paths' we have worn going to these places it would be obvious what 'our world' entails. We would see worn paths going to work, lunch, shopping, visiting relatives and friends, team meetings, club meetings, classes, to get a haircut, get our car fixed, get our computers fixed, to see a doctor, dentist or chiropractor. Worn Paths.

What would your map look like? Where do you go during any given month, week, day? Some paths will be more worn than others. Some places you will go to most every day and others maybe a time or two a month or even less. But GO you do.

Where do you go every week or month when you leave home? Spend some time thinking about this: Work, club, doctor, mechanic, shopping, eating out, entertainment, relatives, friends, sports, school events, kids sporting events, etc?

Where are the 'worn paths' on your map?



We have people around us all the time that we can easily ignore, avoid or take them for granted, maybe even thinking they are there FOR US rather than we are there for them.

God has put us in their world to love and share the Gospel with them not primarily for them to fix our cars, bodies, houses, computers, hair, etc. etc.

God uses our 'need' for their services as His way to connect us with them. Get it?

Did you catch it? The heart on the map above represents YOU. It is not the church facility. We have been led to believe the heart of all Kingdom operations is the 'church facility, campus or programs'. That is so limiting and undermines what the great commission actually is.

I can't find any place in the book of Acts where Christians went out to invite people to 'church'. The church went out to invite people to Jesus. If they were interested and or accepted Jesus then we take them to 'church'.

We have turned it backwards and as a result get smaller results for the King. Jesus said to bear fruit, much fruit, fruit that will last. That fruit is disciples, not church members. It seems that today many churches PR message is about them, the church, their congregation and how it serves the community like a full service grocery store does; we have something for ever appetite out there; vegetables, meats, dairy, house products, paper goods, beauty products, banking; oh it goes on and on.

The concept for many is that the 'church facility or location' would be the heart on the map. We invite people to come there. The Worn Paths are from their home to the church facility.

We aren't called to be a 'full service' church where we Christians are the P.R. people, the greeters, shelf stockers and cashiers to build our local business. We have been called to make disciples. It all starts there. Then we obviously need to care for each other and help each other grow and deal with the challenges of life here on earth. But often we try and attract people to US, the church first. Come and LIKE US.

If people come to Jesus, they are part of the church and their reasons and motives for attending or being a part of a local congregation will very likely change.

WE are Ambassadors for Jesus not the church.

We are calling people to a man, a person, our God and Savior; Jesus.
We are called to introduce people to Jesus in behalf of Jesus.

Why would I invite you to listen to someone you don't even know so they can tell you about MY best friend?

That would be weird. "Why can't YOU tell me about your best friend?"

We are the 'welcome mat' for Jesus. II Corinthians 5:18-20 is for all of us, not just a preacher. We like to put the welcome mat out to church first; that is backwards.

A person might be in a situation where it is almost a 'reverse map'. You might be limited for any number of reasons (most likely health or caring for someone 7/24) you have more people coming to you than you are able to go to them due to your limitations in being able to GO much of anywhere. If that is your case make a list of who 'comes to you': Doctors, care givers, equipment people, repair people, delivery people, mail person, helpers, cleaners, friends, family, 'sitter's, neighbors or old acquaintances from work, clubs or teams. Another thought would be instead of just waiting for people to 'come to you', INVITE them for coffee, lunch etc. Be intentional about it.

There are people in our Spheres that no other Christian will possibly be able to connect with and who will likely never meet our preacher. WE are there for God's purpose as an Ambassador for Jesus.

So God will use our special interests, skills, talents and needs to bring us together with others we encounter on our WORN PATHS.

In the Relational Evangelism course we ask students help with an exercise. We ask them to help fill in the boxes on a chart, listing all the kinds of people they might encounter in any given month of their life. This is similar to 'making up a map of your worn paths.'

It normally starts slow but it picks up speed.

It will include people you work with; that would be colleagues in your SPHERE of work.

Bosses, employees

Neighbors,

Relatives; all kinds of them

Barbers/beauticians

Teachers/students

Mechanics

Computer techs

Waiters

Clerks

Doctors

Dentists

Chiropractors

Repair men

Accountants

And it goes on and on.

Why don't you do this yourself, right now! Start making your own personal list now! These are the people on your personal map of WORN PATHS. We need to purposely go down these paths. They are paths God has put in our life.

We must not GO aimlessly!

I was given a book written by the family of an old time famous baseball player with the Yankees. His name was Yogi Berra. He was well known for his off the cuff funny and sometimes crazy comments. After his death his family got together and made a written history of all the ones they could remember. My favorite was this one. They were all in a car going somewhere together as a family. Yogi was driving and was obviously lost. The family was getting frustrated with him and haranguing him about it until he finally blurted out

“Yes, we're lost but we are making really good time.”

There are times in our lives and our ministries, especially as it applies to our being an Ambassador when we could also say, “Hey, I'm off track, but I'm working really hard, I'm making really good time; what more do you want?” We need to be sure that 'as we go' we are really doing what Jesus wants us to be doing.

I'll say it again: WE DON'T NEED TO GO! **We are already there.**

AS we go about our lives we need to be alert, interested and engaged with the people around us all the time. AS YOU GO about your daily life be proactive in looking for and seeking to engage with future Disciples of Jesus.

There are also ways to intentionally plan to do things to connect with people. Again the goal of the 'connecting' is to see if the people have a need and interest in hearing the message our King has given us to share with them as His Ambassador, offer the VIAL.

We will encounter many who are already Disciples as we go out. They are 'family'. We are to love and encourage them in the journey of life.

We will encounter many who are 'lost' and can't find their way. We are there to help them become followers of the ONE who said he was the Way, the Truth and the Life.

One of the best at connecting with people around him in his daily life that I know is my buddy Jim Larsen. He is such a great model in this.

He and his wife Karen are inspiring in what they do in their intentional efforts to reach out and connect with people. He is a model, a great motivator, challenging others by what he does and how he carries out the Great Commission in his Sphere. He is a pro at this because he **focuses** on it, **plans** on it and **invests** in it.

He works at connecting with people in his daily world and his community.

It is his mindset, it is his lifestyle.

He looks to engage with people whether in planned or casual situations. He is alert to those around him; waiters, gas station attendants, strangers on the street, you name it. But it goes way beyond that. He intentionally does things to connect with and be with people. His plan is to be an Ambassador to all of them.

As Paul wrote, "I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible ...I have become all things to all people, so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the Gospel that I may share in its blessings." I Corinthians 9:19,22,23

Jim was reluctant about my listing all this here fearing some would think it was a way to call attention to himself. I assured him that was not the goal of this, to make him THE model. But his story, his way of carrying out his role as an Ambassador is inspiring and we all can learn from it.

Here are some of the things Jim (Karen is part of some of these) does to love and reach out to people 'as he goes' about his daily life. There is no significance to the order of these. It is simply a list of some of the things he does.

Now I must point out that Jim is PREPARED, in season and out of season to offer people the opportunity to sit down with him and listen to IAAR; and that happens.

From my strawberry patch I let about 80 of the runners take root in their own quart-size containers. Wherever I go I offer these small plants to waitresses, coffee baristas, grocery clerks, bank tellers and others. This gives me a good reason to keep up on the relationships...offering more as time moves along. We have a connection based on a mutual interest and generosity.

There is a triangle of land at the entrance to our town which had a welcome to Talent sign at the corner. It was embarrassment to me and others that weeds were allowed to grow tall and thick. I organized a group of 15-20 neighbors and friends to fix the situation. We spent several days digging, whacking and pulling to make the parcel beautiful. The city then installed a sprinkler system, planted some fresh plants...and gave me a citizenship award for the endeavor. The whole project resulted in plenty of friendships, including connections with City Hall personnel.

For 18 years at our current home (and 15 years before that) we have hosted an Open House during the Christmas season. In time more and more people have come to feel at home...noting that they eagerly await the event. The Open Houses provide us with plenty of conversations with plenty of neighbors, since about half of the neighbors join us each years.

In the last couple of years we have shifted the Open House to September, calling our it our Fall Fiesta. Even more of the neighbors join us now since more schedules are open in September, compared to the holiday season. Conversation time is also extended.

For 20 years Karen and I have hosted an outdoor Thanksgiving Lunch (at first) or Brunch. Now that we start at 10 a.m. more people attend, since more time is left in the day to go to other family events. I cook up plenty of food, using 10 Dutch ovens. Others insist of bring food as well. Part of the success of the day is found in the opportunity for people to learn how to use a Dutch oven. Of course that only strengthens our connection and increases conversation time. Every year more and more people ask to be on the cooking team the following year. During the year we invite participants to join us for other events. This is one of the best connecting ministries we have.

Daughter Lori Jo and I began a ministry we called Enjoy GOD IN THE G.O.D. (Great out doors). We'd offer to take people on little jaunts into the wild for a time of cooking with a Dutch oven, plus whatever spiritual experience they'd like to engage in. I did the cooking and Lori Jo brought her guitar and some familiar music for participants to join in.

It turned out that consistently having our Sunday afternoon ministry in a woodsy park in our town was best. I ended up picking up a carload of food from a local restaurant, which augmented the 18 Dutch oven pizzas I was already (with a team of workers) providing for the park visitors, including the poor and homeless. This went on for 5 years. We offered this huge meal every Sunday afternoon at 4 pm, rain or shine, week after week. I ended up baptizing more people in the park creek than at our church in town.

ROTARY. I've been a member of a service club for the last 40 years, currently Rotary. The crucial part of my involvement is that I must be consistent, generous and a worker. When the park ministry was going strong Rotarians were always asking to help. When I sponsored an Outdoor Gear drive to provide winter clothing, sleeping bags and tents, the community responded generously...especially Rotary members. Opportunities to share the Gospel arose easily and steadily.

When I hear about someone getting married I offer, 'I know a guy who specializes in inexpensive wedding (referring to myself).' So I have plenty of opportunities to meet with couples. I explain that I want to explain to their friends (during the service) some values the couple plan to live by. One of those values is A Marriage based on Faith. Of course, if they agree, this provides an opportunity to engage in conversations about developing a relationship with God. Wedding guests often ask if they can talk about such things.

My main ministry these days is all about working with the homeless and the working poor. I'm president of the largest food pantry in the county. Recently we built a 'village' of 14 tiny little houses. Each week we provide showers, laundry services, haircuts, free clothing and such to the poor.

My favorite part of this is taking young guys canoeing, snowshoeing and such. Naturally these outings provide plenty of time for developing a healthy relationship...plus opening the door for spiritual conversations.

One of the best conversation starters I've found is Pop Open cards. Our church has them made, 100,000 at a time. They are purchased by hospitals, chaplains, churches and individuals. I use them all the time. Each card pops open to reveal a scripture (usually a promise). I offer these to bank personnel, grocery clerks, those who pump gas, wait staff, coffee baristas, friends, neighbors and others. It is amazing how often the promise in the card is exactly what the recipient needed.

I send out a weekly email...a devotional thought. I very often ask if I can add people to my list of recipients. It has been amazing how many opportunities I get to talk about God as a result of these little ditties. I pop the question at every opportunity...restaurants, store clerks and so on.

Okay...I'll add this. My philosophy is to be a repeat customer. I seek out the same clerk in the bank, buy at the same grocery store and get in line with the same clerk. I try to remember names, details of stuff we have talked about in the past.

The most intentional part of interactions is to be a great listener. Nothing opens doors and keeps them open like showing genuine interest.

Building boxes. A friend has supplied me with hundreds of pieces of plywood. So I build nifty boxes to give to kids. I mass produce them, 10-15 at a time. Boys (and plenty of girls) like a little chest, especially if it is lockable. I've made and given away dozens of these treasures. Great relationship builders.

Wooden planter boxes. I have dozens of starts of succulents which I plant in planter boxes made of barn wood. When friends come to visit I like to offer a box of pretty succulents, much like the strawberry ministry. It keeps the door to future conversations open indefinitely. Lastly...landscape maintenance. I make myself available to use my truck to haul neighbor's trash to the landfill. But the most common helpful service is simply to lend a hand to neighbor ladies and elderly folk. Just being a good neighbor has opened plenty of doors to talk about eternal matters.

I used to think the best way was to make meals for people...also make boxes, etc. More recently I have invited people to make things with me. They love to cook with a Dutch oven, sand-paint-construct boxes and succulent boxes. The more time we can spend together the better. Extended times together are super...day camps, fishing, hiking and cooking. Instead of cooking 'for' it is now cooking 'with'.

In Rotary I signed up to set up tables, make coffee and such for our weekly breakfast meetings. One other person is always needed as a helper, so 50 times a year I get to spend an hour with a different member of the club. How good for the Kingdom!

Do you see it? How can you miss it? It is intentional. It is a life plan. It is a plan of action. He does it. There are other things he does.

I like Jim's idea of seeking to do things 'with' people rather than just 'for' them. That gives him more time to build relationships and earn the right to be heard and seek to offer IAAR to them at the right time.

What would/could your list of ways to connect with people look like. Oh, **it won't be like Jim's**. That is the exciting part.

You get to create it where you are, using your creativity and talents. Go for it.

The Principle of being an Ambassador (Carrying and offering the VIAL) in your Sphere of life.



What is your sphere of life? You have one!

The dictionary lists this as one of the definitions of a sphere:

Sphere; *noun*. an area of activity, interest, or expertise; a section of society or an aspect of life distinguished and unified by a particular characteristic.

synonyms: domain, realm, province, field, area, territory, arena, department

YOUR Sphere is where you live life, where you invest your time and energy and use your gifts and talents. That can be where you work or study. It can be a place, a group, or a movement of people or a cause of some kind you are involved in. In the end, it includes your entire community, your family, neighbors and people you have contact with throughout your weeks comings and goings. For some it might go well beyond your local community.

YWAM (Youth with a Mission).

Loren Cunningham is the founder of Youth With a Mission. God gave him the idea of the 7 major Spheres of life many years ago and this concept has become a huge part of the work of YWAM around the world. This book is designed to help all of us as we live and work in one of those seven Spheres.

You will likely find yourself invested in one or more of them. The purpose of this book is to help you see what God's will is for you as you use and invest your God given talents, abilities and interests in your Sphere of life.

Here are the basic seven Spheres that Loran Cunningham has identified. You might have a couple different Spheres you are involved in.

