

Cultivating *Christ-First* Generations

Apologetics + Evangelism + Discipleship

Dear Pastor and or Christian Leader,

The purpose of this letter is to introduce myself (David Geisler) and our ministry, Norm Geisler International Ministries, in order to explore some common ground in which we might be able to work together for His Glory.

Most of us have been trained in various forms of evangelism but might not be familiar with the “Art of Conversational Pre-Evangelism.” Perhaps you have never even heard of the term, “pre-evangelism.” Simply put, there is a certain set of skills and sensitivity that, when possessed by a Christian, will effectively lower our lost friends’ intellectual, cultural, and emotional barriers to the Gospel. In many instances, BEFORE our lost friends can even “hear the Gospel,” these barriers must be overcome. Conversational Pre-Evangelism is a proven technique and methodology that does just that and also *creates greater openness among our non-Christian friends to actually hear the gospel.*

Think about this: How can we proclaim the Good News to someone who:

- *does not believe he/she is a sinner (morality is relative) and therefore sees no need for a Savior?*
- *is very happy with himself/herself and really not interested in good news.*
- *believes that he or she can measure up.*
- *believes that all the ways eventually lead to one true God.*
- *believes that he or she is God.*

The world is full of people who ascribe to one or more of those beliefs and reaching them might seem next to impossible to some believers. Not only do we, as believers, need His touch and the presence of the Holy Spirit, but we also must be wise in how we reach out to others (Col. 4:5). For those who might be shy, or unable to adequately and properly express their faith, and/or the love of the Lord, this training also relaxes and equips the believer to be as effective as possible.

So, how did this pre-Evangelism concept and training first get started?

In 1994 in the US, CRU (Formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) saw a need to approach graduate students in a different way when it became obvious that the Four Spiritual Laws approach did not work very well with those who were indifferent or skeptical towards Christianity. *I (David) was hired to help develop this new approach and what I discovered after five years with CRU was that it wasn't just graduate students that were skeptical.* In fact, a new generation of doubters and non-believers had risen who needed special attention to their objections and sensitivities. *In 2000, God gave me a burden to start my own ministry to teach Christians this new art form called Conversational Pre-Evangelism, which creates many more open doors for evangelism.* In 2009 this training material was published in a book by Harvest House called *Conversational Evangelism: How To Listen and Speak So You May Be Heard.* In 2014 an updated version was published. It has now been translated into Spanish, Chinese, Indonesian, Korean, Slovakian, and German.

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What is Pre-Evangelism?

Witnessing used to involve laying out the truth and guiding a person to understand and accept it. But the awareness of basic Christian principles has changed and so have the needs of “pre-believers.” **If evangelism is planting seeds of the gospel, pre-evangelism is tilling the soil of their mind and heart, preparing them to at least be willing to listen to the Truth in partnership with the Holy Spirit (Mark 4:8).** It raises curiosity in the mind of the hearers so that they become interested. *This Conversational Pre-Evangelism methodology involves asking thought provoking questions that surface uncertainty, minimizes their defensiveness, and yet creates a sense of curiosity to hear more about Jesus or at least continue the conversation.*

Greater opportunities for direct evangelism are created by learning and adhering to a pre-evangelism paradigm containing four parts and the four different roles we play that lead to direct opportunities for evangelism.

The **four parts** to Conversational Pre-Evangelism are: **Hearing, Illuminating, Uncovering, and Building.**

The corresponding **four different roles we serve** are:

1. **The role of a Musician:** listening carefully and also hearing the gaps in their beliefs e.g. (Morality is a personal preference)
2. **The role of an Artist:** painting a picture for others by asking thought provoking questions that help people to see themselves in a more true light.
3. **The role of an Archaeologist:** digging beneath the surface to uncover their real barriers to the Gospel.
4. **The role of a Builder:** finding common ground, building a bridge and looking for opportunities to move from pre-evangelism to direct evangelism.

Once interest has been created, just like the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, it can lead more easily to direct evangelism.

