

Evangelism Update 02-05-06

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Note from Jim:

Get ready! You're going to find this newsletter is a bit longer than the past two issues. In this one, I've included a *Reignite!* Report to share some stories from the GNN reunion and EBC I attended last week. I'm also adding a new Questions & Objections section to the Evangelism Update, where I hope to offer answers to the most common questions or objections we encounter in our street ministry.

Scripture of the Week:

"What I tell you now in the darkness, shout abroad when daybreak comes. What I whisper in your ear, shout from the housetops for all to hear!" (Matthew 10:27, NLT)

Quote of the Week:

"If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for." (Charles H. Spurgeon)

Evangelism Resource:

How about a practical "how-to" guide on sharing your faith simply, effectively, biblically, the way Jesus did?

[The Witnessing Manual 2.0](#)

Requires the free [Adobe Reader](#).

Questions & Objections:

Q. How many people have you lead to Christ?

A. We get asked this a lot when talking about our street ministry. Here's something I learned that really blessed me. Every time we share the full count of the gospel with someone, we have lead them to Christ.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: 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. (1st Corinthians 15:1-4, NIV)

Leading someone to Christ is not just getting the person to say the "Sinners Prayer". Truly leading someone to Christ is sharing the gospel with them; showing that person Christ and opening up the reason for the cross. It's then up to them to make a choice: either to humble themselves in repentance, or to turn their back on Jesus and walk away. Sadly, it seems some times that the modern church is caught up in measuring success by counting raised hands or how many they've lead in the "Sinner's Prayer". It's not about how many "decisions" we can get, it's about how many people we share the saving gospel with (and in doing so, each time we've lead them to Christ).

I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. (1st Corinthians 3:6, NIV)

Prayer Points:

- Pray for Josh (see Weekly "Fishing" Update).
 - Pray for the seeds that were sown in L.A. at *Reignite!*
 - I'll be working with GNN Local Leaders in neighboring areas to organize a one or two day mini-EBC in July. Plans are to focus on sharing the gospel at the Jackson County Fair. Begin to pray now, if it is God's will, we'll find blessing and favor in coordinating this event.
 - "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields." (Matthew 9:37-38, NLT)
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Reignite! Report:

As some of you may know, last week (Jan. 25th-29th) I was at the [GNN](#) reunion *Reignite!* God moved, and it was a life changing experience. I have posted some photos on our website. Hopefully they share some of the blessed fellowship and hard labor that took place in carrying the cross and the gospel to the streets. You can find the pictures by clicking the link below. Also, if you'd like to hear some of what was going on, there's a link below for our audios page. Under the Open Air section, I've posted a 26-minute audio I was able to record while open air preaching on the campus at U.C. Long Beach.

- [Photo Gallery](#)
- [One-2-One & Open Air Audios](#)

Most everyone who's been to an [Evangelism Boot Camp](#) will tell you they went with their own expectations only to have God reveal what His will really was while they were there. That was exactly the case for me at *Reignite!* There's bunches of stories, but for now I just want to share a few that seem to reveal the work God was doing in me and a couple of brothers at the reunion.

The first story took place even before *Reignite!* had officially begun. After some "meets and greets" in the hotel lobby, Christine and Steve Bainbridge mentioned they were hungry (having been on the plane all the way from Ontario). Mike, Juan, Ken and I hooked up with them and walked down to a nearby Subway restaurant.

When we got there, I did a little slight of hand for the manager and was able to give him some [Curved Illusion](#) tracts. After we got seated around a table, the manager came out with the two women that had been working behind the counter and asked me to show them the tricks. I did the sleight of hand for them and gave them the [Curved Illusion](#) tracts as well. Honestly, I was about to let it go at that when Christine picked up the ball and drew them into a one-2-three. She quickly found out that english was a second language for the two women, but God had put Juan Olivo in the group to translate the Good Person test into spanish. Then, when the talk got a little more rapid and heavy, Christine just handed it off to Juan.