- Family;
- Religion / Church;
- Education;
- Government;
- Media;
- Celebration
- Economics

Most careers or vocations will fall in one of these areas

And whatever Sphere we find ourselves in is where God has a mission for us. His plan is that we use our God given interests, talents and abilities, and what is in our DNA to help us connect with other people and carry out a God given Mission to others as Ambassadors for Christ.

II Corinthians 5:18-20

¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us (That is you and me. It doesn't say 'gave pastors') the ministry of reconciliation: (to carry out in whatever Sphere we find ourselves.) ¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world (people in every Sphere on the planet) to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us (That is you and me.) the message of reconciliation. (Regardless of whatever Sphere I work and live in.) ²⁰ We (That is you and me.) are therefore Christ's ambassadors, (to Go to those in our Sphere) as though God were making his appeal through us (That is you and me.). We (That is you and me.) implore you (Unbelievers in our Sphere) on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (That is why God puts us in the same Sphere with others, to let them know this wonderful news. While we are in our Sphere we will work, create, build, sell, and serve the best interest of mankind through what we do, but we have an even larger mission which is to help others come to the King of Kings, our Heavenly Father.)

These are the marching orders for all Christians; business people, scientists, engineers, athletes, performers, entertainers, writers, educators, IT people, doctors, dentists, church leaders, house wives, men and women.

THIS is our calling.

I must point out that being an Ambassador is NOT a matter of what our 'spiritual gift' is. I have heard many say 'Evangelism' isn't my gift." Maybe not but your being an Ambassador for Christ is an assignment, a calling and a responsibility of every person who becomes a follower of Jesus. There is no way out of this. Again, read II Corinthians 5:18-20. This is NOT a 'gift' given to a few. It is a responsibility given to all who become a Disciple of Jesus.

God asks us to use our natural interests and abilities to help us carry this out in whatever major field we find ourselves working or serving in life. He sends us out into our Sphere to be his representative there.

Is the goal to change the culture of that Sphere? Yes and no. That isn't the primary goal. It can be a byproduct of being God's Ambassador there. Seeing others come to Jesus can have a huge impact on the culture of that Sphere and beyond.

If enough lives are changed it can end up impacting culture for the better but the best way for that to happen is to help people get right with Jesus. Unless that happens they generally will not share our understanding, motivation or goals for life. How could they?

While we can work through government, education, psychology, sports, the arts etc. we aren't called by God to spend our lives just working to change culture. That would be a serious distraction from the Christians calling. As we work and live in different Spheres we are called to be light, salt and Ambassadors of our King to all those around us. We are called to help people come to Jesus and live by his Kingdom culture in the midst of their Sphere culture. It might happen in months or over many years. We will work hard to do the best we can in what our job entails but we will always remember that we have a higher calling.

Our Sphere will certainly include our VOCATION or job or career choice. Our role as Ambassador is our AVOCATION. It is the reason for our living and is our greater mission in life. We get paid to carry out our Vocation for 40-60 hours a week. Our Avocation is what we do or carry out as an Ambassador for Jesus. The calling we live under 24 hours a day includes our time at our 'job' as well as our 'free time' at home, going about the community, etc.

As I was writing this it hit me that even a prison can be your Sphere. You might be a guard, administrator, office worker, chaplain, visitor or EVEN A PRISONER. There are Christians in prisons. Some become Christians once they are in prison. We have a number of people working to take the training in RE/IAAR into prisons. Prison workers and prisoners need to hear Good News. One of my best friends in life became a Christian when he heard me present IAAR

to a group of prisoners. It changed his life from a killer, prison gang leader known as the Angel of Death, to becoming a follower of Jesus. He was baptized in the prison in a kids swimming pool we took in, with guards with uzi machine guns standing about watching.

Do you remember that Peter, Paul and even Jesus were all prisoners at one time or another in their life time!

There is a reason God has us where we work and spend our time. It is NOT for self advancement (while that might happen), it is not for fame, popularity, notoriety, power, control, etc. It is to be his Ambassador to others also working in that area. It is to be a blessing to others as well as be blessed by others.

Paul was willing to sacrifice his career, reputation, family, health, wealth and social standing for the sake of Jesus and carrying out the Great Commission. He was like Moses when it says of him "He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward." Hebrews 11:25,26 NIV

Is our position, power, recognition, success in our Sphere more important than our place in the Kingdom of God?

We will need do our best possible in our Sphere in all we do there. Our credibility can be damaged or destroyed by not working hard at our vocation. We should seek excellence and proficiency. We should model integrity, trustworthiness, honesty, team work, and humility. We should be a model of Christ likeness in all we do there while remembering we have a great mission in that Sphere.

As an Ambassador we live and work with the spirit found in the writings of a preacher who wrote the following years ago. I first received this writing in a seminar given by Bob Moorehead years ago.

I'm part of the followers that won't be embarrassed.

I have the power of the Holy Spirit.

I have crossed the line.

The decision has been made.

I am His disciple.

I won't look back; nothing will stop me, make me turn around or be quiet.

My past is redeemed, my present has meaning, my future is secure.

I won't live half hearted, I have quit walking without faith, with small plans, with knees unworn, pale dreams, uninspired visions, talking about small stuff, being tight, with little goals.

I've renewed my commitment with our Captain, he who bought me with his
blood...to give me to God.

I have suffered enough for being self centered, prideful, for living 'my way'. I've
repented.

Now I don't need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotion, applauses or
popularity.

I don't have to be in the right, be the first, in high position, be recognized, praised,
considered or reimbursed.

Now I live in the present, supported by faith, I walk with patience, lifted up by
prayer and I work by His power.

My stand is firm, my walk is rapid, my goal is heaven and being with my Father.

My path is narrow and dangerous. I have few partners. My Guide is trustworthy,
my mission is clear.

I can't be bought, seduced, detoured, distracted, or slowed down by deceit.

I won't run from sacrifice or suffering, hang out with the adversary or negotiate at
the table of the enemy.

I have work to do for Him.

Popularity isn't important.

I won't dwell in the labyrinth of mediocrity.

I won't surrender, shut up or let up until I have worked, prayed, paid, and served
the cause of Christ.

I'm a disciple of Jesus.

I'll go till he comes.

I'll give till I drop.

I'll pray till all know Him.

I'll work until he stops me.

And when he comes for his possession, he won't have any problem recognizing
me.

My colors will be clear. I'll be working, serving and waiting with Joy.

With that in mind we can easily say that where ever you work or spend the majority of your
time is a calling from God. As long as I understand that my being where I am at any given time
is an arena where I can carry out my AVOCATION I realize that I can work in any place, location,
business, school, farm, office or company and be God's agent there carrying out my calling

(Avocation) as Ambassador for Jesus. We are assuming your work is not criminal or immoral in nature.

Many times in the life of the Apostle Paul his Sphere included a jail, a courtroom, the temple, a synagogue or sitting making tents. He was a Hebrew scholar but as a Christian he used all he had for one mission; He was an Ambassador for the King of Heaven and Earth where ever he was at any given moment.

Philippines 3:12-15 -¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things.

THE PRINCIPLE OF AVOCATION OVERRIDES VOCATION

AVOCATION
VOCATION

There are likely people in most every Sphere who need to hear the Gospel. That is your calling (avocation) regardless of where you are located at any given time of your life.

I have often heard Christians fret over a job choice (vocation). "Is it God's will that I work here or over there?" While it is a legitimate concern and one worthy of seeking God's will I can say this. Regardless if you work 'here' or 'there' you have a mission to carry out. In ONE way, it doesn't matter where you are. You will be able to carry out His Mission in either of the places. So seek God's will as to where you should go but realize you can do his will in either place, as His Ambassador.

For all of us to carry out God's mission in our life, serving Him effectively as an Ambassador;

We need to accept and adopt that calling.

We need to be equipped and prepared in how to do that.

We need to be willing to do it.

We need to do it.

We need to be engaged in this mission we are working to carry out for our King, in our sphere.

Our SPHERE is NOT our END purpose in life. It is the place to serve as an Ambassador for the King of Kings. When we die we don't take anything related to our Sphere with us into eternity; our titles, offices, awards, bank accounts, trophies, followers, staffs, companies or tenure. Those we reach for Jesus will be in His presence for eternity but not the other 'stuff'.

There is 'treasure' that Jesus talked about that will endure for eternity with us.

Some of you might be old enough to remember years ago there was a popular bumper sticker that said "The man who dies with the most toys, wins." It was usually on the bumper of a huge motor home or boat. Well, it's not so. We get the idea. But you don't take anything you gain through your Sphere; titles, awards, salaries, benefits, houses, cars, planes, etc. with you when you die.

Our work (vocation) in our Sphere, as important as it might be for the well being of mankind while on earth is not as important as our work in that Sphere as an Ambassador for Jesus.

[Matthew 6:20](#)

But store up for yourselves **treasures** in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Matt 6:33 But seek the Kingdom of God first and all these other things will be added to you.

[1 Timothy 6:19](#)

In this way they will lay up **treasure** for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

[Hebrews 11:26](#)

He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the **treasures** of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.

Our end purpose as a Christian is to make disciples, to reconcile people to Jesus as we have been reconciled to Him. Once becoming a disciple our task is to teach each other all He commanded until the end of our time here on earth.

OUR SPHERE is our MEANS TO THE END.

It is our place of action or deployment as God's Ambassador.

Our sphere will put us in contact with people who need to be reconciled. Our place in our sphere and the way we live and work there will give us opportunities to love and reach out to others who need Jesus in their life.

2 Timothy 2:3-5 (NIV)

³Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. ⁴No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. ⁵Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules."

Whatever your Sphere; military, police, education, engineering, athlete, entertainer, etc. DO it! Carry out your task in that area but don't get so wrapped up in it that you forget why God has deployed or assigned you to be there. Your AVOCATION in life is the mission your King has given you

Paul told us to use the things of this life without becoming entangled in them. Do you remember that he was a tent maker? That was his vocation to support himself while carrying out his Avocation as an Apostle and Ambassador. He even used making tents as a way or place to connect with people for the sake of the Kingdom. He made tents. People needed tents. It was a blessing to many people to get a tent to live in. It made their lives better. Tent making was not Paul's mission but making disciples was.

So what is your vocation, your 'tent making'. Most all non-criminal 'tent making' is a blessing to society and people. We need each other. Our jobs are most often in some way a blessing to others and make life here on earth better. That is so good. I tell our 'trash collectors' how important their work is. Can you imagine life in a big city without their work? Or those who do 'road side towing service'. I tell them (yes I have needed them on occasion) that they are like 'auto paramedics'. Where would we be without them being out there to rescue us when our cars break down or we have an accident. They are invaluable. So in my mind, every legitimate job is invaluable to society and modern life.

As we pursue the valid and important work in our vocational Sphere, let's not forget an even greater task; the VIAL.

While it is o.k. to ask God for direction, wisdom, help, etc. it is good to look at what the general nature of our prayers are. *Are we mostly asking God to help us fulfill OUR desires or are we mostly asking him to help us as we seek to carry out HIS DESIRES?*

As a young Christian I was impressed with Matthew 6:33 when Jesus said "But seek first his Kingdom and his righteousness." Whatever our vocation is here it is good to remind ourselves that in most cases it won't be needed in heaven. Oh, we will be busy and fulfilled like we never were here on earth. God said he would put his faithful servants in charge of all that is his. We don't even know 1% of what that entails. We read in Revelations 21:1 that there will be a new heaven and earth. Revelations 21:3 says we will be with God. He will wipe every tear from our eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain. Revelation 22:5 says there will be no more night.

So we won't need doctors, nurses, ambulances, hospitals, funeral homes, dentists, chiropractors, tow services, firemen, police, armies, politicians, jails, police, lawyers, etc., but God will have plenty to keep us busy and fulfilled.

Again, are we asking him to help us carry out OUR mission or are we offering ourselves to help carry out his?

We obviously can and need to ask him for direction and help in living in our Sphere and doing our job well as well. He can also help us with any conflicts, challenges, or temptations we face.

Do you work in the field of **medicine**? How wonderful it is to have doctors, nurses, surgeons etc. but there is something that gives eternal life.

Police work or law enforcement has become unpopular with many, but it is hard to imagine what society would be without the many honest people working in all these areas. We can't build enough jails to hold all those committing crimes. People need to know Jesus to have their lives changed.

Education: Oh, I so admire teachers at all levels. Having formal education doesn't lead one into the real truth. Jesus is the truth.

Government work: While politics is often very messy, we couldn't live without people running many of the government operations vital to everyday life. There is a greater Kingdom that will exist for eternity.

Business: We couldn't operate without most of the businesses that serve us and provide what we need for daily life. Being a business person is very difficult these days with competition, shop lifting, dishonest and lazy employees, regulations, etc. While you work in that occupation don't miss that there is something greater than selling a product or offering a service.

Engineering; We most often take those working in this field for granted. Without them we would have no houses, bridges, cars, planes; you name it! With all the benefits they provide for us, there is the Engineer who designed the universe people need to know.

Family; Family is God's plan. We need to love and care for our family. That is one huge task. Regardless of the condition of our earthly family, God calls us to be part of his eternal family.

And it goes on and on. Do you get the point? I hope so. It is crucial.

I was reminded of what living out your Avocation while doing your Vocation really means as I was watching some events around the Philadelphia Eagles winning the super bowl in 2018. Many of the players clearly spelled out, even on national TV interviews that there was something more important to them than football; it was making disciples. Wow. They had a life purpose greater than football, which transcended football. The game, place and the team became a focal point, their Sphere or their arena to carry out their life purpose or calling.

They have captured the idea. They have worked hard to become among the best football players in the world but they understand what is more important than football. They didn't sacrifice their Avocation for the sake of success in their vocation.

It is important to point out that there are some Spheres or places where 'being outspoken', bold in our approach might actually do more damage to our cause than good. The goal is not to become known as the obnoxious 'man or woman of God' as we boldly proclaim how great our faith is and that we are there to rescue everyone else. In some places being the BOLD outspoken one might actually drive people away from us and make us lose the opportunity to share the Gospel with them. WE need to be wise.

Our goal is not to be obnoxious as we try and reach out to others.

PRINCIPLE OF THE LARGE SPHERE, WITHOUT WALLS.



I want to challenge you to see your SPHERE as an area that includes where you work or study, but also as an area that goes well beyond that. The focus of your Sphere might be your vocation or job where you spend a lot of time. You might be the only Christian there who can reach out and influence others for Jesus. But don't limit yourself to just that world. You live and work in a much bigger SPHERE.

What does this look like for you?

I challenge you to spend significant time on this.

This is crucial.

