

A SAMPLE GOSPEL PRESENTATION OUTLINE
Inner city Emphasis
RECONCILIATION MINISTRIES NETWORK, INC.
www.RMNI.org

One gospel outline will not be suitable neither to all evangelists, nor with more certainty, to all with whom the gospel is presented. This is presented as a guide to the integration of methods, doctrines and scripture. As a general principle, the more scripture that the evangelist has in memory, the more effective will be the presentation, since the Word penetrates the heart (Heb. 4:12). The following sample presentation is designed for those who believe in God, and accept the authority of the Bible, at least nominally. As a guide, it might be studied and then read over just before going calling. A debt is acknowledged to Evangelism Explosion III International (EE), both in case any similarities are seen, and because they gave me the best training for personal evangelism. Quoted verses are taken from the New International Version Bible.

Pre-evangelism

Personal Preparation

Our **heart** must be ready. Psalm 51:10-12 is a request for personal cleansing, renewal in the Holy Spirit, and for a new sense of the joy of our salvation, "Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you." (v. 13). Be prepared for Satan to attempt to disrupt you before leaving the house through misunderstandings, etc., but don't be afraid of Satan (I John 5:18). Put on God's armor (Eph. 6:10-20), and resist him (I Peter 5:9).

Materials Prepared

Our **materials** should be ready. A nylon attaché case is a good tool to carry Bibles, Scripture portions, tracts, teaching materials, and pen and post-it note paper or index cards, to jot down names and addresses (or use pre-printed follow-up cards, if available). Try also to have copies of a current listing of community resources, such as job training and sources of free food, medical and dental help, lodging and other community services.

Prayer

They must be ready. We ask that God will lead us to those He has already prepared, so that we can take our place in the chain of events which leads to their salvation (I Cor. 3:5-9). It is best to pray with someone specifically for the visitation prior to going. Part of the armor of God is intercessory prayer ("Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel..." Eph. 6:19).

Teamwork

Those with whom we go must be ready. Try to team up with one and preferably two other people. A woman or a member of the ethnic culture of the people we are trying to reach will normally reduce fears of the residents. Leave time to discuss progress either at the end of the

witnessing session or once a month. Before presenting the Gospel, it should be understood among the team who will lead the basic presentation. Don't take away the presentation without the permission of the leader, who can give permission even with a glance. In the meantime, watch and pray.

"Contact evangelism" and "friendship evangelism" ("relational" or "lifestyle" evangelism) are not at odds, but complementary. In contact evangelism, we try very hard to make friends, quickly! We hope to develop friendships with those who are receptive. As proponents of friendship evangelism point out, even in that context, at some point one needs to know what to say to share Christ. In addition, whereas in friendship evangelism one's circle of acquaintances is pursued, in contact evangelism we meet those we would normally never meet. We need to share Christ not only with those in relatively close contact with us ("Jerusalem"), but also with those in other social /ethnic contexts ("Judea," "Samaria," and the "uttermost parts," Acts 1:8).

Building a relationship

It is almost crucial to gain acceptance before attempting to share Christ. In the case of "contact evangelism," when you have never met the person before, state plainly, but in a friendly manner, who you represent and what you are doing. It may be a good idea to say that you are not a Jehovah-Witness or a Mormon, since you may be mistaken for them and it often creates rapport. (It does not work as well if the resident is in either category!) Try to offer a gift of some kind (Prov.18:16), preferably a New Testament or Gospel portion with an invitation to salvation contained in it, as well as your ministry name and address stamped somewhere on it.

At a point either at or near the beginning, ask the person's *first* name, and restate yours and then use their name. If you need to follow up, you can obtain the last name and address later, after you have had more time to build a relationship. You may have to share the gospel on the doorstep. If so, let the relationship hold (control) the door. If you are invited in, take the opportunity. Select a seat that will give you the best chance to speak to the resident. If the TV is on, after you have gained more rapport, ask if you could turn the sound down, since it is distracting. Turn the *sound* all the way off, and if they suggest turning the TV off, do so. Then before leaving, return the volume setting.

Expect distractions, such as visitors, active children, and phone calls, particularly at the close of the presentation at the point of a decision. Those who are not presenting the gospel should try to keep the resident from distractions, if possible.

Often people on the street will not want to listen to a long presentation. You can bargain, asking for three minutes of their time. Then look at your watch, and keep your word. Therefore, you must be able to present the Gospel succinctly, without distorting it.

