



ST. ANDREW'S HALL CENTRE
FOR MISSIONAL LEADERSHIP

SAH-L (500)

Say What?

Practicing Evangelism in a Post-Christendom World

Wednesdays 6 to 9 pm

“Good evangelists are people who engage others in good conversations about important and profound topics such as faith, values, hope, meaning, purpose, goodness, beauty, truth, life after death, life before death, and God.

The evangelist is never coercive, pushy, combative; rather, she is patient and gentle like a midwife, knowing that the giving of life takes time and cannot be rushed.”

- *Brian McLaren*

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Office Hours: By appointment

Purpose: In her classic book on evangelism *Out of the Saltshaker* Rebecca Pippert confesses a time when, “there was a part of me that secretly felt evangelism was something you shouldn’t do to your dog, let alone a friend.” On the surface many kind-hearted mainline Protestants in Canada today would agree. Many folks who sit in our pews are more than a little embarrassed by evangelism, developing “liturgical laryngitis” outside the safety of our stained glass sanctuaries, more than happy to stand and read Scripture on a Sunday morning but afraid to do so quietly in the food court Monday afternoon. More than this, there is a deeper distrust and even despair in some, that due to the haunting legacy of our residential schools missionary past (that mingled Christianity and Empire) we may no longer have good news to share at all. Taking these concerns seriously, the Bible still calls us as followers of the risen Christ/recovering sinners to always be prepared to articulate “the hope that is within us” with gentleness and respect. (1 Peter 3: 15) How might we shape leaders and communities to articulate and embody practices of evangelization in today’s increasingly secular world that feel both authentic and faithful within the Reformed, Wesleyan and Anglican traditions? How might we reclaim a “playful urgency” in our ministry of sharing the good news that is in line with Peter Rollins’ claim that we engage in evangelism not so much to change the other (the work of the Holy Spirit) but that in the practice of articulating our faith we are converted again and again?

Competence Objectives: This course aims to help students:

- Discern the challenges and opportunities in proclaiming the gospel through words and actions in a post-Christendom context.
- Develop an ability to articulate the essence of, and the urgency in, sharing the gospel as a means of participating in God’s reconciling mission in Christ to mend this broken world.
- Revive a deep awareness of the missional pitfalls and fateful errors of evangelism linked with Empire in our Christendom past, including the residential schools legacy with First Nations.
- Engage an awareness of how future evangelization models must be built on the conversion of the “Holy Spirit” and not human coercion, where the evangelist is just as open to the Spirit’s converting power as the dialogue partner.
- Articulate critical theological questions at stake in our attempt to build worshipping and witnessing communities of Christian faith in the world today.

This course aims to increase a student’s skills in:

- Contextualizing and clarifying “What is the gospel?” in this time and place
- Equipping and empowering leaders and congregations to articulate and disseminate a vision of the good news that is compelling and life-giving

- Exploring the link between a healthy prayer life and the practice of sharing the Christian faith
- Developing the creation and evaluation of evangelistic programs and practices that are entrepreneurial and effective in post-Christendom Canada
- Identifying stages of faith development and the critical role of conversion in the Christian faith
- Gracefully developing the ability to offer and receive peer review

Required Reading & Resources: The following texts and links are required for this course:

Bowen, John. *Evangelism for “Normal” People: Good News for Those Looking for a Fresh Approach*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

Guder, Darrell. *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.

Long, Thomas G. *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism after Christendom: the theology and practice of Christian Witness*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.

World Council of Churches Evangelism Webinars,

<http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>

Format & Content: Our time together will normally include a lecture on the theme of the day, discussion on the theme/readings and an opportunity to practice and reflect on assigned “E-Challenges” throughout the course.

Our sessions together will include the following themes:

Wednesday, September 16

Shouting Stones – the Biblical roots of Evangelism

Please read *Evangelism After Christendom*, pp. 1-110.

Please watch in advance of this class the World Council of Churches Webinar #1: Reclaiming Evangelism.

You must register online at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>

Wednesday, September 23

Celtic Evangelism – Postmodern Lessons from St. Patrick's mission

Please read *Evangelism for Normal People*, pp. 76 to 124.

Please watch in advance of this class the World Council of Churches Webinar #2: Evangelizing Each Other

You must register online at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>

Wednesday, September 30

Jesus and Justice – (re)discovering the Wesleyan roots of Evangelism and Social Justice

Special Guest: Rev. Dr. John Pentland, Hillhurst United Church, Calgary

Please read *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*, pp. 1-72.

Please watch in advance of this class the World Council of Churches Webinar #3: Evangelism in a multi-faith context.