You need to pray and think about how God can use you in your Greater Sphere. Expand your world, move the walls way out there. Enlarge your territory to include all the people you can connect with as an Ambassador of Jesus? Remember your "Worn Paths map"? That should also be included in your Sphere.

1. Who are your colleagues in your Sphere?
2. Who are your clients or customers?
3. Who do you lead or follow?
4. Who do you serve or help?
5. Who are the people who 'serve you' in life?
6. Who is in your family?
7. Who is in your neighborhood?
8. Who do you see or meet during any given month?
9. Who do you meet or see as you travel about as you go to meetings, conferences, games, restaurants, shopping, health club, etc?

THEY ARE PART OF YOUR SPHERE; YOU ARE THERE FOR THEM.



**You are there to ‘serve them’
and seek to offer and
‘serve them up’
the VIAL at the right time.**

Are you a doctor, dentist, chiropractor, nurse, etc?

Are you an engineer?

Professor

Business person

Chef

Waiter

Clerk

Politician

Prison guard

Lawyer, judge

Mechanic

Professor

Artist

Musician

Actor

Service person

Military, police, or any related field

Sanitation engineers, cleanup crews

Factory workers

Fire and Rescue services

Towing services

Or _____?

You are there to do something very important for society but you are also there to do something VERY Important to every individual you come into contact with as an Ambassador of Jesus. You have the VIAL.

WHAT IS THE SPHERE FOR:

PREACHERS, ASSOCIATES, ELDERS, CHURCH WORKERS, MISSIONARIES, NON-PROFIT MINISTRIES, BIBLE COLLEGE PROFESSORS. ETC.?



There are a couple issues for those in 'full time ministry' positions.

Listen to this comment from a man in his 40's, a PK (preachers kid), he grew up in church, he went to camps and retreats, graduated from Bible College and at the time of taking RE/IAAR training and writing the following was on staff at a large church.

He humbly points out a problem so many of my students over the years have shared. While working in full time church jobs they were never trained in effective personal evangelism.

"This course has challenged me in that I have not made teaching a priority. I have not shared with another believer how to have conversations, how to explain the gospel or what Christianity is really about, and how to lead someone in becoming a disciple of Jesus. I feel that this is something God wants me to make a priority. I feel silly and embarrassed saying it because one would think that this is a standard requirement for anyone in the 'pastor' role."

I've seen it hundreds of times. A person can be working in 'full time vocational ministry' without ever having been trained in effective personal evangelism and to suggest to them that they need to be doing it usually falls on deaf ears and hearts. They might know how to preach in a service, teach in a class, do a wedding or funeral but to reach out to those beyond the walls of the church ministry, connect with them and sit down with them and share the Good News might never happen. **They need to be trained. It is never too late.**

Another issue is this. I have heard it said many times by church leaders in all these different ministry categories that they actually have little contact with unbelievers because they spend all their time with Christians in their ministry.

I even heard a man say he used to be a 'fanatic for evangelism' until he started to work for a worldwide mission agency (one of the biggest in the world) that resulted in his spending most

all his time with Christians. He wasn't happy to say that or to have seen that happen. He is not alone in that scenario. It can happen to anyone working in a church, mission or non-profit ministry. You can get so caught up in your organization, with your projects, your staff, your members or participants that you actually have little or no contact with non-Christians. Sometimes the contact one does have is very superficial.

So what is the SPHERE for all these fine Christian folks working in a 'Christian setting'? Don't overlook all the contacts you have in your work/vocation. You are an Ambassador for Jesus. That over rules your 'title' and calls you to use your position to always be alert for those contacts your vocation gives you as a leader in a congregation. So look at all the many possibilities that can bring you into contact with unbelievers:

- 1 If you are part of a congregation you likely have visitors. It goes without saying you need to have an active follow up program for them. You will have to determine what will best work in your setting. You need to get into as many of these people's homes as possible and do 'FORM' with them. Find a way you can connect with them.
- 2 Weddings; I know many preachers who make going through IAAR a regular part of marrying a couple. It is helping them see how the spiritual dimension of their marriage can grow.
- 3 Funerals; many of us have done IAAR with survivors of those we did funerals for. This can work by visiting them after the funeral and doing FORM with them.
- 4 Hospitals; you might meet a lot of people through hospital calling. Do FORM with them. We have reached many in this way.
- 5 Rest homes are full of people who need to be taken through FORM. You can figure out how to come in contact with them.
- 6 Visiting prisons? Lots of prospects there.
- 7 Counseling offers all kinds of contacts through which you can offer IAAR.
- 8 Neighbors; Yes, you have neighbors too. Are you reaching out to them?
- 9 All your worn paths; Yes, you get your hair cut or your car repaired, buy groceries etc. There are people there to connect with.

Remember Jim Larsen? You too can make or create all kinds of links into the community.

You have to be intentional about this.

You have to be prepared.

You have to have a plan.

You need to do it.

You can push yourself 'out into the world'.

How to share the Gospel (Offer the VIAL) with those you encounter in YOUR SPERE OF LIFE.



It starts with commitment to Jesus, revering him as Lord in your life.

It then takes obedience to his command to make NEW disciples.

It also takes preparation. Jesus spent three years with his disciples to get them ready. We must commit to seeing that the Christians we work with are well trained in how to take and offer the Good News. That might start with getting ourselves well trained in this too.

The purpose of RE/IAAR is to help Christians learn how to engage all the people on their WORN PATHS in a conversation that can lead to their being able to share the Gospel with them.

THE PRINCIPLE OF GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START.

We teach how to start a conversation with another person you just met. This is one of the major things that makes RE/IAAR 'Profoundly Unique'. This is a key part of our training.

We need to learn how to engage another person in a conversation that can lead to finding out IF they even need the VIAL (they may already be a disciple) or if they are even interested in learning more about it. We show how to find out both of those in a rather simple, calm and friendly conversation.

I like to say **“Our way of approaching someone is often more important than our message. If our approach is obnoxious, too aggressive, impersonal or offensive we will likely never get to share our message.”**



FORM shows us a great way to approach or engage people in a friendly conversation.



We teach how to do that using F.O.R.M.

FORM is an acrostic for Family, Occupation, Religion and Message.

This has changed the world for me in helping to know exactly how to begin a conversation with someone.

You can do this FORM in 20-30 minutes with someone you just met and might not see again. It can take longer; use your judgment. My goal is to get through FORM with anyone I can.

The circumstances don't always allow me to do this. I'm always ready if they do. I don't want to do it with someone if it might be embarrassing because others are around and listening in.

I was once in a conversation with a Christian leader who stated "I don't go into relationships with others with an agenda." I understood what he meant and I didn't respond right away but I did come back later in the conversation and addressed my view. I'm not sure the person has particularly liked me ever since but here is what I said. "I go into EVERY conversation with someone I've met with an agenda. I'm an Ambassador of Jesus. So I need to find out if the person I'm interacting with is a Christian or not. If they are, we are family and we have a responsibility toward each other. IF THEY AREN'T, I have a responsibility to attempt to share the Good News with them. It doesn't always happen but FORM is my way, if circumstances allow, to guide me through a conversation to find out the other persons 'status' with Jesus.

Here is how I begin the conversation using FORM.

It can vary a little from time to time but this is the basic form.

"Hi; I'm John, what's your name."

Then I start like clock work using FORM.

I don't talk about me.

It seems that some people, including Christians, only know how to talk about themselves; their aches and pains, their views on everything happening in the news that day. These folks normally don't make very good Ambassadors.

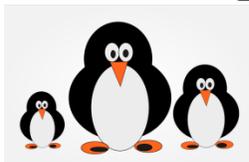
I use FORM to learn about them. They will do most of the talking.

You just need to learn and remember FORM. I think you can manage that part.

FORM is a guide for the conversation.

You start talking about things they are familiar with.

F stands for family.



So I usually start asking questions like:

“Do you live around here?”

I don't ask for the address etc. That would be too bold and personal.

“How long have you been in this area?”

(If it applies) “Where did you come from?”

“What brought you here?”

“Do you have many other relatives here?”

“How do you like it here?”

Their answers might bring up other items to carry on the conversation with such as if they answer they came from where you used to live: “Wisconsin; I was born there! Where did you live?”

O stands for Occupation.



After the conversation has 'run its course' on Family, I move on to O or Occupation.

I learned over the years to ask the question this way: “What line of work are you in?”

Or, if it is a young person I will ask “Are you in school or working?”

I don't ask “Where do you work?” Many people are unemployed and that can be embarrassing to them. If they want to tell me that it is up to them. Asking “What line of work are you in?”

can be answered by “I’m a nurse.” Now if they are unemployed that is up to them if they want to tell me.

Then I continue the conversation with more questions:

“Well that is interesting, how long have you been in nursing?

How did you get into that?

How long did it take to prepare or study to do that?

What do you like best about it?

What is the most challenging aspect about it?”

And there are other simple questions that might come up.

We just don’t need to ‘dig too deep’ or get too personal with people on these things.

R stands for religion.



After we have talked about Family and Occupation we then move on to R or Religion. I have been doing this for 40 years and I have never had anyone act offended by being asked this in this order. Most people have some kind of religious background and don’t mind sharing about it.

I have found that even atheists love to be asked this. They love to say “Oh, I’m an atheist. I don’t believe in God (or religion etc.)” That used to scare me off but now it doesn’t. We cover this in the training course. I just show interest and most all of them are happy to talk about it. It’s rare for them to ever have anyone even show interest in them and their experience.

So I ask, “That is interesting. How did you become an atheist?”

Behind most every atheist’s beliefs is a story of some kind. I don’t think people are born atheists. I’ve never encountered a 5 year old who declared they were an atheist. Now I’m sure if they had atheist parents they could be taught that. But in most cases youth or adult proclaiming to be atheists have been educated to be one or have had a bad experience that lead them to being one.

Just listen. Show interest. We deal with what to do with FORM with them when you get to M in the training. I have had a number of atheists go through IAAR with me and many of them have accepted Jesus. It is very interesting. I have never tried to set out to prove to them that the Bible is the Word of God before going through the lessons. While there are legitimate questions people will have I have found out that the Gospel will speak for itself in most cases.

When I offer and share IAAR I'm not trying to 'prove' anything; I'm just showing what the Bible says.

So how do we initiate a conversation with someone we have known for a long time with the goal in mind of seeing if they need, or would like to go through IAAR with us?

It can be with FORM also, but the nature of the questions would be a bit different for the obvious reason that you already know a lot about them.

It could go more like:

F; "How is the family?"

O; "How are things going at work?", or "How are things going for you here at the office."

If it is someone where you also work be careful you don't come across as the company spy, or the disgruntled worker looking to stir up trouble with other employees.

R; There are two possibilities.

1. "I was thinking, I have known you for years but I have never heard as to whether you have any religious background?"

If yes, "Are you active in it?"

If yes, "What do you do with it?"

If not, "What happened?"

2. Or, "I've noticed over the time I have known you that you are active in XXX faith/church? Is that right? How did you get involved in that? What do you do with them?"

Ask questions.

Not judgmental ones like, "You know that is a cult don't you?" "How can you belong to them?"

With people you just met or with someone you have known for a long time, you are patiently working toward the GOLDEN QUESTION that comes as part of the M of FORM.

M stands for Message.

This is the shortest part of the whole conversation. It might only take 5 minutes or so. Be patient, not in a rush, respectful, showing interest in them as a person.

M or Message is done through

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE GOLDEN KEY

Let's assume you are trapped in a room with others where someone locked the doors on you. Now you have to get out there. There are two basic ways to do it.

Get a group of strong looking folks and have them get on each side of a table or something and use it like a battering ram and break the door open.

Or you can ask if someone has the key! If so you can simply and easily put the key in the key hole, unlock the doors and walk out.

GUESS WHAT?

I HAVE A GOLD KEY FOR YOU.



It is a key that can quite often easily open the door to set up taking someone through IAAR who otherwise might have been closed to an invitation to 'go to church' or to even have a discussion about God.

It is amazing how many hundreds of times this has worked for me. There are a few important issues behind this question.

There are some things I know about every unbeliever that I'm confident they don't know and aren't aware of.

Here is one. Anyone who DOESN'T have Jesus cannot have the abundant life that Jesus spoke of in John 10:10. Regardless of their status in life; rich, beautiful, popular, all star, etc. IF they don't have Jesus (regardless of what they do have) they don't have the abundant life that only Jesus can give; it is an inner life than nothing else will give them.

Second, in Ecclesiastes 3:11 it says that God "has put eternity in the heart of man." That is, every person alive has an 'innate' desire for life after death. They might not know it but it is there. God himself put it there. So I know that if I address the issue of life after death, most people are going to be interested in knowing what the Bible says about it; and if there is life

after death they certainly want to be sure they will be part of it. Yes, people can harden their hearts to this but they can't 'delete' what God has put there.

Third, Paul wrote about Gentile unbelievers in Romans 2:15, "They show that the requirements of the law **are written on their hearts**, their consciences also bearing witness and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them."

I only grasped the significance of this a couple years ago but the implications are HUGE. GOD has written his law on the heart of every human being who has ever lived. We call it a conscience. Some have 'hardened' their hearts to God for any number of reasons but they can't erase what God has written there.

Our sharing the Gospel with others is God's most powerful way of breaking through any barrier, doubt, objection, resistance or hardness that they might have created between themselves and God.

I like using the example of a small flash light you can buy at most stores. When you buy it there is a small plastic tab between the battery and the bulb. You have to take out the tab for the battery to connect with the light bulb so it can shine. The purpose of that tab is so that other people won't be trying out your flashlight so many times that they wear out the battery before you purchase it.

Many people have 'tab's or impediments between their spirit, their heart and God. We have to try and help remove the impediments to allow the life force in them to connect with Jesus, the light. The BEST way to do that is through their hearing the Gospel. While other things can certainly be part of the process, God himself said that 'Faith comes by hearing the Word of God.'

Paul said "I preach Christ crucified" time and again. That is more powerful than all the apologetics, testimonies or whatever we can try to use with other people. Paul didn't preach himself, the church or good works to people. He got to the heart of the matter. That is what we do with "It's All About Relationship". We start by looking at the Cross and what Jesus did for us in dying for us there.

I've seen that Good News break through to killers, PhD evolutionists, playboys, religious people, etc.

That is not to say that we don't need apologetic resources to help people at times.

