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Evangelism in a Diverse World...

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“Evangelism is bearing witness to what God has done, is doing and will do in the world and in one’s life, engaging others in Spirit-dialogue and inviting people to faith.” • Adam Walker Cleaveland

“Evangelism is the practice of attempting to convert people to a religion.” • WIKIPEDIA.org

Questions to think about:

- * What **IS** evangelism? Should we be doing it?
- * Will evangelism always be understood as a 4-letter word by culture? The **e-word**.
- * What are your *personal* experiences with evangelism? Good? Bad?
- * Can we come up with a definition of evangelism that we can think is not a bad thing?
- * Is it okay to talk about your faith in our diverse and pluralistic world?
- * Is faith something that should be kept private and not shared with others?
- * **Is there a way to be honest about your faith without offending other people?**

Some quotes to ponder:

“When we enter this dialogue with all the cultures of the world...we must be **open to conversion** – conversion to a fuller truth...If we are not open to conversion, then we have no right to enter into true religious dialogue.”

• Vincent Donovan (Catholic Theologian) from “*The Church in the Midst of Creation*”

“...the religious person enters this arena without prejudices and preconceived solutions, knowing full well that she may in fact have to lose a particular belief or particular religion altogether. She trusts in truth. She enters unarmed and **ready to be converted herself**. She may lose her life – she may also be born again.”

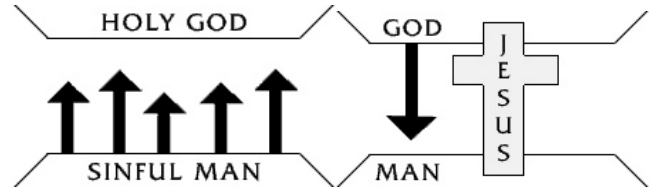
• Ramon Panikkar, from “*The Intrareligious Dialogue*”

“Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.””

• Jesus, from Matthew 28:16-20

4 Spiritual Laws:

1. God LOVES you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.
2. Man is SINFUL and SEPARATED from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.
3. Jesus Christ is God's ONLY provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.
4. We must individually RECEIVE Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.



Very Different Views:

“It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.” – **Southern Baptist Convention**

“Evangelism is not a matter of converting someone to a different belief, it is a matter of welcoming those who are isolated and in need of a community. Evangelism is founded on the beliefs that people have a need for religious community, for deep relationships, for spiritual exploration, for social involvement. Evangelism has everything to do with salvation. A religious community is a place that can save us from the crushing banality of consumerism, instrumental relationships, superficiality, alienation and isolation. Our communities are a place where we can connect with our true selves, with each other, with our communities, with our sense of the sacred.” – **Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations**

It's not about people's eternal destinies:

“The Gospel is not primarily informational but relational/missional. That is, imparting information about how to be *individually saved* is **secondary** to inviting people into relationship with a God and with members of a kingdom whose foremost concern is **wholeness for a broken world**, rather than an insurance policy for eternal destiny.” – **Brian McLaren**