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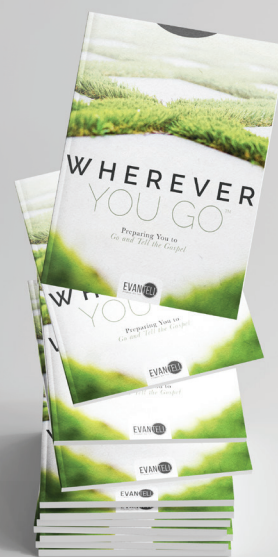


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EVANTELL'S TOOLBOX

SPRING 2023

50

YEARS LATER

What's Changed and How Evangelism Matters More than Ever

An Interview with Dr. Larry Moyer

EvanTell is celebrating 50 years of sharing the gospel and training Christians around the world to do the same. Dr. Larry Moyer takes a look back on what has changed over the years and the good, as well as the not so good, that he sees in the area of evangelism today.

pregnancy resource centers). Our latest training, "Wherever You Go", focuses on conversational evangelism in today's volatile culture. God has done great work in these last 50 years, and much more could be said, but that is a brief overview.

How has EvanTell evolved and grown since its founding?

The Lord burdened me in 1973 to found EvanTell, a ministry committed to a clear and simple presentation of the gospel, through a careful handling of Scripture, with an emphasis on the grace of God. The initial focus was on crusades – traveling and preaching the gospel. As I was traveling, Christians started asking me to train them to share the gospel. That led to EvanTell developing the "Bad News/Good News" approach to sharing the gospel and the "You Can Tell It!" seminar for training in personal evangelism. A few years later, we produced the "May I Ask You a Question?" tract which is now in 56 languages. Later came "Seedlings" (child evangelism), "Workplace Evangelism", and "Save the Mother, Save Her Child" (evangelism for

How has reaching unbelievers changed over the years?

Wow, where do I start? I think the biggest change in reaching unbelievers is that we can no longer assume they have any knowledge of the Bible. When I started in 1973, almost anyone could finish quoting John 3:16 if you started saying it. Today, people don't even know there is a book called John in the Bible. That definitely changes how we approach people today. The terminology we use has had to change as well. For example, I would say "Bible" today instead of "Word of God." Unbelievers don't know what the latter is. When talking about church, I'll say "song" instead of "hymn" or "auditorium" instead of "sanctuary." So, the gospel hasn't changed at all, but some of the terminology we use to get to the gospel has had to change.

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YEARS LATER

What changes have you seen in evangelism as practiced today versus in 1973?

The biggest change is that there is more of a focus on “pre-evangelism” than ever before. One of the dangers of this is that the gospel simply isn’t shared because there always seems to be more work to do in order to get to the gospel. I think this can become an unhealthy trend if we’re not careful. It’s great to answer questions, apply apologetics, and help those in need. However, if we don’t get to the gospel, we’re missing the opportunity to meet their most pressing need.

Do you think Christians still see evangelism as a priority today?

In my experience, it’s definitely not the priority it used to be. It seems like there are more obstacles in the minds of Christians – especially younger ones – today. Relativism seems to be one of the big reasons. Many Christians see their beliefs as “their truth” instead of the truth. Another reason seems to be accommodation. There are many who are so focused on accommodating others’ beliefs that they feel they have no right to say that they are right about the gospel. We cannot back away from the truth but we must be wise and sensitive in how we share it. This is why churches have to be so insistent on training the next generation of Christians how to share the gospel effectively.

What would you like the next 50 years to look like for EvanTell?

For the past 50 years, God has been using this ministry in ways I just couldn’t even imagine to spread the good news of salvation through Christ alone. We have a lot of exciting things happening now for EvanTell, and I just hope for God to be glorified through the clear and simple proclamation of the gospel.

A Tale of Two Methods

Confrontational Evangelism

This form of evangelism usually involves encountering someone with a tract or striking up a sudden conversation with the intent to lead to the gospel very quickly. No time is wasted. There is a quick introduction, a question or comment to enter into a spiritual conversation, and an entrance into the gospel. This method generally leads to more opportunities to share the gospel because the focus is on bringing the message one-on-one to as many as possible in a short amount of time. While there is plenty to commend here, there is a pitfall to avoid. When done hastily, the goal can become to simply get through a presentation and move on, which can come across as inauthentic and lead to missed opportunities to connect with someone.

Conversational Evangelism

This form of evangelism usually involves some relationship building. This could be over the span of a few minutes or the span of several months or longer. The method also lends itself to more dialogue, so someone sharing the gospel can take time to listen and get to know a bit more about where the unbeliever is coming from and any pain points he or she may have. One upside of this approach is that it allows for more opportunities to understand where someone is coming from so the gospel can be customized to meet them where they’re at. However, a potential downside is that the gospel can continually get delayed for the sake of continued conversation.

Whichever approach you prefer, be aware of these advantages and potential pitfalls to make the most of *every* opportunity!



HOW TO USE A Method in Evangelism

by David Souther

Part of EvanTell’s history is the creation of the “May I Ask You A Question?” tract that utilizes the *Bad News / Good News* method of sharing the gospel. This method has been used millions of times to share the gospel since 1973. However, we realize that this is not the only way to share the gospel. Whatever method you prefer to use, there are a few important keys to keep in mind to ensure the method is relational and not robotic.



USE A METHOD AS A ROADMAP, NOT A SCRIPT

Telemarketers almost never have any interest in you as a person. They are simply calling and following a script. If we’re not careful, we can make this mistake with a gospel presentation method. It should never be a script we simply follow, but rather a roadmap of main points, verse, and helpful illustrations that provide us with a structure for sharing the gospel.

When EvanTell was founded in 1973, the population of the world was just under four billion people. Today, the world population is nearly eight billion — almost twice as many people. With so many people all around us, we can say with absolute certainty that “today is the day to prioritize evangelism.”

A Double Anniversary

EvanTell celebrates 50 years of ministry in April of 2023, but that’s not the only big anniversary. That same month, Dr. Larry Moyer and his wife, Tammy will celebrate 50 years of marriage. Congratulations to Dr. and Mrs. Moyer!



USE MULTIPLE METHODS FOR SHARING THE GOSPEL



Trying to apply the same exact method for everyone you meet can lead to frustration. Jesus proclaimed the same message throughout His ministry, but the methods He used to share that message varied. He used a well and “living water” with the woman at the well in John chapter four; yet He used the story of the bronze serpent with Nicodemus in John chapter three. Jesus recognized that people have different backgrounds, personalities, learning styles, and felt needs. We should recognize this too and be ready with multiple ways to lead someone toward the truth of Christ.

DON’T LET THE METHOD BECOME YOUR MASTER



When we have a preferred method for sharing the gospel, sometimes the goal becomes singular: “get through the method.” However, sharing the gospel is about a dialogue, not a monologue. People need the freedom to ask questions, share thoughts, and explore new things that they’ve maybe never heard before. We must be sure that moving them toward Jesus is the priority and not just walking through the method. This may mean stepping outside of the method to help them understand a certain truth, pray with them through a certain struggle, or simply be present for them as they express their feelings.

Did you know?