Josh McDowell's book is a great basic book that will answer the questions and doubts most have about Jesus. I have given out hundreds of these to people I've gone through IAAR with. You can get them in bulk at www.josh.org
Keep some of them on hand along with your copies of IAAR.

So what is the Gold Key and how do you use it.

When we get to M of FORM we are ready to use the Key.

We have heard their R or religious history.

It doesn't matter if it was very little or they have been religious most all their life.

M IS FOR MESSAGE;

I must move on to M or MESSAGE.



Up to this point I haven't talked very much.

I have been asking questions and listening as outlined above.

M might only take 5 minutes. It is simple and sweet.

Here is how it works. Here is what I say at this point.

I want to ask one more important question.

I first learned about this 'Kennedy Question' years ago when I learned a program named Evangelism Explosion. It is called the Kennedy question because a preacher by the name of Kennedy came up with it. Oh, it was popular. I tried using it years ago as part of Evangelism Explosions' method but using the question as taught in that program seemed very aggressive, confrontive and almost like spiritual entrapment. Years later I found a way to use it in FORM and it is very powerful in achieving what I want to do; set up IAAR studies with unbelievers. I have asked hundreds and hundreds of people the question at the end of FORM and I haven't had ONE person seem irritated, annoyed or angry about it. They have all seemed to be thinking deeply about the question.

The power of this question is found in the assumptions I just covered above, especially Ecclesiastes 3:11 and Romans 2:15.

Here is the question, the **GOLD KEY**:

So after we finish with R I go to M and I ask this, the Golden Key question:

"You know, I'm curious. I'd like to ask you a question in light of your background (and it doesn't matter what it was). It is a tough question. It really makes you stop and think.

Have you come to the place in your life where you could say for sure that if you were to die today you would go to heaven?"

You need to learn that question but it is pretty easy to do. I ask the question and then I just wait for their answer. The KEY is in the door.

Most often the response is some form of “Ah, no, I don’t think so.” Or “I’m not sure.” That is the response I’m looking for.

Then I ask this simple and logical question, “If you could be would you want to be?” 9 out of 10 people are going to say YES.

The key has turned, the door is opening.

Then I say, **“If you would be interested** I would be glad to get together with you and share 4 lessons I have about what the Bible says a person needs to do to be sure that when they die they will go to heaven. There are four lessons each about 35 minutes long. I have found it is best to do one a week over 4 weeks. It is just too much for one time. If you are interested I can come to your place, share the lesson and be on my way. Would you like to do that?”

Then you wait for the answer.
I still am amazed at how this works so often.
At times it still even ‘shocks’ me.

Most of the time I will explain again that there are 4 lessons and we usually do 1 a week. They take about 35-40 minutes. We leave a printed copy with them. We will share the lesson and be on our way. We won’t be ‘camping’ in their living room.

If I sense some hesitancy I will often add “Just so you know I won’t be trying to pressure you to do something you wouldn’t want to do. I will just show you what the Bible says, try and answer any questions you have and leave. What you do with it all will be up to you.

If they say yes to being interested in hearing the lessons, then we set up a time and place, often starting the next week.
I will give them my phone number so if any problem comes up they can call me.

Then we go on to something else in the conversation. “Aren’t we having great weather.” Or “How about the playoffs!”

I’ve accomplished my goal. I have the studies set up. Now I’ll be fervently in prayer for them till we meet again. I might see them every day at work but I don’t keep bringing it all up with them. If they ask questions I will respond but I want to put it off till we get into the lessons the next week or whenever it is.

THE PRINCIPLE OF ‘IF YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED’.

Do you remember their TERMS, TURF AND TIME?

This is a huge part of that scenario. I don't think I have ever done IAAR with anyone of whom I didn't ask that. It applies to the TERMS. This is SO important. When I ask someone "If you would be interested they fully understand what I mean. They hear me saying, "It is up to you. It is your choice and decision. If you aren't interested I will respect your decision and drop it."

I have found over the decades that people really appreciate that. They LIKE it. It actually helps them trust us and be more open to listening to the lessons.

Remember when they say YES to the question that they would like to be sure that when they died they would go to heaven, to then ask them "If you would be interested" and then offer to take them through the 4 lessons, explaining doing one a week for four weeks at their home if they chose that at a time that is convenient for them.

O.K.

The KEY only works if you use it.

If you wait for the door to open itself, it won't happen with most people.

If you try knocking the door down by force most will reinforce, bolt and lock it.

NOW CATCH THIS. Many models of evangelism start with M, going for the gold on the first shot! Doing FORM is so much better.

THE PRINCIPLE OF BEING A CURIOUS INTERVIEWER, RATHER THAN AN ATTACKER



We have all seen both kinds. You can do an interview where the goal is to learn more about the person being interviewed. The other kind of interview is where it becomes obvious that the Interviewer has their opinion or 'case' on a subject and they are out to prove the other person wrong. It is really not an interview but a 'set up' for the Interviewer to express their views and the interviewee is simply their pawn in the process. The Interviewer really isn't interested in the other person or their view, they are just there as a setting for the Interviewer to preach their view.

As you do FORM with people or have a conversation about faith before or after doing IAAR, You don't want to:

Attack,
Belittle,
Criticize,
Mock,
Or Bully

A PERSON WHO HAS A DIFFERENT VIEW POINT OR FAITH THAN YOU DO.

Not only do you 'not have to' but you 'don't want to.'
You are not going to win someone to Jesus by treating them that way.

Most Christians are very familiar with John 3:16 but often stop without learning 3:17 which says that Jesus didn't come into the world to condemn it but to save it. The world is already condemned. It needs salvation. To attack, run down or berate a person for their different and maybe erring beliefs is like screaming at someone who is drowning that they are drowning. They need someone to reach out a hand, a life buoy.

You are a life saver and an Ambassador.

It is not your job to point out the sins of everyone in the world. You are there to let them know the message of the King who sent you. There is life and that life is in Jesus.

I recently read a statement that pointed out that we must focus on what other people NEED (the VIAL or Good News) and not focus on their morals, sin, offenses or life style. If you do the later you will come across as negative, judgmental, arrogant, self righteous and most people won't listen to you.

Keep "first things first."

Jesus is first.

Don't get caught up in the side issues for now.

Be gentle and respectful.

Col. 4:6 says "Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Those are great points.

ALWAYS; not some of the time.

FULL OF GRACE. Grace is when we get what we don't deserve. Maybe the person has a bad attitude and 'deserves' sharp replies, but give them kindness instead. That is what God has done with us.

SEASONED WITH SALT. Salt brings out the flavors and adds flavor to food. He didn't say let your conversation be seasons with hot peppers that 'burn'.

I Peter 3:15 says to speak with gentleness and respect.
What more do we need?

When dealing with people of other views show interest in them, in their story, and in their thinking and reasoning. Be like a curious, interested interviewer instead of someone out to prove them wrong, like a prosecuting attorney.

You don't HAVE TO MAKE A POINT, PROVE A POINT or SHOW THEM HOW WRONG THEY ARE as part of your strategy to be able to share the Gospel with them. You can undermine your goal or objective in doing so.

IN THE CASE OF AN ATHEIST I will often ask them the following:

"Since you've become an adult have you ever had the opportunity to sit down with someone and hear a clear presentation of what the Christian life is all about?" If they haven't I offer them the opportunity to sit down with me and hear a clear presentation of what it is all about.

Or, I will ask them this question:

"According to your understanding of the Bible what does a person have to do to go to its' heaven?"

In most cases their answers will be wrong. Most will say something like;

"Be good long enough,
Go to church,
Keep ten commandments or golden rule."

When they give a wrong answer my response is this:

"That is interesting. That is what I've found many believe. If you would be interested, I would be willing to meet with you and share 4 presentations I have (each is about 35 minutes long; we do them at your home or where ever). They will show you exactly what Christianity is really all about. The truth is if I believed it was what you think it is, I wouldn't be a part of it either. Actually it does not teach that. If you would be interested I'd be glad to share the presentations with you; there is no pressure to do anything. I'll just show you what it says. And in the end I understand you still might not believe it but at that point you will at least know correctly what you don't believe. What you think it says is not correct. **Would you be interested?** I think you might even find it interesting. I won't be pushing or pressuring you to believe something or do something you don't want to do. I'll just show you what it says. What you do with it from that point is up to you. Would you be interested in that?"

I have been surprised how many times they are interested.

Using FORM and the Golden Key (the Kennedy question) in this context and in this order is much better than most ways Christians are often told to 'reach out' and witness to others.

SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES of RELATIONAL EVANGELISM



Over the years we have learned quite a number of what we will call 'principles'. They are all part of the model and method of Relational Evangelism and what makes this model unique in the world of evangelism. Let them become part of your way of working with people in reaching out and offering them the Good News.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SNAKE AND THE DOVE



I had been struggling with the whole issue of sharing the Gospel or witnessing as some called it, for years as a young Christian. I didn't like the confrontive models of evangelism. The problem was most of them were just that. They were too aggressive and 'in your face' and seemed to lack respect and kindness. I backed off from them. Then one day I read the following in

Matthew. Jesus was sending his disciples out to preach in His name and for His cause. He gave them several instructions. Among them was the following:

Matthew 10:16 “I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as *shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves*.”

As I read it I gained an insight that has guided my life ever since.

Point; Jesus was sending them out to MAKE new disciples, not offend them or condemn them. He reminded them that this mission could be dangerous with some people. Then he told them to be ‘as crafty as a serpent and gentle as a snake.’ And it smacked me in the face.

I realized many sincere committed Christians had it backwards. You can see it by the way they go about trying to win people to Jesus. The truth is they are driving more people away than they are winning over.

Let’s talk about snakes for a minute. Where ever I do our training live, I like to ask people if any of them like snakes. There might be 1 or 2 that raise their hands but most don’t like snakes. So I ask why? We fear them. We fear they might strike us or bite us. Many of them are poisonous and it could kill us. We avoid them and run from them. In some cases people will kill them.

Now, how about doves? I always ask the people if they are afraid of doves. No one raises their hand. Doves are global symbols of peace. They are known to be gentle and harmless. I have never read of someone dying as a result of a dove attack.

Back to Jesus teaching his disciples. His point was this. As he was sending them out to ‘make new followers or believers’ they should be as crafty as a snake, that is ***think like one don’t act like one***. Snakes are smart hunters. They don’t go thrashing through the forest looking for its prey. It knows how to get close to what it wants. It is smart and very patient.

Jesus knew that if his disciples, full of enthusiasm and conviction went out and acted like snakes, striking at them, they would scare people off and no one would hear the whole message.

Back to the doves. Jesus told his disciples that the way of approaching people shouldn’t scare people off any more than if a dove landed near them. Rather than run they might want to put their hand out and see if the dove would walk up on it. His point? Don’t give people anymore reason to fear you by your approach and style of preaching than they would a dove. Be GENTLE. Be humble.

You are not there to attack, judge or condemn them. You are there to offer life.

I like the ‘use your brain’ and ‘be gentle’ approach.

This teaching of Jesus has greatly influenced the development of Relational Evangelism.

In another place Jesus said that the children of the world are often more shrewd than are the children of light in the way they deal with each other. We need to learn from that.

[Luke 16:8](#) “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted **shrewdly**. For the people of this world are **more shrewd** in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light.

We, the children of light, need to be smart in the way we seek to go about making disciples. We often miss the way Jesus worked with unbelievers.

As you become familiar with RE/IAAR you will get the basic tools to do what you need to do whatever your Sphere is. You will need to be wise in how you utilize RE/IAAR there. Be crafty and gentle. Crafty in this case doesn't mean deceitful but wise; use your brain and heart.

We ought to work hard to be competent at whatever we do (our vocation), while NOT having to be the best, smartest, richest, etc. Few of us will be 'THE' best. Yes, we ought to work hard, but not to the point of losing site of our life mission or calling. We ought to work hard at our vocation without making it so important in our life that we lose everything else that is important; family, health, testimony, future, or even our relationship with Jesus. We have to be careful of that in our 'avocation' too. We can get so over involved that we lose other important relationships in life. There needs to be balance. That is not always easy but we need to work to keep that in our life.

Work as unto the Lord in all you do but don't get sidetracked.

You are where you are to be an Ambassador.

You are in your SPHERE to be an Ambassador.

Let this sink in!!

We need to be very aware that others in the SPHERE where we will be living and working won't always share our enthusiasm for Jesus. II Corinthians 4:4. *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Some of the others we will encounter are living for self, promotion, power, gain or pleasure.

They will not like us or our presence. In some cases they will even try and get rid of us in order to silence us. Be humble, kind, respectful and patient in the face of rejection, opposition or persecution. Remember; they are watching us. We are there to patiently reach out to them. God just might be able to use us to share His love with them.

Our MISSION in life is greater than any given SPHERE we might find ourselves in at any given time.

Our work and the positive results of our involvement in any given Sphere might be important for the operation, maintenance and advancement of civilization as we know it, but our work as Ambassadors has eternal implications for every person alive.

Remember the VIAL.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MID-WIFE.



A mid wife's job is to help a women with her delivery.
 She doesn't go out and shout in the streets; "You must get pregnant."
 She doesn't show up at the house and tell the woman she has 30 minutes to deliver.
 She doesn't pace back and forth acting annoyed or irritated if it is taking too long.
 She doesn't in her impatience start pushing on the woman's stomach to hurry up the process and try and force the baby out.
 She doesn't keep trying to make the mother feel guilty for keeping the mid wife there so long.

IT IS NOT ABOUT THE MID-WIFE!

No. She is NOT the one having the birth. She is there to support, encourage, inform, help and deal with any side issues or crisis that might come up.

As Ambassadors we are not the one's having 'a birth'. We have already been born into a new relationship with Jesus. Our command is to make NEW disciples. In our efforts to do that we are there to support, encourage, inform, help and deal with any side issues or crisis that might come up. We are there to help another person who is investigating what 'being born again' is all about and if they are interested. There is no need or value in being impatient, pushy, demanding, threatening, condemning or creating distractions. We are there to help them in their spiritual birth.

This task calls for respect, patience, kindness, humbleness, teaching, encouraging, being available and ready to deal with whatever comes up.

PRINCIPLE OF THE SPEED OF A RELATIONSHIP



Jim Phillips was the one I first heard use this phrase. It is an important idea.

While there are some people I have been able to set up doing the IAAR lessons with during our first meeting, there are other cases when it might take months or years to get to that point. There is not one set rule or model other than to proceed with others 'at the speed of a relationship.'