It was beautiful! God had put the perfect team together to accomplish what He wanted at the restaurant. Even more amazing was how God held the ground for us. When we got there, I'd say about eight people were eating at tables. As we ordered, I was about to go and give them all tracts but they had picked up and cleared out. I was a little disappointed, but that's only because I didn't know what God had planned. For about 45 minutes those three employees heard the gospel with no distractions, only a single customer came through in all that time.

Praise God! It's a thrill just to work in tandem with Him.

Friday, I was on a team that went to Hollywood and I hooked up with Steve Bainbridge, Mark Warren and Franklin Reeves. God had reminded me of a spot I'd ended up at during [EBC6](#) about 16 blocks further down from the Chinese theater area where most everyone else was going to be. It's a large open area with lots of benches and planters where a number of city buses stop, an escalator also leads up from the subway. My heart was that rather than talking to tourists and such like we might encounter along the main strip, I wanted to reach the people that lived in that darkness day in and day out.

OK, now to the lessons God had for us. It was a good spot but the crowds were fluid. Because of the buses and foot traffic they'd rise to 40 people and then drop to three, next they'd climb to 30 and then drop to five. It was a little disheartening. Even with an [EBC](#) first -- a guy with a megaphone heckling us on and off throughout the day from across the street -- we felt like we couldn't hold a crowd. The flesh started to play against us and Steve and I talked about how perhaps this wasn't where God wanted us. Steve said that he'd really like a chance to preach in front of the Chinese theater. I realized everyone else was back up that way as well as the photographers and I'd like to be where at least one picture might make it into the photo video (yup -- pride). God brought us back into focus though. First, I noticed that with the amplification bouncing off the buildings around us, people on the other sides of the streets and corners (including another bus stop) could hear us as well. Then shortly after that Franklin got a call from Linda Essary saying their team was having trouble gathering crowds and they were thinking of coming down our way. We felt the conviction and recognized God was saying to stay put.

The Holy Spirit began to work. As one of us was preaching, the others would talk to people scattered around the area. They were simply amazing one-2-ones! Even members of the other team said the same thing once they joined us. The main one-2-one that sticks in my mind was talking with Clifford. I'm almost sure this man had a demon. He was tall and thin, dressed completely in black. He wore a hooded sweat shirt with a scarf or fabric over his nose and covering the lower half of his face. One hand was pulled up into the sleeve and the other hand only had fingers sticking out with really long fingernails. I told Steve he reminded me of the lepers from the Bible. I first encountered Clifford coming up with other people from the subway. I gave him a [Chronicles Collectible](#) tract in passing. A little later, he appeared when Mark was up on a bench preaching with zeal. Clifford went and stood about 12 feet from Mark, looking at the ground and standing perfectly still. He didn't move for at least 20 minutes. Later, I saw him again sitting off to the side alone on a bench. I felt drawn to talk to him. I asked what he thought about what Mark had said. Clifford gave the oddest response, "I'm so full. I'm just too full." I wasn't sure what he meant: full of the message, full of the Spirit in response to the preaching, full from lunch, full of something more sinister? I asked if he had a Christian background. He said he used to. I asked if he believed in God. He said no. I took him through building-builder, painting-painter, creation-creator. All through this he was making little noises, but with his face covered I couldn't tell if it was laughing, crying, or something else. He said he believed God was a guy who just laid on his back and didn't do anything. I took him through sin-righteous-judgment-grace so he could see exactly what God was doing. As usual, when I got to the Law I pulled out a [Ten Commandments Coin](#) to give to him. He started to reach for it, but when I said it had the Ten Commandments on it his hand locked and froze. He shook his head and said "no". I prompted him but he said "I can't touch things". I knew he couldn't mean touching everything because he was carrying a bag, so I asked if he had a skin sensitivity -- maybe why he was so covered up. He said sometimes he "sees" things he shouldn't when he touches things. Freaky! I continued with the gospel message and asked if he had a Bible. He said no, while still making the choking/laughing noises. I asked if I could give him one. He shook his head, and when I asked if the Bible was something he couldn't touch either he nodded. I wrapped it up with urging him to make peace with God because we're not promised tomorrow, and to pray about what he'd heard. I offered to buy him something to eat, but he declined. As we finished, he said "I believe Hell may just be something some people have to see for themselves." It was really kinda spooky. Pray for Clifford.

