

Evangelistic Expository Preaching

Xenos Summer Institute – 2014

Introduction

THESIS: Weekly expository Bible teaching in a larger group setting both feeds and equips Christians and helps non-Christians come to faith in Christ.

- *Contra* conventional wisdom of the seeker movement: “You can only speak effectively to seekers or to Christians – not to both at the same time.”
- *Contra* conventional wisdom of the house church movement: “Large meetings are counter-productive to house church health and multiplication.”

BIBLICAL EXAMPLE:

- The Jerusalem church (Acts 2:42,46; 5:42)
- Barnabas and Saul in Antioch (Acts 11:26)
- Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:9; 20:20,21)

GOALS OF THIS WORKSHOP:

- To explain what this kind of meeting looks like
- To explain why it is evangelistically effective
- To highlight some of the features of this kind of preaching that make it evangelistically effective

Meeting format

The exposition of the Word – not corporate worship – is the centerpiece of the meeting.

Brief welcome and announcements

1 or 2 people pray briefly followed by a short prayer by the teacher

40-45 minutes expository teaching on a Bible book or a topical series rooted in specific biblical passages, utilizing PowerPoint for main points and Bible passages.¹

15 minutes of Q & A

Meeting ends with several (4-6) people praying

Home group members hang out afterward with one another and their guests

¹ You can listen to hundreds of examples of these teachings at: <http://www.xenos.org/teachings/>

Why this kind of meeting is evangelistically effective

Because direct evangelism occurs in this meeting in several ways:

- Non-Christian guests hear the Bible taught by our most gifted preachers and teachers.
- Non-Christian guests usually hear the gospel and are challenged to receive Christ at some point in the teaching.
- Non-Christian guests often hear the testimony of Christians during or after the meeting.

Because this meeting encourages evangelism in many other ways:

- This kind of preaching will motivate Christians to bring non-Christian guests.
- Many non-Christians are more willing to come to CT than to a home group meeting because its size affords them anonymity (vs. exposure of home groups).
- Non-Christians often find the picture of the Christian life advocated by the teaching appealing and different from what they expected.
- Non-Christians are often attracted to Christ by other aspects of the meeting beyond the teaching:
 - The Q & A
 - Others' sharing and prayers during the meeting (1 Cor. 14:24,25)
 - Real love between Christians before and after the meeting (Jn. 13:34,35)
 - Christians often witness to guests after the meeting
- This kind of preaching will embolden Christians to do this in their own spheres of influence (Phil. 1:15).
- Christians who are well-fed through this kind of teaching will be more potent witnesses in the world (Chuck Smith: "Healthy sheep produce new sheep").

Key elements of this kind of preaching:

Your teaching outline should usually answer four key questions:

- *What is the **main point** that you are expounding?*
- *Why is the main point **important**?*
- *How can we put the main point into **practice**?*

- *How is the main point related to **God's grace**?*

NOTE: You can answer these questions in varying order/ways, but try to answer all of them in almost every teaching.

Evangelistic appeals should emerge naturally out of the content of your teaching.

- Sometimes the *contemporary antitheses* provide this opportunity.
- Sometimes the way *God's grace* relates to the main point provides this opportunity.
- Sometimes the practical application of the main point provides this opportunity.
- Declare Jesus' desire to begin a personal relationship with them, and call on them to address Him personally.
- Make appropriate use of your testimony.
- Express appropriate urgency

NOTE: We do not feel obliged to give a direct evangelistic appeal in every teaching. The other aspects of the meeting (see above) will still impact non-Christians.

Speak both as a fellow-learner/sinner and as God's spokes-person.

- Speaking as a fellow-learner/sinner involves humbly communicating our awareness of our own sinfulness, ignorance, and brokenness. This establishes identification with your hearers, and makes it easier to receive your challenge (see below). Authority without this humility sounds self-righteous. You can do this by:

-
-

Speaking as God's spokes-person involves standing on the authority of God's Word and boldly declaring His will to your hearers. This expresses God's authority and calls on them to respond to Him while they have the opportunity. Humility without authority sounds like merely sentimental empathy. You can do this by:

-
-
-

Speak so that you are always understandable to biblically illiterate people.

- Use modern translations of the Bible.
- Avoid all insider language: Christianese, church jargon, “You know this,” etc.
- Use biblical and theological terms, but define them immediately.
- Help them navigate to biblical passages.

Supply appropriate apologetic content to disarm common objections to Christianity.

- The length and depth of this content depends on the issue you are addressing.
- Subordinate apologetics to evangelism:
 - Most non-Christians have serious misconceptions about Christianity
 - Apologetics can remove barriers, but only the gospel saves people

Don't over-use video, PowerPoint, music, pictures, etc.

Other helpful measures

Stay in personal contact with non-Christians!

Mobilize prayer-warriors to pray for you and especially for evangelistic impact – before, during, and after the meeting.

Consider having relatively recent converts give their testimonies on some regular basis.

Consider inviting non-Christian guests to talk privately immediately after the meeting ends.