I am always looking for the opportunity to offer IAAR to anyone I know. I also realize I need to be careful and sensitive to the relationship and in my eagerness not rush it to the point of actually closing the door to what I want.

Sometimes I'm able to do FORM all in the first meeting. At other times, especially with someone I trust I will be seeing more often, I will proceed a bit slower and I might work through FORM over a period of weeks or months.

I wouldn't recommend doing all of FORM with a brand new neighbor I just met for the first time. Maybe I'd just do F and O. It is very likely I will see them more often but if I start with all of FORM on the first meeting I may never see them again. They will always look outside to see if I'm there before they venture out and if I am they will stay in the house. The same would apply to the first day on a new job, etc.

So we need to be in prayer about this, be alert, be wise and sensitive; always ready but seeking the right moment to proceed from FO to RM.

We need to be crafty as a serpent and gentle as a dove. Remember? So the speed by which we engage another person in a conversation using FORM can vary from situation to situation. If I'm with someone and I know I might not ever see them again I try and do all of FORM right then.

THE PRINCIPLE OF BEING A 'FRIEND' OR 'BEING FRIENDLY'.



Years ago I picked up the idea somewhere that you had to be ‘a friend’ to someone before you could really share the Gospel with them. Later I discovered that is wrong. I have shared the Gospel with all kinds of people with whom I had no ‘friendship’ or previous long lasting relationship. I have done FORM with many people I had just met and we started the IAAR lessons the next week.

They really knew very little about me. They don’t know what my moral life is like. I’ve not been around them for them to see if I practice what I’m preaching. The message I’m offering is NOT about the Ambassador, it is from the King and what he has to offer them. If we start talking about US the dynamics all change. That includes thinking that we have to share our story or our testimony as a way to ‘get our foot in the door’ or earn the right so share more about Jesus.

I’ve not reached out to them and done nice things for them. Most often we just met. So I didn’t win them over by my doing good things for them. Oh, I end up doing a lot of good things for them down the road but that is normally not a necessary condition that I have to fulfill before sharing IAAR with them.

When I do FORM with people I don’t make it a point to tell them about MY Family, MY Occupation, or My Religious Background. It is rather amazing how many hundreds or people I’ve done IAAR with who had little knowledge of me before we did the lessons. I hadn’t been ‘friends’ with them for weeks, months or years before offering and doing IAAR with them. If someone asks me about any of those things at any point I’m happy to share it but it doesn’t happen most of the time. I don’t want to get long winded about ME either. This is not about ME.

When engaging FORM with people I like to tell ‘trainees’ that if you do more than 50% of the talking YOU Are talking too much. This is NOT about you. Most of our talking should come in the form of questions (FORM questions) and any follow up questions (i.e. How do you like living here; how do you like that kind of work, etc.) or positive comments on their responses.

Here is the PRINCIPLE folks.

I don’t have to be a ‘friend’ with someone before I offer and share IAAR but I DO NEED TO BE FRIENDLY as I reach out to them, seek to engage them in a conversation using FORM.

Using FORM as we suggest, if done kindly, with genuine interest in the other person comes across as being friendly. Yes, even this Turtle (me) using FORM has won the confidence of hundreds of different kinds of people (after just having met them) enough so to be allowed to share IAAR with them; hit men, playboys, transvestites, scientists, cab drivers, street people etc.

THE PRINCIPLE OF MUDDIED WATERS



When we are reaching out to others we need to be very patient and understanding with them. It will increase our effectiveness. We need to think about their life experience with religion as well as Christianity in the past. It might have been very negative. They might have been 'turned off' to God and religion by some unfortunate negative relationships, teachings or experiences. Don't over look that possibility. Remember, you are a mid-wife, helping the person with their fears and misunderstandings with the hope that 'a healthy new birth' will take place.

My buddy Jim Larsen is the one I first heard describe it this way; *the waters have been muddied.*

Some have had bad experiences with religious people, and in some cases Christians.

Some have witnessed religious people leading sinful lives and conclude they are no different and they don't need what the others preach about.

Some have had bad experiences with a church or church leaders.

Some have heard false teachings presented as Christianity and thus rejected the real thing in the process.

Some have had bad life experiences. Many have experienced a loss of a loved one, a marriage, been in an abusive situation, etc. and conclude that their life experience does not match with there being a God of Love. If there was a God and if he was loving, why would he allow that to have happened?

Some have been negatively influenced by family, teachers, stars or friends against all religion.

Some are living a life style that they know in their heart is wrong and would have to change if they 'get right with God' but they don't want to give up their life.

Some have wandered into the meetings of a congregation or group that has weird or bad teaching, practices, or requirements. What they teach and practice doesn't really come from Jesus or represent what He is really all about but the observers don't know that. So Jesus gets thrown out with the weird stuff.

Some have been 'educated' into unbelief in school or by others. Some are just 'hard hearted'. A person isn't born rejecting the true God but any number of things can lead them down that path.

When people are turned off to religion, they normally tend to include Christianity in the same category as a religion even though it isn't. I think it was Josh McDowell among others who defined the difference as; "Religion is man trying to reach up to God; Christianity is God reaching down to man." So Christianity has been thrown in the muddy pond in the mind of many people. They end up being closed to the Gospel.

The waters have been muddied. The nice clean, clear, pure waters have been messed up and they are no longer appealing to many to want to 'jump in.'

Who would want to swim in this pool of water after the buffalos leave? Not many. We would prefer a pristine clear pool to swim in.



So be patient. Part of your job as an Ambassador might be to become a **WATER PURIFIER of Muddied Waters.**

We can try to help clean up poor concepts and misunderstandings, the muddied waters. You are there to help clean up the waters not make them muddier. Taking people through IAAR is a great way to start.

THE PRINCIPLE OF DIVINE APPOINTMENTS'



When I do live trainings I ask people if they understand the phrase "Divine Appointments." Most have some kind of understanding of it. It is when we experience a moment when we meet someone and it seems obvious to us that God set up our meeting with them. It wasn't an accident or coincidence; it was a God incident!

The story of Phillip and the Ethiopian treasurer (Acts 8:26) is such an experience. God set the meeting up. He saw to it that Phillip was at the right time at the right place. It was a 'divine appointment' or meeting. The man was seeking God in his life. God responded and sent help. Phillip knew what to do and say. If he hadn't GOD WOULDN'T HAVE SENT HIM. He would have sent someone else.

Here is what I have observed about 'divine appointments.' They happen a lot more to people who have been prepared to share the Gospel with those who are seeking God. Why would God send someone to a seeker IF the one sent didn't know what to do other than invite them to church?

I have experienced so many 'divine appointments' in my life since learning how to use RE/IAAR. It is so exciting to see how God is actively working in bringing people to Him. We can be a part of that process IF WE ARE PREPARED. There are a lot of people out there seeking God. Why would God arrange for me to be the one to meet with a seeker when I don't really have a clue as to what to do.

So, get prepared and you will see 'divine appointments' happening in your life. You have to be prepared **and you have to be looking.**

I consider every new encounter with anyone, anywhere at anytime as a possible divine appointment.

THE PRINCIPLE OF "ARE YOU READY AND WILLING?"

ready. set.
go!



IF you know what to do, and even if God arranges some divine appointments the next step is you have a **MAKE A HEAD/HEART** decision to actually begin the conversation with the intent of offering IAAR at some point. This leads us to:

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE 5 SECOND RULE.



Obviously all this training means we need to be willing to spend the time and energy to engage with other people. We have to be willing to take that first step knowing we could be rejected at some point or that this could turn into doing IAAR. We don't know until we 'jump'. It could take time and energy to make it all happen over the coming weeks or months.

Let me tell you about the 5 Second Rule.

I first heard of this when I saw an article on the internet news titled "How to pick up a woman in a bar in 5 seconds." Now, I wasn't in the hunt for another women but the whole idea seemed rather absurd to me. So I read it and here is what I found. Sometime later a friend of mine told me this was an old business practice that is taught to sales people too.

Here is the idea. The author said that when a man enters a bar and sees a woman he would like to talk to and maybe pick up on, he will have to decide within 5 seconds as to whether he will actually go up to her and start talking. The longer he waits the greater the likely hood that he will end up not talking to her. The longer he waits the more doubts will arise and take over his mind, such as "Oh, she won't want to talk with me. Or, "She will probably laugh at me." Or, "She will tell me to bug off." Or, "The guy a few feet away from her is her boyfriend and he will punch me in the face." And so it goes. The more time that passes the more doubts and fears arise.

As I read the article I thought the same concept applies to Relational Evangelism! In many cases I will have to decide within seconds if I'm going to engage a person in a FORM conversation. The longer I wait, the greater the likelihood I won't even talk with them or all I'll talk about is the weather or sports.

Doubts will arise. "Oh, they don't look like someone who would be interested. I'm sure they would probably be offended and tell me to get lost." And so we back off.

We have to trust the process.

I've approached men in prison, drug addicts, alcoholics, scientists, politicians, transvestites, (You name it.) and if I hadn't learned how to use FORM I would have scared myself off with my own doubts and fears. Don't let your fears stop you. Pray to God for boldness and enough love to care about the person to find out if they need the VIAL. They could be dying and you could have possession of what they need.

I like to picture engaging someone in FORM like opening oysters searching for pearls. You can't tell from the **outer shell** whether there is a pearl inside or just a piece of sand. You won't know until you open it. When I am with someone I can't tell from their outward appearance or behavior what is 'inside'. God knows what's going on but I won't know if they are interested in knowing more about God unless I engage in conversation with them and FORM is my way of doing that.



I have 5 seconds in many cases to decide if I'm going to take that first step and engage them in conversation. There are times when my "quiet, shy personality shouts out "Don't get involved. Just shut up and stay in your 'corner.' The uncaring John can come up with many reasons why not to take that first step.

"Oh they wouldn't be interested.

They will be annoyed.

I don't have time for this now.

I'm tired. I don't feel like talking."

Etc.

You get the point.

I know I can't do that. I have to give it a try and God has surprised me so many times. God is cheering me on, "Come on John. Do it. I'm counting on you. They need you to risk it!"

There are thousands of people out there who will respond positively to our doing FORM with them and they will be interested in hearing the four IAAR lessons. We have to take the first step and begin the conversation. No conversation, no offer made.

Satan is the only one who wants to see us shut up, back off and 'leave the other person alone.' He is shouting out, or whispering in my ear: "John, don't do it."



When I don't do it Satan wins, Jesus loses. The other person loses. I lose. I hate losing.

PRINCIPLE OF IN SEASON AND OUT OF SEASON



Where ever you are.
 With whomever you are.
 What ever time it is.
 When you feel like it or not.
 Be ready.

II Timothy 4:2 Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season;...with great patience and careful instruction.

Paul isn't talking about just standing in a pulpit in this admonition. He is talking about all of us being prepared for any given opportunity to share the Good News.

With the Gospel, there is not one time of year to plant 'the seed' and another to harvest the crop.

With the Gospel, all year long is 'planting time' and 'harvest time.'

We must be ready. It is not to be done just at church or in your home group.

It can be done at a meal, in a casual or planned meeting. I like to say that you can do

FORM with:

ANYONE

ANYWHERE ANYTIME

With the goal of setting up an appointment to go through IAAR with them. All this is true if we are alert, ready and intentionally looking to connect with people in a calm, casual way.

This doesn't just happen if someone happens to show up at a church service on Christmas or Easter or some other event.

By the way,
Farmers don't plant their seeds in the barn.
Hunters don't go hunting in their living room!
Fishermen don't fish in their bathtub.

They all have to get out THERE and they have to know how to plant, hunt and fish or they will die of starvation.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE RABBIT TRAIL



It is so easy to get distracted and go off chasing down rabbit trails which take me away from the goal. The goal is to share the Gospel and plant the seed.

While we need to be willing to address other subjects, questions, doubts or objections people have we must stay focused as best as possible on planting the seed. There are hundreds of side issues that we can get caught up in that will detour us and often close the door to being able to share the Gospel.

Abortion

Using drugs or alcohol

What is marriage and who can marry

Sexual life styles

Your opinion about weapons

Which political party is the 'right one'.

The inconsistent lives of some Christian leaders

Aliens

Evolution or Biblical creation

And a thousand other issues.

While I'm willing to address other issues I try and get to IAAR first.

I have one huge example of a personal failure in my not practicing what I'm preaching here.

We will always be learning. Sometimes that includes failing. We need to learn from our failures. This is an example of where the professor didn't practice what he preached and while the model worked amazing well up to sitting down to do IAAR I let it all fall apart and I lost the opportunity to share Jesus.

Let me tell you about Joe. I sat in the back middle isle with him on a trip home from South America. We were each on the isle with two empty seats in between. We had greeted each other before takeoff. A while into the flight I determined I needed to talk with him. Guess what I started with? Yes, FORM. Oh, he told me a lot about his life, more than I asked. He ended up telling me about his divorce, his kids etc. He really opened up. Then I asked him about Occupation. He was an official for a Teamsters Union: 30 years in the Union. He told me a lot about his work and when that sort of wore down he watched a movie or two. I knew he wasn't going anywhere without me! It was an 8 hour flight. So I let it be for the time being. About an hour and a half or so before arriving in L.A. I resumed FORM and asked him about R. He had some religious experience in a very formal denomination but had dumped it years before. Then I asked him the GOLD KEY question. He wasn't sure. I offered him IAAR. He was interested. I told him I lived a couple hours away from him but that I was up in his area several times a year and we could meet for lunch and do IAAR. He agreed. Wow. Amazing.

All was going great until the first lunch. I had the first lesson with me and was prepared to do it after eating. But it was noisy there and we had a nice conversation and I put off doing the first lesson. Goof ball (me)! Uuggghhhh. He was ready. He didn't say he had to rush off. I let the circumstances, noise etc. throw me off.

Then we decided to meet a few weeks later in another place. It was quieter and I had the lesson with me. He had a question that ended up taking me down a 'rabbit trail.' He asked if I believed in aliens and space ships. I don't even recall what my answer was but I should have just said I really didn't know enough about it all to say and then suggest we get to the lesson. I didn't.

He asked, I 'bit' and it took us off the trail and away from the objective of sharing the Gospel. Again, we didn't get to the lesson. Again, goof ball (me).

We talked about meeting again. BUT in a week or so I got an email from him. My stomach sunk as I read it. Had sent me a list of about 15 different questions, doubts and objections he had about the Bible, God, Jesus, etc. As I read the list I realized I was done. It wasn't that there

weren't good answers for everything he wrote but I realized that IF I didn't answer them very convincingly I would never get another chance to share the Gospel with him.