Though the crowd fluctuated, we kept on preaching and found that God brought to that spot who He wanted there. We encouraged and shared the biblical gospel with a number of Christians, including a man who told us he'd been preaching on the streets there for 25 years. Mark prayed with a man who said he was a Christian, but smelled of alcohol. Steve talked at length with a modern gospel casualty. I brought lunch to a young homeless man that was strung out on drugs but had sat in the area hearing us preach the gospel a number of times over. Mark bought a bottle of water for another young woman (possibly homeless) that sat and listened to us for a while as well. These are just a handful of the witnessing encounters we found there.

As I mentioned, that day began the lessons in obedience for Steve, Franklin and me. It started off not being what we would have wanted or expected, but it was exactly what God had planned.

Fast forward to Saturday ...

Saturday at Venice Beach I hooked up with Steve Bainbridge and Franklin Reeves. Mark Warren and Dan Peters were also with us for a little while. As soon as we hit ground, Steve and I hopped on our stools for some tag team open air right near the tennis courts and discovered immediately that money (cash for trivia questions) was not going to draw a crowd there. We shifted gears and just preached the gospel, but people simply flowed by -- sleep walking their way into Hell. A little discouraged we grabbed the stools and headed up the beach looking for another spot. After wandering for a bit, we stopped and prayed God would lead us where He wanted us. He took us back to that spot by the tennis courts. We planted camp and prayed, claiming that ground for God and committing that we'd not move from that spot until the day was over. We also prayed for a heckler in hopes that it might get people's attention.

One word of caution ... the Father sometimes provides in abundance! Once we began to open air preach we had about 50 hecklers! Everyone on the tennis courts began yelling at us. Shopkeepers came out to oppose us. One "Christian" tried to shut us down, calling the park security and police. We felt sure-footed in God's will and secure on the Cornerstone so we held our ground and pressed on.

Shortly, we recognized our words weren't cutting it, and people continued to just drift by. Steve shared a word he'd received in the van on the way there and others had confirmed it, that there may be a time we stop preaching in our own words and just read from the Word of God. The rest of us agreed, so we took turns each reading a chapter and for the next couple of hours we simply stood on the stool reading the Gospel of John to Venice Beach -- from the first chapter to the last.

A wrestle with the flesh began. Steve and I both shared an urge to take a break and shift to straight preaching for a bit. At times we even considered moving down where other seed sowers were using amplification, engaging hecklers and gathering crowds. However, we felt the conviction and stayed the course in reading John straight through. Franklin shared something of encouragement that really blessed me. He said, the Apostle Paul wrote that he could rest knowing their blood wasn't on his hands because he'd shared the full count of the gospel. How much more of a full count of the gospel could we share than reading out the

entire Gospel of John?

I only hope I can convey the experience in words. It wasn't what we'd have expected or planned. After all, we were [EBC](#) veterans and [Local Leaders](#). As the crowd drifted by, seemingly ignoring us, we stood there reading out of the Bible. Then it hit me. Who were we preaching for: God, a crowd ... or worse, ourselves? I even felt a rebuke, and I told Steve there was a time when I may have walked by an open air preacher standing there reading straight from the Bible and thought to myself "He's not doing it right. He's not preaching the [Way of the Master](#)." It was humbling. Through this God was doing a work in Steve, Franklin and myself. It was exactly what He willed.