"Interrogative Evangelism"

"Interrogative evangelism" is advocated. That is, ask enough questions so that you understand the person's view of God, personal sin, how they believe salvation operates, and how they think that they stand with God. Do they have a valid assurance of salvation? Good doctors ask many

questions. So do good evangelists. Don't launch into a long monologue without asking questions. Tailor the presentation uniquely to each individual. Start where the person is. They may not even believe in God or the Bible, so we could be guilty of great presumption.

Be very careful to **listen** to the person. A doctor must listen before prescribing a remedy, and so must a "soul" doctor. The better we listen, the better we will be able to address the specific needs and objections that the person may have. The better we listen, the more fair it will appear to allow you (the witness) to speak. The goal is to enter into *dialogue* with the person, so that they will feel free to honestly express problems they may have with what you say. If the person is too talkative, you may have to take more control of conversation so that you can present the Gospel.

Be very careful to listen to the **person**. Every person is an image bearer of God, and deserves respect. The person may have a beer in hand, and have a live-in lover. The personal appearance may be unlovely. God has delivered us from what He alone knows. He doesn't show partiality, leaving an example (Acts 10:34-35). Someone has correctly noted that we don't clean a fish before it is caught. If you seem to get nowhere with the person, pass the presentation to another on the team, if possible, or leave in such a way that the next Christian has an easier time of it. Also, do not promise anything to the person that you are not prepared to perform. It is wise, if you are uncertain, to say that you will not promise anything, but will see what you *might* be able to do.

A GENERAL GOSPEL OUTLINE

Introduction

(Evangelist "E") "I'm (name) and we're from (church). We are NOT Jehovah-Witnesses. We're offering free New Testaments (or . . .) to people in the neighborhood. Would you like one?"

(If not) "Thanks, anyway. Have a good day!"

(If yes, particularly if you see obvious interest) "Before we leave, may I ask you a question?"

(If "no," due to being busy, we can try to reschedule the visit. Often such rescheduled visits either don't materialize or are not very fruitful, indicating that the person didn't want to talk in the first place.)

(If "yes") "Are you **absolutely positive** that you'll go to heaven when you leave this world?"

(If "yes") "Can I ask the basis for your assurance?"

(Proceed if the answer is one other than faith in Jesus Christ. If the answer is one of faith in Jesus Christ, encourage them, and perhaps leave a local Christian radio program guide, a modern language Bible, or other material.)

(If no) "Would you **like** to be sure?"

(If "yes") "May I share with you how you **can** be sure?"

(If "no," then encourage them to read the material that they have accepted, and leave in a friendly manner. You may also warn them of the dangers of putting off the decision [cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-6:2]).

Gospel Presentation

We all have sinned

(Most often, in the Black community, the biggest misunderstanding of salvation comes at this point. Most have been lead to believe that if they "keep on keeping on," and do good deeds, like going to church, and if they don't hurt people, the chances are quite good that they will make it into heaven. They look around and don't appear to themselves to be as bad as others. This false view of righteousness is a Satanic deception that must be destroyed [2 Cor.10:3-5]. Unless a person has a definite sense [conviction] of personal sin and need, he/she will not repent and seek God.)

(If given permission to proceed) "First, the Bible declares that none of us deserves to go to heaven." "FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD." (Rom.3:23).

"Have you ever sinned?" (If "no," quote 1 John 1:8, "IF WE CLAIM TO BE WITHOUT SIN, WE DECEIVE OURSELVES AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN US.")

(If "yes") "So have all of us. We are in the same boat."

"In fact, there is not a single person who is naturally good."

ROM. 3:10-11 "THERE IS NO ONE RIGHTEOUS, **NOT EVEN ONE**; THERE IS NO ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, **NO ONE WHO SEEKS GOD.**"

"If anyone is seeking God, it is because God is drawing that person (John 6:44, "NO ONE CAN COME TO ME UNLESS THE FATHER WHO SENT ME DRAWS HIM...").

"THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH..." (Rom. 6:23 a). We deserve to go to a place of unending agony and torment called hell. Once a person goes there, there is no possibility of getting from there to heaven (Luke 16:19-26).

No one can get to heaven by being good, even though most people believe this. God says, "HE SAVED US, NOT BECAUSE OF THE RIGHTEOUS THINGS WE HAD DONE, BUT BECAUSE OF HIS MERCY. HE SAVED US THROUGH THE WASHING AND REBIRTH AND RENEWAL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT." (Titus 3:5)

"FOR BY GRACE ARE YOU SAVED, THROUGH FAITH--AND THIS IS NOT FROM YOURSELVES, IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD--NOT BY WORKS, SO THAT NO ONE CAN BOAST." (Eph. 2:8-9).

"Even if you never sinned again from this moment on, until you were 90 years old, you wouldn't get into heaven. Do you know why?"