How can I learn more?

For the past 20 years we have been conducting C. E. Seminars in different parts of the globe. For seven years we trained Christian ministries, seminary students, and church and lay leaders all over Asia in this art called *Conversational Pre-Evangelism*. In July, 2011, we moved our ministry headquarters from Singapore to the United States in order to expand the vision. With a passion for people, we share an engaging, conversational approach to evangelism and address:

- Why we don't have a greater heart to reach those around us.
- What makes old models of witnessing ineffective in today's culture.
- Why evangelism must start with relational pre-evangelism.
- How to ask questions, listen attentively, and understand what someone believes.
- How to engage others pre-evangelistically and keep their interest.
- Ways to identify the real barriers to belief in order to build a bridge to the Truth.



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Please prayerfully consider how Norm Geisler International Ministries might impact your church and or ministry to advanced God's kingdom.

In Him,

Dr. David Geisler
President, Norm Geisler International Ministries

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What International Christian Leaders Have Said About This Training:

"I believe that every church would benefit by integrating the concepts of Conversational Pre-Evangelism into their existing evangelistic programs and strategies!"

- **Josh McDowell**

"Truth is best communicated in the realm of interpersonal relationships. And the best conduit for establishing relationships is the fine art of soul-searching conversation. As such, conversational evangelism and apologetics are vital tools for communicating the Gospel in a non-threatening, pre-evangelistic manner. This fresh pre-evangelism model by Rev. Dr. David Geisler is excellent. It is seeker-sensitive, Word-centered and purpose-driven. It is designed to win a hearing from a conversation with pre-believers, much like what Jesus did when He engaged in conversational evangelism with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4)."

- **Rev. Edmund Chan**, International Discipleship leader and author of *"Built To Last"* and *"A Certain Kind."*

What Participants Have Said About This Training:

"Your training is refreshing in its format and content. I have not found anything published [aside from individual books on evangelism] that comes close to dealing with the legitimate barriers that most people have BEFORE they can give the Gospel a hearing."

- **Erin Kerr**, Former Evangelism Pastor, Saddleback Church, San Clemente, Ca.

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In 2003, God used David Geisler and his CE training to significantly shape my approach to evangelism with my non-believing friends. Now, 10 years later, **I'm so thankful that my young staff team has received the same gift.**

- **Barry Lusk**, Director of Campus Outreach, Florida

"Conversational Evangelism gives us some fresh ways on sharing the gospel especially in reaching out to specific target groups. Everyone can greatly benefit from the research made for this training. In fact, a few days after attending Dr. Geisler's seminar, *I was able to apply the new skills I've learned and five persons readily accepted Jesus into their lives. I highly recommend it.*"

- **Lucivar "Boc" Laurico**, Former National Director Philippines, Campus Crusade for Christ

"I urge every Christian to attend a Conversational Evangelism Conference with Dr. David Geisler. I believe this is absolutely the finest training available emphasizing pre-evangelism as a means to share the gospel. **This is NOT another gospel witnessing methodology!** This training will lead you to confidently engage our current culture and the wide variety of belief systems in such a way as to create honest and willing opportunities to share a meaningful gospel witness. Furthermore, **the training model removes a great majority of the fear and anxiety** associated with and felt by those attempting to share the gospel....*I now actively look for opportunities to share the faith.*"

- **Pastor Kevin R. Ferrell**, Egypt Baptist Church Memphis, TN

Dr. David Geisler held an outstanding conference for Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention September 27th and 28th of 2013. Not only did he deliver a time-sensitive material that is needed in the area of evangelism, but delivered it in a way relevant to his viewers and captivating to as young as high schoolers. His material has depth that will keep academic students wanting more but it is also practical enough that everyone who listens can apply things immediately. Dr. Geisler's style of teaching shows sensitivity to his students not willing that any attendee be left on the gutter of information. He mixes facts with actual research through multimedia. Our two days - four sessions were filled with inter-active dialogues, informational videos and a note booklet that allowed everyone to be engaged from beginning to end. It is one of those conferences that will keep everyone's attention glued. **No believer should be in the world marketplace without this skill of pre-evangelism.** I highly recommend Dr. David Geisler to any person who wishes to make a spiritual impact in this generation and the generations to come.