As all this was going on, God had placed a springboard for an open air in my heart. Mark Schotten joined us, and he and I tag-teamed an open air from it. As I handed the open air to Mark, I stepped down and grouped with the others in prayer. I broke into heavy tears. I wish I had some incredible climax to the story ... that crowds gathered, conviction fell and people prayed in repentance. That didn't happen. Through it all, people continued to just walk by -- sleepwalking their way into Hell. There was a movie or dinner they had planned, a tennis game they were playing or some other distraction that was more important than their eternal salvation. Perhaps during that day God allowed a simple sentence or two to penetrate the ears of someone as they passed by and it was all they needed. Perhaps He allowed a heart to capture a scripture or verse that would take root or be built upon at another time. I don't know. However, something in me had been changed. As I was on that stool with the sun setting and the day ending, I had shifted from being an open air preacher to an open air pleader. The words and tone may have been similar, but my heart was different.

God's plan for us that day was a call to maturity and obedience. It's a clumsy example, but I liken it to a cooking course. The first few classes you learn the basics, then later you begin to use those same basics to create a variety of dishes and meals -- all from the same core steps and ingredients. [Hell's Best Kept Secret](#) had given me the missing puzzle piece for understanding the principle in sharing my faith. [Way of the Master](#) and the [Great News Network](#) had equipped me and given me the framework in putting legs to my witnessing. Now it was time to mature and step fully into the ministry God had given me. Like one brother who was called to merely stand on his stool silent and hold his Bible in the air for a long while, would I do it His way when He asked? Would I be willing to go to Nineveh when called?

Franklin and Steve expressed the same conviction. I thank God I could share that experience with the two of them. I love you, bros!

Praise Him!

Weekly "Fishing" Update:

Saturday, we had four brothers (Dave, Wayne, John and Dan) join us. They do some street witnessing in Medford and Ashland, were able to come up yesterday and see what we're doing here in Grants Pass. It had been raining, which meant less foot traffic along 6th St. Still, dozens of tracts were given out and we had a number of witnessing encounters. Primarily,

I want to share the last one-2-one I had that night.

After the others left, I felt prompted that the Holy Spirit wasn't quite done with things. So I started a final loop of 6th St to see what He may have in store. At the Dutch Bros hut, I came across Josh and a girl he was talking with. At first I thought the girl might be who I was supposed to meet. However, shortly into things, her mom showed up and she had to go.

That left Josh and me. I'd spoken with Josh a couple of other times. In fact, he and some of his friends are in two of the witnessing [audios](#) on our website. I'd wondered what I might say when I talked with someone I've already shared the gospel a time or two before, and here he was. We talked about a few things and I learned his father is an itinerant minister with a freeway ministry. Josh had even gone door-2-door witnessing in the past. Sadly, though Josh is just lost.

We talked a little more, and I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me to turn up the heat. I told Josh I wanted to ask him a serious question. I said, "You know all of this, Josh. You know the Ten Commandments are the standard of God's righteousness. You know they're a mirror. They show our sin for what it is and leave us guilty. You know you'll face judgment after death. You've said yourself that Heaven or Hell is waiting. You know Jesus died on the cross for that. So, what's holding you back? What's keeping you from humbling yourself and coming to Jesus?"

He shrugged and said he didn't know. He said that really he just liked what he was doing. I said bluntly, "you love your sin too much." He admitted he still likes to drink, he smokes weed and he likes girls. I felt the Holy Spirit continuing to push. This was a first time for me, but I was obedient and I asked Josh, "What sex have you had that's worth an eternity in Hell? What weed has been so good, that you can stand in eternal torment and say -- ya, it was worth it? What lie has been so good to cover your butt that Hell is worth it? What sin are you playing with that's worth damnation? " He understood what I was saying and kept watching me.