I did try. I wrote responses to all the questions but I was right. It didn't work at that point. Who knows what would have happened if I had stayed on track and presented the lessons but I would never know. I pray to God that someone else will come along the way and finish the job I goofed on. Uuggghhh.

I did try. But I lost my best opportunity. He was sitting across the booth from me.

I didn't get right to it.

I got distracted.

I was too cautious.

I was fearful.

I was trying to be 'too' nice, patient, understanding, etc.

When a cancer specialist discovers you have cancer we want them to get to it.

It is nice if he has nice bedside manner, but get to the cancer, please!!!!

I experienced firsthand what I teach not to do. FORM worked up until I dropped the ball. I didn't get right to lesson, I got distracted which allowed him to start coming up with all kinds of other issues.

I have discovered in many, many cases that if people hear the Good News, it will either completely eliminate any major concerns they had or at least table them. Often they will move forward and accept Jesus and find answers to their questions later. I think a lot of people deal with and engage in secondary issues because they don't know the main topic; Jesus and what he brings us. Until they know the truth about Jesus they don't have anything else to deal with other than the questions and doubts that they have heard, read about or thought up themselves.

STAY ON TRACK. Once they find out about Jesus much of the other disappears.

A lot of the other issues are like FAKE NEWS that Satan throws out there to get people off track. We need to STAY ON COURSE and not get caught up in chasing down rabbit trails, never to get back to the VIAL. Give them the TRUTH. The Truth (Jesus) will set them free.

The place for apologetics.

Apologetics have an important place in evangelism but I feel at times we can get into apologetic arguments or debates when it isn't necessary or before it is really a good time to take that road. There are lots of great resources to help us defend the faith, the Bible, Jesus, God, etc.

Josh McDowell I have given out hundreds of "More Than a Carpenter" to people I have been doing IAAR with. It helps answer most of the basic questions or doubts people have. He has many other books that are very valuable too.

David Wood; his life story; links to working with Muslims

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DakEcY7Z5GU> Why I became a Christian; former atheist
<https://network.crcna.org/muslim-ministry/why-should-someone-ministry-muslims-be-aware-david-wood-and-acts-17-apologetics>

Josh McDowell; His life story ; former atheist

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhJ9HkaR8Gg>

Francis Chan; For those who don't enjoy evangelism

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPDKTDM1zDs>

How a French Atheist becomes a Christian Theologian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZwC2ndcb50>

Nabeel Qureshi; A Muslim who became a Christian

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bjv2t7PC7E>

Ravi Zacharias; Apologist

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDMOEj6lneZWgrp-r8KqXIQ>

Frank Turek; Apologist; Author, I don't have enough faith to be an Atheist

<https://www.youtube.com/user/TurekVideo>

Lee Stobel; former atheist; author

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=lee+stroble

Dr. Edward Fudge What about hell?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHUPpmbTOV4>

Reasons for Jesus; great site

<http://reasonsforjesus.com/10-quick-replies-to-atheist-arguments/>

Christianity for Skeptics; Dr. Steve Kumar with Dr. Jonathan Sarfati

Stephen Williams; author; What your Atheist professor doesn't know (But should).

<https://www.facebook.com/SteveWilliams808?fref=search>

You can do a lot of your own research on other good resources to help with apologetics or the defense of the faith. Be careful to not let your research and excitement for delving into apologetics hinder you from reaching out with the Gospel.

Listen closely to these two quotes by two great writers on the Christian faith.

The first is by Dr. Timothy Keller; *The Reason for God*; Pg.97. This is a very profound and insightful comment. ***“Only after drawing conclusions about the person of Christ, the***

resurrection, and the central tenets of the Christian message should one think through the various options with regard to creation and evolution. Essential doctrine is what new believers should concentrate on. So many side discussions and debates which boil down to a matter of opinion and do not affect our relationship with Christ or our salvation.”

Many of those who are atheists became so through their studies of evolution in school or a university. There are all kinds of professors who ridicule the Christian faith and the Bible.

My premise is this. I want to help any person deal with any obstacle to having faith in Jesus such as; Did Jesus live, was he just one of many, how can you believe in Biblical creation, etc? There are hundreds of possible topics. I have heard most of them and have studied most of them. I have also learned that most people will ‘take a stand’ with just about any topic under the sun, fight for it and defend it until they are given a good understanding of the Gospel. A clear presentation of the Gospel often puts to rest or at least puts many of the concerns people have on the shelf. Once seeing Jesus they are willing to wait and work on the other issues. Sometimes it takes a combination of hearing the Gospel and sharing other evidences. To get in an apologetic stance and try and argue and convince others on all the side issues **before sharing** the Gospel is not the best strategy. IF we can share the Gospel first, in a calm, casual and respectful manner we will have done the best we can in helping someone on their journey to Jesus. If I debate other issues and am not convincing or lose the case, my experience is that they really see no reason to go on and hear the Gospel.

Here is the second quote from David Limbaugh’s book **Jesus On Trial**. It is an excellent apologetic book. It is a long one but it is very good.

Dr. David Limbaugh’s Jesus On Trial; Pg.334. ***“It’s wonderful to convince someone that Christianity’s truth claims are supported by substantial evidence, but what good is defending the faith if the person to whom you are defending it to ends up knowing very little about it after you’ve presented your case?”***

Do you hear what he is saying? You can ‘win an argument or battle’ and lose the war. If I can only get to one thing with someone I want to share the core of the Jesus message and what following him is like. IAAR does that.

**THE PRINCIPLE OF ‘NOT EVERYONE WILL BE INTERESTED’
Or
A fisherman doesn’t catch every fish in the lake.**



Years ago I wrote a book titled, **Smart Fishing**. It was about the strategy that we used as we saw Central Christian Church in Mesa, Arizona grow into a mega church.

I took the idea that Jesus called his followers to be ‘fishers of men’ and his comment that the ‘children of darkness or of the world are often craftier than are the children of light.’ So the theme of the book was that we need to be fishing and we need to be smart in how we do it.

Having set in a boat or on a shoreline for hours in the past without catching a fish I’m well aware that fishing takes a lot of preparation, having the right equipment or gear, fishing where there are fish (we do a lot of fishing in the ‘church facility’; a place most fish will avoid), and knowing what they will bite on. It also takes a lot of patience. **An easy observation is that you don’t catch all the fish out there.** You know that. That is part of the fisherman’s mentality. He hates to go home empty handed but he will return to fish another day anyway.

He is persistent. He will get up at any hour to go fishing, and stay out late into the dark. He will brave bad weather and drive any number of miles to get to the right place.

One huge lesson I learned from a lifelong ‘steel head salmon’ fisherman expert is this: If you lose a steelhead while reeling it in, it is usually the fisherman’s fault. He is trying to reel it in too fast. He needs to be gentle and patient. The same applies to help people change their mind about Jesus. Don’t be in a rush. Be patient. Leave something up to God. You don’t have to do it all. We share the Gospel.

So with that little bit in mind let’s consider the following:

Not everyone Jesus spoke to followed him and he could even do miracles!

Not everyone we engage with will be interested in knowing more about Jesus either.

Not everyone will be interested in going through the IAAR lessons but offer them we must.

WE WON’T KNOW UNTIL WE OFFER THEM. We won’t know their situation or relationship with Jesus until we get into a conversation about it. FORM takes us down that road in a calm, patient, gentle manner.

Even if they aren’t interested we are letting them know we are available and we respect their decision not to want to hear the lessons at this time. You can back off for now. Don’t force the

issue. We haven't offended them or come across as too aggressive. That will most always leave the relationship intact and open for a possible future opportunity.

Not everyone who hears the Good News will accept Jesus but offer it "we must" to those willing to listen. We are planting the seed of the Gospel. It might 'take root' immediately and grow, or it might lie dormant for some time.

People can't think about it until they know about it.

A seed can't grow until it is planted.

All seeds don't grow at the same speed.

Did you know some seeds will only germinate when they are in contact with fire?

Don't miss this.....



— I found this 'googling'. I knew about this but this just confirms it.

*Eric Draper/AP Perhaps the most amazing fire adaptation is that some species actually require fire for their **seeds** to sprout. Some plants, such as the **lodgepole pine**, **Eucalyptus**, and **Banksia**, have **serotinous** cones or **fruits** that are completely sealed with resin.*

This has been the case with so many people I have known. The best example is my dad. He was a skeptic until he was 79. I presented IAAR to him while he was in his 60's. He said then that he didn't believe in Jesus. I was disappointed but kept that to myself and kept praying. It wasn't until he was 78 or so and got colon cancer that he took a second look. God, my sister, me and others played a role in his coming to Jesus a year before he died. It is a great story. But he had to come to the 'fire', which in his case was cancer before he got real serious about life after death. The seed had been planted years earlier and it bore fruit in the fire.

Suffering, lost hope, frustration, emptiness, crisis, illness, approaching death, hunger, etc. can 'wake people up' and open them up to listening to and responding to the Good News. Often people have to be down and beaten by life before they will look up to their Savior.

Here is one more thought for this section. Don't be surprised when you see someone who accepted Jesus later turn their back on him. While we need to do all we can to help other Christians be faithful and grow, some will turn their backs. Read the parable of the Farmer again. Matthew 13:3

We must not let any of the situations above stop us from continuing to do our work as an Ambassador.

Keep praying. Keep engaging. Keep offering. Keep loving. Keep learning.

There is only one person/being who wants to see you stop and become inactive in this. Satan. Don't honor his desires.

THE PRINCIPLE OF 'YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT THIS WAY'

I don't say that RE/IAAR is the only way to reach people but it is an excellent way and an effective way to train Christians how to reach out to those in their own Sphere of life. If you have a way that is working in your life and it is a way to train other Christians then keep using it.

You don't have to do it this way,

BUT PLEASE DO IT 'SOME WAY'.

If you don't have a proven model and method then give RE/IAAR a try. There are thousands using it now and it is growing every day.

I was remembering Doug Lucas' (President of Team Expansion) comment to one of his staff members. The staff member shared it with me; he was a big man to do so. I respected his willingness to share this. They were discussing a concern the staff member had about IAAR. In the end Doug summarized it all by saying to him; "I like what John has better than what you don't!"

So while you might have a way, the question comes up, "How is that working? How many are using it? Is it producing fruit or converts?"

I wrote a book a while back. You can find it on my web site www.itsallaboutrelationship.org It is titled TRAINING DISCIPLES TO GO AND MAKE NEW DISCIPLES. It had a different title in the beginning. A friend convinced me to change it. I shouldn't have. The original title hit it on the head. "The Question Most Church Leaders Hate to be Asked, But Seldom Are." And the question? How many of your people did you train last year to go and effectively share the Gospel with others? And the year before that? What are your goals for next year?

We can find so many things to do in ministry but miss one of the most important things we should be doing.

So, again, if you don't have something that works, try IAAR. It works.

Who I've been able to share with in my Sphere of life using RE/IAAR.

My Sphere has covered a lot of territory.

I've lived in Wisconsin, Illinois, California, Arizona, Chile South America and back to California.

I've worked in Arizona, California, Chile and Peru South America

I've worked as a staff member of a few different churches, small and mega. I have worked as a missionary in other countries, as a college professor and as a teacher/trainer in South America, Latin America, Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and many more countries coming in the future Lord willing.

Over the years I been able to use RE/IAAR in all those places other than Wisconsin and Illinois where we lived when I was a kid and before I became a Christian.

Using RE/IAAR I have been able to share the Gospel using IAAR with

My Parents.

My Kids.

My Grandkids.

My In laws.

Some Cousins.

Some Nieces.

Visitors to churches we attended.

People I met out in public.

People I met through others.

People I met in a meeting.

People I met at an appointment; doctors, dentist, chiropractors.

People I met at dinners.

People I met on a plane.

People I met at a gym.

People trying to become a 'god'.

People I met in prison.

People dying at home or in a hospital (Randy and his family).

People I met who were 'serving me'. Mechanic, doctors, chiropractors, computer techs.

People who are neighbors.

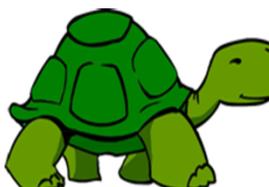
People I met in a park.

People driving me to the airport; chauffeurs.

People I was working on a project with.

People wanting to get married.
 People I did a funeral for a loved one for.
 People who were seeking counseling.

Yes, with atheists, agnostics, skeptics, criminals, killers, PhD scientist, evolutionists, transvestites, religious people, politicians, professors, doctors, dentists, chiropractors, athletes, students, technicians, neighbors, relatives, military people, firemen, police, investors, cooks, abused, prostitutes, criminals, students, Satanists, street people, 'god's, educators, musicians, playboys, feminists, drug addicts, alcoholics, religious people, lawyers, people at the gym, 'good people', widows, divorcees, married couples, couples living together (not married), politicians, engineers, hotel managers, chauffeurs, cab drivers, etc. All kinds of people.



How have I (turtle) managed to do this?
 It is all about being willing.
 It is about being prepared or trained.
 It is about being available.
 It is about being willing to take the first step with people and step out and do FORM with them.

It isn't magic. I pretty much do the same thing, FORM, time after time.
 I don't have a different approach for every different kind of person on the face of the earth.
 I'm not that smart.
 But I've learned this one way and I still am amazed at how often it works with all kinds of people in all kinds of settings.

Have I failed at times? Oh yes.
 I've missed opportunities.
 I didn't engage with some when I could have.
 I went down rabbit trails with others never to get back on track.
 I allowed tiredness or feeling down to divert me.
 But "forgetting what lies behind", the successes and failures, "I press on looking for more opportunities."

Changes you will see and experience in your life if you use RE/IAAR

I was in a meeting with the preacher of our congregation in Arizona years back, Dr. LeRoy Lawson; Roy to us. I don't recall what we were discussing at the time but he interrupted

whatever it was by asking me a question. He asked me “Do you know what keeps you up in the ministry?”

It sounded like one of those trick questions that he already knew the answer to so I said I wasn’t sure what he meant or what the answer was.

He said this; “I have seen you go through most of the kinds of frustrations and disappointments everyone in ministry goes through but I have seen what keeps you up and what allows you to recover quickly. I see you the morning after the night before when you were out sharing the IAAR lessons with someone. That keeps everything in perspective for you. It doesn’t eliminate the other issues but it puts everything in its place and keeps the most important thing first in your life; making new disciples, seeing people come to Jesus.”