(Usually, the person does not.)

"Because you and I have **already** sinned in the past. How are we going to pay for those sins **already** committed?"

Jesus' substitute sacrifice

"I cannot help you, because I have my own sin debt to pay, and **you** cannot help me, because of your own sin. "NO MAN CAN REDEEM THE LIFE OF ANOTHER OR GIVE TO GOD A RANSOM FOR HIM--THE RANSOM FOR A LIFE IS COSTLY, NO PAYMENT IS EVER ENOUGH." (Ps. 49:7-8).

"Either we must pay for our sin (and we would never finish paying for it, which is one reason why hell is eternal), or a substitute for us must be found."

"We need the help of someone who has no personal sin. There is only one person who has lived without sin. Do you know who this was?"

(If correct, affirm that response and turn to John 1:1; if incorrect, you may say, "Let's see what the Bible says on that subject." and turn to John 1:1.)

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD." (John 1:1). "THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US. WE HAVE SEEN HIS GLORY, THE GLORY OF THE ONE AND ONLY, WHO CAME FROM THE FATHER, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH." (John 1:14).

Jesus, still God, humbled himself by becoming a mere man, a servant, and then by dying for us (Philippians 2:5-8).

The Bible says: "HE COMMITTED **NO SIN**, AND NO DECEIT [or trickery] WAS FOUND IN HIS MOUTH." (I Peter 2:22).

Then it says, "HE HIMSELF BORE **OUR SINS** IN HIS BODY ON THE TREE, SO THAT WE MIGHT **DIE TO SINS AND LIVE FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**; BY HIS WOUNDS YOU HAVE BEEN HEALED." (I Peter 2:24).

The same idea is expressed elsewhere, "GOD MADE HIM WHO HAD **NO SIN** TO BE SIN FOR US, SO THAT IN HIM WE MIGHT BECOME THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD." (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus took our sins, and paid for them by the sacrifice of Himself.

Counting the Cost--Purity

(Note: so often little change in the life of those professing Christ is seen. Receiving Christ seems to be like taking out a "fire" insurance policy, which has no impact on the rest of life. Here we are encouraging the person to "count the cost" of becoming a Christian, realizing that, at this point, the person cannot clean up his/her life.)

Notice that God wants those who follow Him "To live for righteousness," to "become the righteousness of God," once Christ becomes our sin bearer. This involves repentance, which means a decision to turn **away** from any known sin, **toward God**. "NOW HE [GOD] COMMANDS ALL PEOPLE EVERYWHERE TO REPENT." (Acts 17:30). We cannot do this in our own power, but when God comes into our life, he cleans us from the inside out. "IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; THE OLD HAS GONE, THE NEW HAS COME!" (2 Cor. 5: 17). The Holy Spirit comes into our life and burns out the sin, "FOR IF YOU LIVE ACCORDING TO THE SINFUL NATURE, YOU WILL DIE; BUT IF **BY THE SPIRIT** YOU PUT TO DEATH THE MISDEEDS OF THE BODY YOU WILL LIVE." (Rom. 8:13). We must be willing for God to clean us and cooperate with Him.

Whose side are you on: God's or Satan's?

(Note: Satan has a stronghold in the inner city. He will try to thwart our attempts to share Christ, but our work, like the apostle Paul's, is "to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins..." Acts 26:18. In this presentation, we are directly confronting the issue of Satan's power. Experience shows that people understand Satan's power and bondage.)

Until Christ comes in to take control of our life, we are under the control of the god of this world, Satan, and are in the kingdom of darkness (1 John 5:19; Col. 1:13). Satan is too strong for us, if we are without Christ, and will keep us in slavery to sin. Satan is a destroyer and will ruin your life (John 10:10, cf. Mark 5:1-20, the Gadarene demoniac). He tries to keep us in spiritual blindness (1 John 4:40 and take us to hell with him (Rev. 20:7-15).

Our only hope of getting out of his grasp is to receive Christ, who is greater in power than Satan (James 4:7). God can rescue us (Col. 1:13), but if we don't receive Christ, then we actually remain an enemy of God, on the side of Satan (Rom. 5:10).

Receive Christ

To transfer into God's kingdom and become a child of God, we must receive Christ, as it says in John 1:12, "YET TO ALL WHO RECEIVE HIM, TO THOSE WHO BELIEVED IN HIS NAME, HE GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD."

Receiving the gift of going to heaven (and all that "eternal life" means) occurs when we receive the **person** of Jesus Christ. "AND THIS IS THE TESTIMONY: GOD HAS GIVEN US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON. HE WHO HAS THE SON HAS LIFE; HE WHO DOES NOT HAVE THE SON OF GOD DOES NOT HAVE LIFE." (1 John 5:11-12).

