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# BUILDING MOVEMENTS: WIN:EVANGELISM PHILOSOPHY

## UNSTOPPABLE EVANGELISM

As your church begins a ministry on a nearby campus, evangelism is what will set it apart. It will make the difference between a maintenance ministry and a thriving one like we see in the Book of Acts.

It would be tempting to build a ministry solely through the gathering of Christians. While fellowship is vital, it does not encompass everything Jesus came to do: to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

Churches grow through one or all of the following: transfer growth, biological growth and conversion growth. While all three are important and valid, it is the third that occurs most infrequently.

The good news is that most people who become Christians do so before the age of 22. College students are at a crossroads, and many belief systems are competing for their allegiance. While they're in this stage of life, we need to make Jesus Christ an option for them.

It really is possible to equip Christian students to do properly motivated evangelism that is both natural and effective. The keys are dependence on the Holy Spirit, training and selection of the best approach. Combine these factors together and evangelism can be exciting and fruitful.

As you make plans to reach out to the lost, take a look at these four principles found in Colossians 4:2-6:

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always*

## EQUIPPING STUDENTS

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*full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

### 1. PRAYER

Only God can change a human heart. We must pray that the Holy Spirit would convict people of their need for Christ (John 16:7-11).

Only God can open doors. The doors may appear to be closed on campus, but God can open them. In 1985 believers in the former Soviet Union called Christians around the world to prayer for that imprisoned nation. God moved in powerful ways, and today the gospel is spreading throughout that part of the world.

Only God can give us boldness. Many of us become like arctic rivers—frozen at the mouth—when it comes to sharing our faith. In Acts 4:29 the persecuted believers prayed for boldness, and God filled them with the Holy Spirit.

Seek out others who have a heart for students and gather often to pray for the campus. Encourage students to pray for lost friends and acquaintances by name. Pray for creativity in bringing the gospel to those who need Christ.

### 2. PROCLAMATION

Evangelism in the New Testament included broad proclamation of the message of Christ. Both Jesus and Paul often sought to expose more people to the gospel (Mark 1:38, Romans 15:17-21).

Students are barraged daily with messages from a secular world view. We must utilize every appropriate means to communicate a Christian world view (1 Corinthians 9:22, 1 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Develop a plan to expose the campus to the message of Christ and to a Christian world view. Consider strategies such as freshman surveys (see additional resources), using campus media, socials and parties, or other ideas mentioned in the previous section.

### 3. PRESENCE

Paul advised his Colossian friends to conduct themselves wisely around outsiders. He assumed they would have regular contact with the lost.

Many Christians today isolate themselves from unbelievers. They are not influencing those who need it most. Jesus did not isolate Himself from the lost, or spend His time exclusively



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with those who loved Him or responded to Him. He was out in the marketplace talking to tax collectors and other sinners.

Christian students and faculty have a unique platform for ministry because they are insiders on campus. Often students are encouraged to bring a friend to an outreach event or a dormitory discussion about the Christian faith. Students who have non-Christian relationships will find it easier to encourage others to attend the evangelism outreaches.

Encourage Christian students to develop common ground with non-Christian students on campus. This could occur in the classroom, playing intramurals, joining an affinity group, or simply making friends. Each Christian can build a network of outsiders who may be encountering authentic Christianity for the first time.

### **PERSUASION**

Paul's encouragement to the Colossians, which applies to us as well, is that we are to prepare ourselves to verbally share our faith in a gracious and clear way. Our speech needs to be seasoned with salt. Of all people, Christians should be winsome and fun to be around.

It is not that we have the power to persuade people to become Christians. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. Yet God has chosen to use our words to communicate His message of love and forgiveness. And as Paul makes clear, we need to use words thoughtfully to clearly communicate God's message to a lost world.

Do the students in your ministry know how to explain the content of the gospel to a person who has expressed interest? Many lack confidence because they do not know how to simply and clearly share their faith. Make sure Christians in your ministry are equipped to communicate their personal testimony or a clear outline of the gospel.



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