Well I thought about that for a while and you know what? He was right. The same thing will happen in your life too. We all go through hurts, failures, frustrations etc. To be out there and see other people come to Jesus and find eternal life in Him puts it all in perspective.

Being active with RE/IAAR is a frustration balancer.

As I have gone through frustrations, inner pains, disappointments, etc. I have tried to not forget my avocation. That is what Paul did in an even greater way than I could ever imagine. That is what Jesus did.

Satan wants to use our pains, illnesses, sufferings, loses, hurts, failures and disappointments to divert us, detour or stop us from the Mission.

This is not to say that we don’t ever need to recognize our being human or that we don’t need to give attention to crisis or other serious issues in our life, but let’s work to not forget our/His mission. If we stop our work as Ambassadors every time a new pain, hurt, failure, disappointment or whatever arises, we will probably never get to our JOB for Jesus.

Our days here are numbered and something greater awaits us. Upward and onward for Him.

Endorsements and testimonies of those who have been trained. Doctors, engineers, professors, lawyers, pastors, missionaries, elders, youth pastors, men and women, church planters, mega church pastors, architects, business people, etc.

Underlines done by John Hendee

COMMENTS BY PAST STUDENTS OF RE/IAAR.

PREACHER IN INDIANA

I have used IAAR consistently with excellent results since 1981 in ministries in Arizona, Kansas, Oregon and now Indiana. Even as the very beginning when I was just learning, it amazed me how positively people responded to it. It works with the un-churched and the churched.

I just started a new study with two couples last night... 2 brothers with them and their wives. The gospel is powerful and effective. I just finished a study with another couple who have been in our church for about a year. He told me he has never understood the message as clearly as he understood it after study #4. I know I have preached this stuff over the last year but to have it condensed in one place and presented clearly and simply is what they needed.

YOUNG ADULT

“Evangelism has always been intimidating and somewhat frightening to me. On top of that, most evangelism tactics have always seemed, to me, to be unrealistic, ineffective, wouldn't have long term results, and didn't make sense. This course has introduced me for the first time to a tactic that makes complete sense to me and has gotten me excited to put it into practice. Now that I have an outline that makes sense, that I can realistically see having long term results, I see it as a way around the intimidation and fear. “

PREACHER/CHURCH PLANTER

It is tragic for the church that the average follower of Christ in my circle of influence has been abandoned by me and other leaders of the church who have been called to equip the saints of God. I will no longer remain dormant. Not only do I commit my life to this class, but I commit my life to every person around me. I will be more greatly engaged in looking for opportunities to share the gospel. I will be alive with intensity when it comes to encouraging others to learn how to personally share their faith with the people around them in their natural context.

ELDER, ACTIVE IN MISSIONS

I look back and wish I had this tool over the past 23 years, since I became a Christian. There have been 100's of people that I wanted to share my faith with, but didn't know how. Then, when I figured out that it was just a process of talking with them and having a relationship, I still didn't have this calm and casual tool to use. My approach to some was harsh and others may have seemed insincere. I have family, friends, church members, divine encounters to share with and now I have the IAAR/PT to use.

PASTOR

This is a very non threatening way to share the gospel. It takes the pressure off us and places the burden on God to achieve the results. It's very Biblical as well.....I think, if faith sharing is taught in this manner, that of being very non intrusive, respectful and kind, more people would be willing to share their faith.

A YOUNG 21 YEAR OLD LADY. VERY ACTIVE IN MINISTRY

This manner of approaching people makes perfect sense. Approaching them in a friendly manner using the FORM method, with the desire to get to know them, and create opportunities to offer them the presentation of the gospel using the IAAR format. It makes it easier for me to

go and make disciples as I don't have to memorize scripts, or do the presentations to people that are not interested or whom are strangers.

CHRISTIAN LEADER

The IAAR is the most complete explanation of the Gospel. It took me years as a new believer to fully understand what is presented in the four IAAR lessons.

CHRISTIAN WOMAN; NURSE

Throughout my 20 yrs as a Christian I have never learned what I have thus far learned about evangelism. I can't even compare this method of evangelism as we are learning to any other method I never thought of myself having the capability to evangelize but now that I am gaining a new insight. I realize this sense of incapability is a deception. We all are capable. Our Father is depending on each of us not just on our Pastors.

PASTOR

After becoming a Christian I have served in dynamic and contemporary churches that focus on evangelism since 2003. Yet in all that time and my ministry experiences in these places I was never trained in "How" to do evangelism. Yes I took classes that addressed the subject, but never once did I leave with a tangible or practical "how to." We always discussed doing it in Group Models, or organically by letting actions speak louder than words. This course has made me feel much stronger about having an applicable and teachable way of evangelizing rather than the ambiguous routes of modern examples. I also feel strongly that it is part of the job of a believer to teach another disciple how to make a disciple. This is even more crucial for those in ministry leading as well.

PASTOR

What I appreciate about IAAR is that, properly understood, it takes the focus off of me as a person and off of my performance as a "professional". This allows me to take a deep breath and rest in the Lord. It also allows the person that I am sharing it with to do the same. I do not have to use behavior modification techniques, pop-psychology, manipulation, peer-pressure, and sales tricks to coerce people to "become Christians." All I need to do is share the study with them and let the focus to be on being in right relationship with God and others.

PASTOR

In the eyes of the receiver, the IAAR approach through the use of the FORM model is non-confrontational (we are not debating, creating a stance or taking a position). We start by showing interest in the person, and who doesn't want to talk about themselves and their family, what they are involved with, what they enjoy. We are showing an interest in them almost exclusively, yet our goal/motive is to lead to a point where we are able to offer that person the opportunity to hear our message, the greatest gift ever given. Everyone wants people to care about them and once we have established that we care, they relax, open up and become willing to hear our four (4) Lesson message.

CHURCH LEADER

I appreciate the non-confrontational approach. Caring about people and simply talking with them. We aren't trying to cram anything down their throats, just listening and then sharing to the degree they are interested.

CHRISTIAN WOMAN

Many attempts at evangelism center on putting people in what feels like an impossible decision making situation for them. A well-meaning but over-zealous disciple verbally pins down a person with a couple scriptures from the Bible and then challenges them to make a decision for or against "coming to Christ." A key problem with that scenario is the person that has been cornered likely doesn't understand the full scope of what is being asked of them, and they certainly don't have an understanding of a whole Gospel message."

CHRISTIAN WOMAN

We're not trying to convince someone of something, or sell anyone anything, and we only want to schedule an IAAR study with someone who is interested. There's no convincing or pushing". This is a powerful motivator to use the IAAR model. I have never considered myself good at selling stuff, I don't like it, even if what I'm selling is good and beneficial. But this approach is totally different. I can do this.

CHURCH LEADER

Good afternoon John,

I wanted to let you know that I had an epiphany of sorts yesterday while watching the video for presentation 1 for the second time. As you know I have struggled a bit in regards to the relationship building prior to going through presentations with people. While watching the video God made something very clear to me: This training is based on relationship. I have been understanding that to be referring to the relationship built before and during going through the presentations with someone, instead of what it is REALLY about...the broken relationship between the unsaved and God and God's plan to restore that relationship!! When taking notes I wrote on my paper in capital letters, DUH!! I have no answer as to why that didn't resonate

with me sooner, but thought you'd like to know that I finally get it!!

Thank you for your prayers and encouragement!!

CHURCH LEADER

The benefit of using the method FORM gives an opportunity to make a connections. The benefits for me using the IAAR is **that I can be more confident in my delivery of the message and not sound rehearsed or rigid.** The better I know scripture then the less rehearsed I will sound to the person I am interacting with. **The benefit of the IAAR for others and giving a copy at each presentation is that they have something to look back on and hopefully for those that feel compelled to use it to help someone else at the same time they are learning or later.**

YOUNG COUPLE

We shared IAAR with a couple in the Air Force. They accepted Christ and were baptized. With the COPY OF THE IAAR THAT MY FRIEND left with them, the couple started sharing the message. Within a year they had baptized others and had a group of 30 meeting in their apartment to study the Bible!!!!!!! You never know.

CHURCH LEADER

Quiet and insecure I am not, I am very much a talker. I love to talk, well most the time haha. Anyway what's awesome is this will help me the same as it does you, but instead of starting the conversation it will help with just staying on track and not just a lot of babble, I will start with FORM, and have an agenda. . So great to see the people who work for God with me so passionate about eternal life with Jesus.

CHURCH LEADER

I am really beginning to understand and like the IAAR tool as we have progressed in this course. I have used other tools of evangelism, even recently joining our church in going door-to-door taking a survey. What I appreciate is the building of a relationship that provides the opportunity to go through the presentations. Our objective is not to sell the person on Christianity, but to offer them the opportunity to learn in a "comprehensive, yet concise manner". That way they are able to make an informed decision.

In some of my encounters before I have always wondered what a next step could be and IAAR fills that gap in my thinking. Also, I think I will feel more comfortable in using this tool with others. It is not a pressure approach where some methods can make one feel that way.

CHRISTIAN WOMAN

How did it go? This week has been a great week. I feel like I've been given the secret ingredient to sharing Jesus. It has sparked another flame inside me.

PASTOR

I have used this presentation for the last 30 years with literally hundreds of people and have found it to be the most effective means of leading someone to Christ and actually beginning the disciplining process. What a joy it has been to sit in the front row and watch as God changes lives through this study and then to have the blessing of baptizing them into Christ. I am so glad that you all are learning this and I pray you will use it and find it fruitful.

CHURCH LEADER

The set up using FORM is great. I recognize that that is how I have approached people when I have done some door-to-door evangelism. Being more of an introvert and one that does not easily get into conversations with people, though I love to talk to people, this helps give a context to conversations that easily leads into a way of opening the question of interest in IAAR. I really appreciate the responses and questions for the anti-religious person. I also like the fact that IAAR is a presentation of the gospel in such a way that it is giving the person the

facts and allowing them the time to think about what it means. As I go through this it is becoming more and more clear how impactful this is. I am starting to get a better handle on it! Slow learner!!

CHURCH LEADER:

"I really like the IAAR approach because **it is truly a relational approach** that is designed to treat the other person like a person rather than a target. It's not just the content spread across four sessions, which is very good, but it is also all of the fine details around how you engage the person, how you bring up the topic, how you invite the person, and how you always leave them an out. It's treating the other person how you would want to be treated. In all of this, it is allowing the person to respond to the truth and the Holy Spirit. Spreading it out, gives the person time to wrestle with the truth. This is big, heavy stuff that requires time to evaluate; if you'll forgive me for such a simplistic example... it's much more like buying a house than a pack of gum at the checkout line."

THIS IS ABOUT AS GOOD A SUMMARY OF THE BENEFITS OF USING THE "IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP" PRESENTATIONS AS I HAVE SEEN. I COULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN IT BETTER. THIS IS WHAT YOU LEARN TO DO WHEN YOU TAKE THE ONLINE RELATIONAL EVANGELISM COURSE.
John Hendee

CLOSING THOUGHT;

Why the reluctance of some to give it a try.

Going from this..



to this....



I have found it very frustrating at times to understand why so many church leaders, preachers in particular in the U.S., are so resistive to not only take RE/IAAR training but to even want to talk about it. I have thought about it a lot and I'm still not sure. I haven't figured it out. Here are two other men's thoughts on it.

I was talking to Tim Coop a couple years before he passed on to heaven. Tim was one of the greatest personal evangelists I've ever known. He could befriend most anyone he met along the way.

In our conversation about many topics we arrived at the point where I was sharing with him the reluctance of so many preachers to even want to talk with me about Relational Evangelism and IAAR.

I was briefly telling him about my frustration with it all and he just blurted out, “JOHN, it is nothing but ego and pride. They didn’t come up with it so they aren’t interested and to start using it now is to expose to their people that they haven’t known how and haven’t been doing this themselves all of their ministry.” Well, that was strong and to the point. I think there is some validity to what he said after 55 years in the ministry and helping build two mega churches. He had experienced the same thing over the decades of his ministry with a tool he had developed and used.

A year or so later I was having coffee with a 76 year old retired business man who sat near us quite often on Sundays at church. I wanted to get to know him better and suggested we meet for coffee. During the coffee he shared with me what he had done during his working years. He had been a trainer of insurance sales people and also had owned several other businesses. He had only been a Christian for about 5 years and from the best I could tell hadn’t done much other than attend church during that time. He was not involved in any particular ministry of the church. After hearing his story he asked me what I was doing. I told him about my traveling to Africa several times a year to train Christians in RE/IAAR. In the midst of that I briefly share with him my frustration in getting many U.S. preachers or leaders to even listen much less try or adopt RE/IAAR in their ministry. I couldn’t have talked about that for more than a couple minutes and to my surprise he blurter out, “JOHN, they are embarrassed.” He went on to explain that in his opinion they were embarrassed to talk about it much less embrace it because to do so would show they haven’t been doing much of anything in this area for their entire life or ministry.”

He floored me with his quick response. I think he saw part of the problem for many leaders. But it is time to put the embarrassment aside and get to work. Can you image how embarrassed we all would be if after a life time in ministry we tell Jesus that we hadn’t trained even one person in how to GO and make disciples? There is no reason for that to happen. Remember the parable of the talents and the man who had not reproduced his talent?

Some will be offended by these thoughts. But remember the old saying, “If the shoe fits, wear it.”? If this doesn’t apply to you ignore it.

If this IS your situation, please put your reluctance, fears or embarrassment aside and push forward. Give RE/IAAR a try. Read the testimonies of others who took the training. You will find new excitement in your life. YOU can do this. You love Jesus and believe in his cause. It is more than likely you were just never trained in this. So, come aboard and join us.

At one point NONE OF US knew how to do this. We are all in the same family fighting for the same cause. So if the SHOE FITS, put it on and put the other one on too and start running the race more powerfully equipped and then become an equipper of others too.

Maybe you already have a way to personally share the Gospel one on one with others but can't train others in it for whatever reason. Most preachers after years of ministry, reading and preaching have developed in their mind a way to do it. Few of them have found a way to transfer it into a tool they can train others in using.

Gene Rogers was my mentor in ministry. He was the 'right' guy for me to work with in my internship for college. He was a model in so many things. He was the real model for what developed into IAAR years later. He had two lessons he shared with people. They were presented sitting down with people in their homes, usually sitting at their table. Gene was very effective in leading people to Jesus with his lessons.