- **Michael "Bong" Abagon**, Director of Evangelism at Hawaiian Pacific Baptist Convention

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Apologetics + Evangelism + Discipleship

Recently we had David Geisler come and teach a staff training for us on conversational evangelism. We spent much of the time looking at pre-evangelism apologetic strategies. There was a great mix of upfront instruction, question and answer time, as well as small group interaction and discussion. There was also a good balance of intellectual stimulation as well as emphasis on loving people and gentleness in communication. All of the staff that I have discussed it with thus far have spoken highly of it. Some have already been able to use things learned in the class in personal evangelism experiences. ***This was the best staff training we've had all year. I would recommend it to anyone.***

- **Olan Stubs**, Director of Campus Outreach, Alabama

"David Geisler has provided the Church with a tremendous resource in his book *Conversational Evangelism* and the corresponding training sessions. His method is Bible-based, grace filled, and strategic for our current times. Rather than looking to emerging cultural trends as road blocks to God's Kingdom, David helps us to see these trends are new opportunities to participate in God's advancing Kingdom."

- **Pastor Doug Hankins**, Highland Baptist Church, Waco Texas

"**After learning C.E., we realize we could talk to people whom we think would reject our message and not talk to us.** Even though they were initially not interested, by using this methodology, we were able to lead them into deeper conversations and some of them even expressed interest to hear the Four Spiritual Laws. I believe that the Lord will continue to work in us: to both revive our passion in sharing the gospel, and more importantly, to give our lives to respond to the Great Commission."

- **Tiffany**, Student-led Movement Campus Crusade staff, National Taiwan University

"I have been in ministry over 40 years and let me say that this is some of the most helpful training in evangelism that I feel a person can have in light of what we are facing in the world today. It takes the evangelistic training that we may have had previously and lifts it into an art form called - a conversation! I highly recommend it." -

- **Dr. Geoff Gorsuch**, Former staff, The Navigators, Singapore.

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“I wanted to let you know about something we have found very helpful in training our people to relate to their friends in a post-modern culture. Dr. David Geisler spoke at our church retreat and lead us through a seminar on Conversational Evangelism, a methodology/mindset for building a bridge to share the Gospel with our post-modern (what's true for me may not be true for you) friends. *Conversational Evangelism is more than apologetics and more than a mere Gospel presentation. C. E. teaches regular church folks how to ask the right kinds of questions, without causing defensiveness, in order to hear the inconsistent beliefs or internal longings in the unbeliever, help them see their own contradictions in their beliefs, uncover their real reasons for their unbelief, and cultivate a desire in the pre-believer to learn more.* This C. E. material also provides some very practical steps for a pastor or lay leader to teach others how to build bridges to unbelievers for the Gospel every day and create more open doors for them to share the gospel more often. **I don't know of anything else quite like it.** David has taught this material in 13 Asian countries and in a number of churches in the U.S. as well. I think this stuff has tremendous potential to help folks in the pew to share their Christian faith as they live among people growing increasingly relativistic and pluralistic. I highly recommend it!”

- **Pete Everett**, Senior Pastor, Grace Church, Harmony, Penn.

What Others Have Said About the Conversational Evangelism Book

“Yes! That was my reaction when introduced to this book! It admirably teaches all of us how to build bridges to unbelievers in such a way that (1) they will not be needlessly alienated and (2) that they will actually listen to what we have to say. These writers follow the lead of Jesus by teaching us how to stimulate thought and awaken people to their need by asking provocative questions. Here we have answers to age old questions such as, how do I begin a conversation with someone who is not interested in the gospel? And, how do I learn to talk about my beliefs in an understandable way? In short, **here is practical instruction on how to introduce the Gospel into the market place of ideas without awkwardness or fear.**”

- **Dr. Erwin Lutzer**, Former Senior Pastor, Moody Church, Chicago, Il.