I told him he needed to really understand the price that had to pay for that sin, and just let it break him. If he really saw the sacrifice those sins cried for, they'd become undesirable. I told him a story about a father and son going on a fishing trip in Florida. They were camping in the everglades. As the father sat up camp, he gave his son only one real rule for the weekend. There were alligators in the everglades, so he could fish from the dock but he couldn't wade or take a boat out into the water. The boy agreed. For two days they only caught six fish. The last day, the father was tearing down camp so they'd have a few more hours before having to head back. The son was disappointed that they'd only caught six fish, so while his dad was busy he pushed out in a rowboat to try and find a good fishing hole. Within an hour he'd already caught another three fish. However, the splashing of the fish drew the attention of the alligators. A big one hit the little boat with its tail and threw the boy out of the boat. His father heard his son's cry as he hit the water and the boy blacked out from fear. Later, the son woke up. He'd been drug up on the shore. He was wet and scared, but otherwise OK. He sat up and saw his dad's shallow breathing. His dad's face was grey and then he saw his dad's legs were gnawed and torn. Ribbons of flesh hung from them and in places the boy could see bone. It was the price his dad paid to get through the alligators and save him. Now, what son could look at what his father had done and say, "Dad... I can't believe what you did. I appreciate you saving me. However, I caught three fish in just an hour and the alligators

were really exciting. I can see you're going to pass out and since you'll just be laying here for a bit. You won't mind if I just push back out in the boat again for a little, will you?" Josh got my point, his expression showed that if he was there he'd slap the boy.

I knew we were about done talking, but the Holy Spirit wasn't finished. An analogy I hadn't used in months leapt to mind. I asked Josh if he had any brothers or sisters. He had five, if I remember right it was four brothers and one sister. I asked him if they were close and he said yes. I asked if he'd give his life for them. For example, if he was in a store with his sister and a gunman threatened her, would he take to bullet? He promptly nodded. I asked if his parents would give their lives for him or his dad would die for his mother. He agreed it came with the territory. I then asked if he would give his life for a stranger? If that gunman in the store threatened a stranger, would he die to save them? There was a second or two of thought, but he said he probably would. I agreed it's not as easy of an answer but some of us might. I then asked, what if it was an undesirable stranger ... would he give his life for a criminal? There's was a longer period of thought. I told him we're not as ready to die for someone like that, but some people might because they're still human. He nodded. I then told him we're going one more step, and asked "would you die to save a cockroach?" He just looked at me. Finally shook his head "no".

I told him I used to live in Arizona, and I'd bug bombed my house a few times to kill the roaches. I even felt indignant about doing so, they were disgusting and had gotten in my food. Josh nodded in agreement. Now, earlier I'd given him a "[You Are Here](#)" tract with a NASA photo of the sun (showing the tiny earth in comparison). I pointed back to that and said, our fallen nature is as alien to the awesome God that made that sun -- a holy, righteous, perfect God -- as a cockroach is to us. Further, our sin is as offensive to Him as that roach is to us. We have lived in open rebellion in our sin, cursing and blaspheming His name daily (Colossians 1:21, James 4:4, Romans 2:5). Josh agreed with me. I then said, yet Jesus stepped down and went through incredible suffering and death on the cross for us. I told Josh he needed to let that break him. Josh had told me earlier that he had seen the Passion of the Christ. I challenged him to go back and watch it from that perspective -- as undeserving as a cockroach and just let it humble him.

We left it there. I told him that every second two people die, meaning within 24 hours more than 150,000 people walk off into eternity. That's six times the population of our city that are now facing Heaven or Hell. As I left, I urged him to weigh what we talked about, and make peace with God. I look forward to our next chance to talk.

Pray for the seeds that were sown. Pray especially for Josh, he's in that dangerous place of feeling he's a "[Halfway Christian](#)" (and there's no such thing).

Calendar:

- **Downtown Fishing Hole** (Recurring)
Street witnessing each Saturday (3 pm to 5:30 pm) downtown along 6th Street. Meet in the Budget Internet parking lot (4th St & F St).
- **DMV O/A** (Recurring)
Open Air preaching Wednesdays at 8:40 am to the people waiting for the DMV doors

to open.

If you would like to join us, [click here](#) to send us your contact info.

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May Jesus receive the glory He is due!

'til the nets are full...