You must register online at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>

Wednesday, October 7

Don't make Baby Jesus Cry – How Evangelism resists domesticating the Gospel

Please read *Continuing Conversion of the Church*, pp. 73 to 144.

Please watch in advance of this class the World Council of Churches Webinar #4: Evangelism and Migrant-Immigrant Churches

You must register online at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>

Wednesday, October 14

Here I am to Worship – Evangelism as a correction of the Unholy Trinity of Me, Myself, and I

Please read *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*, pp. 1-68.

Please watch in advance of this class the World Council of Churches Webinar #5: Evangelism and the context of the Poor and Marginalized

You must register online at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>

Wednesday, October 21

Full of it (and bankrupt at the same time): Evangelism Beyond Functional Atheism

Special Guest via Adobe Connect: Rev. Dr. Darrell Guder, Princeton Theological Seminary

Please read, *Continuing Conversion of the Church*, pp. 145 to 204.

Please watch in advance of this class the World Council of Churches Webinar #6: Evangelism and the Context of the Small Congregations

You must register online at <http://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/world-council-of-churches-evangelism-webinars>

Reading Week: October 26 to 28

Wednesday, November 4

Q3 Minority Report: Following Jesus in the ruins of Christendom

Please read *Evangelism after Christendom*, pp. 171-276.

Wednesday, November 11

Remembrance Day – Public Holiday – No Classes.

Wednesday, November 18

For All the Saints – Building Evangelistic teams within existing mainline congregations

Please read *Evangelism for Normal People*, pp. 125 to 163.

Wednesday, November 25

Preaching to Itchy Ears – Evangelistic preaching in a mainline context

Please read *Evangelism for Normal People*, pp. 164-210.

Wednesday, December 2

Taste and See – Evangelistic opportunities through the Sacraments

Special Guest: Bishop Melissa Skelton, Dioceses of New Westminster

Please read, *Evangelism for Normal People*, pp. 39 to 75.

Wednesday, December 9

Can I get a witness? A pilgrimage from Tongue Tied to Testimony

Please read *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into being Christian*, pp. 67 to 158.

Expectations of the Student: *Reading & Conversation:* Students will come prepared to class to discuss the assigned readings and participate in small group conversation on the theme.

E-Challenges: Students are expected to engage and reflect upon the challenges given to them weekly as part of the course. Whether they succeed or fail in the challenges is irrelevant. The student's ability to theologically reflect on the practice is critical for learning. *Written*

Assignments: Students are invited to submit a book review of 500 words on an evangelism work approved by the Instructor. The second assignment due at the end of the course is a 2,000 word "talk" on evangelism for a fictitious setting offered by the Instructor (Sunday Sermon, Campus event, Youth Group Meeting, etc). The student's response to this scenario in will draw on learning from lecture, small group conversations and course readings.

Additional readings (photocopy) will also be provided by the Instructor.

Evaluation: Students will be evaluated based on classroom participation, a 500 word Book Review & 2,000 word Final Written Assignment.

Selected Bibliography

Bass, Dorothy, Ed. *Practicing our Faith: A Way of Life for Searching People*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

Brueggemann, Walter. *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism: Living in a Three-Storyed Universe*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

Florence, Anna Carter *Preaching as Testimony*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.

- Holtom, Jamie & Debbie Johnson, *Bullseye: Aiming to Follow Jesus*. Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 2015.
- Honeycutt, Frank G. *Preaching for Adult Conversion and Commitment*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003.
- Kallenberg, Brad J. *Live to Tell: Evangelism for a Postmodern Age*. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2002.
- Lockhart, Ross & Robert Fennell, ed. *Three Ways of Grace: Drawing Closer to the Trinity*. Toronto: United Church Press, 2010.
- Lockhart, Ross. *Gen X, Y Faith? Getting Real with God*. Kelowna: Wood Lake Books, 2003.
- Long, Thomas G. *Testimony: Talking Ourselves into Being Christian*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.
- McNeal, Reggie. *The Future Present: Six Tough Questions for the Church*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009.
- Newbiggin, Lesslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture*. Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1986.
- Pathak, Jay and Dave Runyon. *Art of Neighboring, The: Small Steps to Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door*. Grand Rapids: Baker Publishing, 2012.
- Pagitt, Doug. *Preaching Re-Imagined: The Role of the Sermon in Communities of Faith*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005.
- Richardson, Rick. *Evangelism Outside the Box: New Ways to Help People Experience the Good News*. Downer's Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2000.
- Rollins, Peter. *How (Not) to Speak of God*. Brewster: Paraclete Press, 2006.
- Saunders, Stanley and Charles Campbell. *The Word on the Street: Performing the Scriptures in an Urban Context*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000.

Stone, Bryan. *Evangelism after Christendom: the theology and practice of Christian Witness*.

Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2006.