“The Geisler have great insight into the thinking of unbelievers. This book gives valuable training in learning to ask questions, listening, and helping non-Christians move toward faith in Christ.”

Dr. Max Barnett, Former Professor of Collegiate Ministry, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX.

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“*Conversational Evangelism* isn’t a good that you read and pass on. It’s a book that you read and reread, that you underline, highlight, notate, and dog-ear, that you keep within arm’s reach because you use it regularly...in real life. David and Norm Geisler lay out what is not only a remarkably practical “oh I can really do this” approach to engaging those far from God in conversations that draw them toward Jesus, but also a wealth of helps in asking questions, uncovering issues, offering illustrations, and answering concerns. How do you take sharp apologetic thinking and integrate it into a life of winsome, missional living? *Conversational Evangelism* makes that life accessible. And isn’t that the Point? Isn’t that our point?”

- **Tim Hawks**, Senior Pastor: Hill Country Bible Church, Austin, Texas

“If you’re looking for a book that will help you share your faith more effectively, *Conversational Evangelism* is a great choice. It contains no gimmicks or slick methodologies, just thought provoking and practical ideas on how to spark engaging dialogue that will help you sow the gospel into the hearts of others. I especially appreciate the way the concept of “pre-evangelism” is developed. By using examples from Jesus’ life and ministry, and observing how He built bridges into the lives of others before communicating eternal truth, brilliantly reveals Jesus’ heart for evangelism. We have used *Conversational Evangelism* as a springboard for our weekly roundtable discussions among our pastoral staff. **I believe this book is a must read for every pastor, and anyone who seriously desires to win souls.**”

- **Lloyd Pulley**, Calvary Chapel, Old Bridge, New Jersey

"Calvary of Albuquerque recently hosted David Geisler in conjunction with an apologetics conference. Speaking on the topic of conversational pre-evangelism, I found his points relevant and informative. **I would recommend his book to anyone wanting to clearly understand the nature of personal evangelism.** I particularly enjoyed the section in his book on how to ask the right questions, listening to a person's worldview; and then providing answers that connect them with the truth of Scripture."

- **Skip Heitzig**, Calvary of Albuquerque, NM

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Apologetics + Evangelism + Discipleship

“Conversational Evangelism is one of the most helpful and practical books on personal evangelism I've ever seen. It makes evangelism seem as easy as having a conversation with a friend--which it is. You give so many ideas on starting conversations that don't shut people down. Students want to tell you what they think and sometimes don't care what you think. These tips give me ways to keep a conversation going with a student that doesn't seem to care. It is well written and easy to put into practice. When I think of some of the training times I have had with staff, I wish I had had this book for them to read.”

- **Warren Culwell**, Former Campus Crusade, Red River Regional Office, Texas

“Conversational Evangelism is a great tool for parents to equip their sons and daughters to reach their culture with the Gospel ‘one home at a time.’”

- **Alex Kennedy**, Senior Pastor, Carmel Baptist Church, Matthews, North Carolina

“Why should I read Conversational Evangelism? Recent studies within churches indicate that successful evangelism is no longer being measured on how many tracts one hands out or how many times they got to share the gospel. Today it is being measured in terms like: “How many meaningful spiritual conversations did you have with non-Christians in the last six months?” Today it may take several encounters by several different people before the gospel is understood or embraced. Greg Hawkins of the Willow Creek association says, “The human spirit is wired by God to search for Him.” Part of our problem is how to dialog with people to help them know where to search or even to know that they have a need to search. It is often hard to start those dialogs, to know where to begin, how to bridge barriers to the gospel. This is where Conversational Evangelism fits. **This book is a great resource to help Christians effectively do that. There is room for this resource in any church’s outreach or evangelism process.**”

- **Ed Newell**, Church Discipleship Ministry, Navigators