He had the right idea; he dictated the text of the lessons and put them into a manual and tried teaching them to others in the congregation. I was there for the first class. He was so excited. There must have been 30+ people who attended. He had the manuscript of the lessons to hand out. It was about 20+ pages, single spaced on both sides. All was well until at some point the people realized they had to memorize these lessons (20+ pages, single spaced on both sides). The next week the class attendance was about 4 or 5. To my knowledge I was the only person who ever really learned even the first lesson after spending most of a week trying to memorize it. They were great lessons but too complicated for most to learn.

My friend Jim Larsen has used for years a 3 story presentation to share the Gospel with others. I remember the day he called me and shared the following. It was something like this: "John you have to come up here and train our people in RE/IAAR. Gene, an elder (and teacher of physics at a local college; smart guy) came up to me recently and said, "Jim, your lessons are so good. I've heard them. I've seen you share them so effectively. BUT JIM, we can't learn them."

That is the story of many preachers. They know how to share the Gospel one on one and have a way to do that but that method often isn't teachable or reproducible so others can use it. IAAR is.



Jesus called them to a mission, a life surrendered to Him. He started preparing them for a MISSION.

He spent three years teaching and training them in how to carry out that MISSION.



He showed them how to do it. He sent them out to try it, had them come back and give reports on how it went. He corrected them and taught them more.

Then he sent them out in all directions to make disciples. He commanded them to go and preach and make disciples.



OTHER MODELS OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM used today

There are a few major ways Christians are told to reach out or evangelize others today

1. Many are told to 'share your story' with others.

Many Christians are told to do that by a lot of preachers who more than likely hardly ever 'share their story' with people outside of the church setting.

One of the problems with this is that most Christians don't think they have much of a 'story.' Plus I've also seen that many unbelievers have seen enough Christian leaders fall broadcast on the evening news to convince them that their stories aren't all they are cracked up to be.

In addition most 'outsiders' are bombarded by thousands of 'testimonies' every year of their life. They are constantly hearing testimonies about how a toothpaste will make them sexy, how a car will make their life complete or how a certain product of philosophy is THE answer to a great life. And they have been burned by many of those products and listen as doubters to most all testimonies.

Besides, Mormons, Muslims, Atheists, Communists, Playboys, Gays etc. all have their form of testimonies too.

The proof of the Gospel is in the Gospel! Share the Gospel.

That is a better way. I think I have an interesting story of how I became a Christian but I don't believe I share it even once a decade as a means to try and win a hearing with unbelievers. It isn't necessary and isn't the best way.

Many Christian leaders push and promote 'share your story' because they don't know a better way.

2. Often times we are told that the way to earn a hearing with people is to do good things for people. I'm all for doing good for others but there is a trap in thinking this is the best way to build bridges with people and win them to Jesus or that you have to 'do good' before they will listen to the Gospel.

Yes Jesus did say clothe the poor, feed the hungry and visit those in prison. We ought to do those things. But our being nice is not enough to win the world to Jesus and it isn't always necessary to earn the right to share the Gospel. Paul didn't say 'faith comes by our doing good to others.'

DO good for people. BUT they need more than what you are providing in the moment of their great and legitimate need. They need Good News. Don't stop short. Oh, and remember many of the people around us in our daily lives don't have huge needs we can actually help with.

CARY N.....

You also need to know that governments, Mormons, Muslims and many other groups are doing good for the needy too.

3. Crusades or revivals.

In the U.S. in the past week long church 'revivals' were a popular way to try and reach people. They have died out. Then came crusades. They seemed to help for a while but they basically have fallen to the way side. Crusades have been a major outreach model in Africa for some time but they tell us that isn't working so well anymore.

4. There are many other methods that a few, very few are willing to try; handing out tracts, street preaching, etc. Some people (very few) are reached through these methods. These methods don't seem to be the best way we are going to reach most in our culture. In another presentation I refer to those as 'hand grenade evangelism'; impersonal, with strangers, little or no positive contact with the people, little or no follow up, etc.

5. Maybe the most common model of what some call 'evangelism' is "Invite them to church'.

While some will accept an invitation this is not the best way to reach the lost world we are a part of.



Many, many, many Christians are regularly told to invite people to church. It is said that is the best way to do evangelism. Some people will be reached by attending a church or church event but that is not the BEST way to reach the world. Often this method is done or used in place of training people to GO and share the Gospel. Some churches think it is the best way because that is the only way they know how to find new people. But that doesn't make it the best way to reach people. To limit our reaching the world to inviting people to church is greatly limiting our efforts. Again, it is often adopted as the main way to reach people because many leaders don't know any other way. They don't know how to train their people in relational evangelism.

I was speaking with the 'lead' associate of a mega-mega church one day. I had asked him if their church had a way they were training their people in personal evangelism and his answer was no. I asked him if the preacher had trained people in that in the past. His answer was "No, he doesn't know how." I was stunned. So the preacher was a great preacher and knew how to manage and build a congregation to the point of being a mega church but he did not know how to train people in personal evangelism. This church regularly had many programs and events and strongly encouraged their members to invite others to come. Many come. That is great. They reach many for Jesus. But those results are not as great as they would see if they would also train their people to GO OUT and share the Gospel with those around them who don't want to go to any church for any reason.

Church growth expert Ed Stetzer said "Inviting people to church isn't evangelism." While it might result in it in some cases we must not fool ourselves into thinking we are doing a great job in evangelism because some do come and we do reach some of them. Thank God for those reached in that way, but it is a drop in the bucket compared to what would happen IF we trained our people how to connect with people off the church campus and know how to effectively share the Gospel there first, without their ever having to come to a church service or event.

Ray Comfort is the one who said, "Thinking we will reach most of the lost by inviting them to church is about as effective as it would be thinking we can capture all the criminals out there by inviting them to a brunch at the police station."

John Hendee (Me) created a new word. INVITIMITUS: It is contagious condition. It is sort of like a cold. It could become a cancer. Invitimitus is when we *limit* our 'outreach' or 'evangelism' efforts to planning, preparing and implementing events, service or activities and encouraging our members to invite their family, friends, neighbors and associates to attend in our efforts to reach them. Our hope is that they will 'LIKE' our service, activity and maybe even

be impressed with US (our greeters, facility, preacher, music and programs) enough so they will want to return and give us more opportunities to share Jesus with them through preaching and teaching.

DON'T MISS MY POINT HERE. I'm not saying it is always wrong to plan some events to invite outsiders to. I AM saying it is a poor strategy to think that we can reach most of the world by simply inviting them to come to our events. Most of the world will never come to our events, services, activities etc.

HEY, we are a Church and they know it. You know why most of the unbelievers I know don't attend or 'go to church'? **They don't want to** for any one of a number of reasons. And I'm confident it is the same for most of those likeminded folks in your life.

I recently read the results of a study that showed that 75% of un-churched people have no confidence, trust or interest in any preacher yet so many churches (and preachers) method of trying to win people to Jesus is to try and get their members to invite those same 75% to attend church to listen to a preacher, whom in most cases they don't have any confidence or trust in even though they don't know him. I guess our hope is that IF we can get them to our service the preacher will be able to change their thinking and feelings. Hummmm. What is wrong with that picture? Most of them will never come to give him a chance.

We need a better plan, a bigger strategy to reach out. Jesus had it. He WENT to the people. He didn't invite them to his 'services'. I can't find one place in the book of Acts where the early Christians invited unbelievers to their events for the purpose of winning them to Jesus.

My story; I remember what it was like before I became a Christian. My dad was a skeptic until he was about 79. I became a Christian as a teenager in spite of my fear of what Dad would say and do.

BUT back in those pre-Christian years I remember the absolute FEAR and distaste I had of 'going to church'. I didn't want to go. I had no reason to go. I had been invited but better invite me to an operation without anesthesia or a root canal without pain killer. I had heard people say "The only way you will find me in church is at my funeral." That suited me just fine. Actually I didn't even want to be found 'dead' in one. NO THANKS.

But that was the 'price' the church had put upon me in order to learn about Jesus! Go to church and you can learn about Jesus.

Then I heard about Jesus without 'ever going to church.' It was all different. I fell in love with Him. He was what I needed in my life. I didn't need church, I needed JESUS. I didn't have to like 'church' or 'go to church' first. Coming to faith in Jesus and loving Him changed my feelings about the church dramatically. It was different then. I started attending and haven't stopped for 54 years. Oh, there have been a lot of challenges and hard times dealing with some in the church (and I'm sure some could say the same about me) over the years but leaving the church

at large, the family isn't an option because my commitment started with Jesus, not a congregation, and the church is Jesus' family. And he commands me to love it.

There were some strange things I had heard and that I saw about churches back in those pre-Christian days and I was not interested in the least. There are still 'strange' things to outsiders going on in a lot of churches these days that have nothing to do with Jesus. I grieve when I scan through Facebook and see some of the unloving, obnoxious things put on there by Christians trying to preach or witness to unbelievers. Some are doing more damage than good to the cause by what they put on there. But what is put on there reveals the attitude and preaching of many churches.

In too many cases, unbelievers are given the idea that they have to GO THROUGH A CHURCH SERVICE, MEETING, GROUP, CLASS OR ACTIVITY in order to get to Jesus.

We can spend thousands of man hours and thousands of dollars trying to make 'church' appealing to outsiders and next to nothing in training our people how to GO and be effective Ambassadors. Yes, some will find Jesus, praise God. But it is a small number compared to what it would be if we were doing what Jesus commanded.

We are missing the boat by not preparing and equipping our people to GO about in their daily lives ready to share the Good News about Jesus, OUT THERE.

Jesus said, "Come to me!" He didn't say 'come to church'. And millions out there will not walk through 'church doors' in order to get to Jesus. They don't know there is another option. That is our failure.

When are we going to get serious about equipping our people to GO and share Jesus' invitation to people 'out there?'

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MISGUIDED 'DISCIPLE MAKING' EMPHASIS IN MANY CHURCHES TODAY.



Did you know the phrase 'disciple making' isn't in the N.T.?
But church after church talks about their 'disciple making' ministries.
On closer examination you will see that 90% or more of their 'disciple making' activities offered by most churches are with those who are already disciples.

Here is what my challenge has been as I look at this. I see two tasks in the Great Commission, Matthew 28:18-20.

1. Make Disciples
2. Teach them to obey all I've commanded you.

My question is, **“Who do you MAKE DISCIPLES’** out of?

What seems to be the obvious answer to me? **“Non-disciples.” Those who currently aren’t disciples.**

Then once they become a disciple we are to teach, equip, mature, love, serve, care for, encourage, nurture, rebuke, etc.

Here is where I see we have a problem. We call what we do in the second of those commands as ‘disciple making.’ But HEY, they are already disciples. You don’t have to ‘make them’ disciples or believers, they already are.

But in calling what we do with them ‘disciple making’ we can justify ourselves and say, “YES, we are carrying out the Great Commission. We are active in Disciple Making.” Those activities are fine for the most part but they don’t excuse us from MAJOR involvement in the first part of the command. And if we aren’t training or equipping those who are already disciples in how to go and make NEW disciples we are failing them and to a large part our calling in the Kingdom.

THE unfortunate PRINCIPLE OF ‘KEEP’EM’ BUSY.

THE GOAL IS NOT TO BE BUSY



The goal of ministry is not to be busy, or just to be sharpening pencils’ as you will read what Jim Larsen wrote at the end of this.

There are so many things that demand time and energy in life and ministry. You can easily spend 50-60 hours a week and still feel like you can't get it all done.

Exhaustion, overload.

It might be good now and then to stop and evaluate what we are really doing as disciples.

Steve Holsinger likes to quote Peter Drucker when he asked the questions:

"What's your business?"

"How is business?"

So the question in the church becomes "What is our business?" It seems pretty clear that it is making disciples. Then the question is how is that going? Are we busy at what we are called to do?

The experts say that 95% of Christians never share the Gospel with another person in their entire life. That is how we make NEW disciples!

A huge part of our problem is that few are being trained how to GO and make NEW Disciples in most churches, but we know how to keep people very busy.

I know that any Christian woman or man can share the Gospel with others IF they are encouraged and trained. With Relational Evangelism we are seeing thousands being trained. Yes, we can say 'thousands'.

Many of the items below are very important but none of them can replace the command to MAKE DISCIPLES.

You can pray a lot, be an elder or deacon, hand out bulletins and help serve the Lord's Supper, read the Bible every day, attend church services, sing 1000 hymns, give thousands of dollars, go on short term mission trips, attend camps, retreats and conferences, read 100 best selling Christian books, sit in a 1000 Bible Studies, invite hundreds to 'church' while never sitting down with someone one on one and effectively sharing the Gospel with them.

That is painful to think about. That is not necessary. To do that is to spend one's entire life without experiencing one of the richest joys and responsibilities of the Christian life; sharing the Gospel and sometimes seeing

someone else come to Jesus.

[1 Corinthians 4:2](#) Now it is **required** that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

THE PRINCIPLE OF SHARPENING PENCILS



Sharpening Pencils?

Jim Larsen

Preacher, professor, writer, servant

Each Thursday I meet some fine folks for Bible study. This morning one of the ladies in the group explained that she is a member of 5 Bible study groups.

This reminded me of an illustration I've used a number of times.

What would we think if a person was fascinated with having a sharp pencil...so fascinated that he was continually sticking one pencil after another into his sharpener? He didn't use the sharp writing utensils...just sharpened them.

Sometimes I get the feeling that continually attending Bible studies and listening to sermons can be something like that.

Just as I'd ask the one who is obsessed with pencil sharpening when he intends to actually do some writing, we might ask such a question of the lifelong Bible study-sermon listening-book reading, praise singing disciple. When will you actually start passing on some of all your accumulated Bible facts and experience to someone else who needs it, or is it all just for you?

I heard this referred to as 'dead end links'. A person who receives instruction but doesn't pass it on is like the last link on a chain. Rather, students or disciples of Jesus are to eventually teach others or make 'other disciples'. Disciples are to 'go and share the meal, not just keep eating at the banquet table over and over and over. It is the way God's Kingdom grows. The taught teach. The saved help save others.

I feel inclined to encourage the lady I mentioned to drop **at least** one of her 5 weekly Bible studies with the intention of seeking to do some one-on-one sharing of the Gospel with an inquirer or seeker, or with someone fairly new to faith in Christ. The writer of Hebrews made such an observation in 5:12 where he complains that 'by this time you ought to be teachers, now you need some to teach you the word all over again.'