There are the "haves", and the "have-not's"--those who have Jesus and are going to heaven, and those who don't; who will end up in hell, quite simply.

How does a person receive Jesus Christ?

There are certain key truths about Christ that must be believed, called the "gospel", which is that: "CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, THAT HE WAS BURIED, THAT HE WAS RAISED ON THE THIRD DAY ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, AND THAT HE APPEARED TO PETER, AND THEN TO THE TWELVE." (1 Cor. 15:4-5).

"Believing" is described in this way: "IF YOU CONFESS WITH YOUR MOUTH, 'JESUS IS LORD,' AND BELIEVE IN YOUR HEART THAT GOD RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, YOU WILL BE SAVED. FOR IT IS WITH YOUR HEART THAT YOU BELIEVE AND ARE JUSTIFIED [made right with God], AND IT IS WITH YOUR MOUTH THAT YOU CONFESS AND ARE SAVED." As the scripture says, "ANYONE WHO TRUSTS IN HIM WILL NEVER BE PUT TO SHAME." (Rom. 10:9-11).

"With your heart" means that you really mean it. "Confess" means that you are willing to tell others about your faith in Christ.

"Being good", or trying to obey the Old Testament Law will never get someone to heaven, because we cannot be good or righteous enough. We get there simply by faith. "THEREFORE NO ONE WILL BE DECLARED RIGHTEOUS IN HIS SIGHT BY OBSERVING THE LAW; RATHER THROUGH THE LAW WE BECOME CONSCIOUS OF SIN. BUT NOW A RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD, APART FROM THE LAW, HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN, TO WHICH THE LAW AND THE PROPHETS TESTIFY. THIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FROM GOD COMES THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST TO ALL WHO BELIEVE. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE, FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD." (Rom. 3:20-23).

This is the truth that will set you free from the power of sin and Satan (John 8:32).

Invitation

Would you like to put your faith in Jesus Christ and receive the person of Jesus into your life **right now**?

If they are "not ready," ask them what keeps them back, then try to deal with that hindrance. If the person is ready, they often will want to pray right then and there. I usually give them the option to pray in the privacy of their own room before going to bed that night, so that they will not do something just to get rid of, or to please the evangelist. Even so, people sometimes opt to pray right then. But if they are still "not ready," remind them that they do not know the time of their own death, and that once dead, there is no second chance. "JUST AS MAN IS DESTINED TO DIE ONCE, AND AFTER THAT TO FACE JUDGMENT." [Heb. 9:27]. (Violent death is fairly common in the inner city in America.)

(If they are ready, you might ask them if they would like to pray alone, or if they would like to follow you in a prayer. Usually they would like to follow, in which case you would restate the Gospel and the desire to receive Christ in prayer then lead the phrase-by-phrase in praying to receive Christ.

After the person has prayed, affirm that decision and begin to equip them for the battle with Satan that will follow. There are numerous methods to use. If you have the "Four Steps Up" tract (Open Door Press), the second half of the booklet would be covered. You could review the back of the "Four Spiritual Laws" (Campus Crusade for Christ) tract. I also use the "Welcome to God's Family" teaching sheet, leaving it with them. It then becomes the basis for the next follow up visit. During that visit we could see if they have an assurance of salvation. While we can point the person to 1 John 5:11-13, the Holy Spirit must give that assurance (Rom. 8:15-16). Pray for the person during the week and try to call them on the phone to see how he/she is.

The most important goal at this point, and the hardest, becomes getting the new Christian into a strong church. This is why teaming up with a local evangelical (Black) church from the start is so valuable, because often this church team member can offer a ride or offer to come by to lead the way to church the following Sunday. The church is God's natural womb of nurture and growth. We could also offer a ride to a solid local Black church, or to our own, if the person would feel comfortable, if a local Black church member is not with us.

Now discipleship is the goal.

SOME WAYS TO PRAY FOR INNER CITY EVANGELISM

1. Pray for revival. The gift from God of repentance is critical. Unless there is conviction of sin, we won't see much progress. (Acts 11:18; John 16:8) Pray that the local churches will receive a burden and resources to evangelize the inner city.
2. Agree to bind away demonic spirits from the workers and to suppress them within the city, especially the housing projects (Matt. 18:18-19; 2 Cor. 4:4; John 17:11-12). Pray against the spirit of the antichrist (1 John 2:22-23; 2 John 1:9-11).
3. Pray for more workers and more teams of evangelists (African-American and females on teams, in particular) to expand the work (Luke 10:2).