

Evangelistic Leadership: How Do We Share the Gospel with Nonbelievers and How Can We Encourage and Train Believers To Do It As Well?

This Pre-Forum Seminar is designed to equip attendees with basic skills in personal evangelism and also enable them to pass these skills on to others with whom they minister. In the Western world the passion and practice for evangelism is at an all time low. While there are some bright lights burning in isolated areas the truth is those in the Global South have become far more effective in making disciples than their Northern and Western counterparts. This Pre-Forum seminar is designed to awaken in Church leaders a fresh passion to do the work of evangelism and also to train and equip others to do the same. The four parts of the Seminar will look at:

1. Biblical reasons for our unfruitfulness;
2. Ways to bring the Gospel into everyday conversation by listening to the felt needs of others in order to awaken the deeper need of every individual for the love and grace of God offered to us through His son Jesus Christ;
3. Essentials of the Gospel message and how it can be presented succinctly;
4. The importance of following up new believers in the hopes that they too might become evangelistically reproductive in sharing Christ with others, thus producing a new generation of those willing to make the message of God's love and forgiveness known to others.

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Biblical Reasons for Evangelistic Unfruitfulness

The sociological fact of the Western world's fruitlessness in the evangelistic enterprise (with notable exceptions) is uncontested. While it may be difficult without complex statistical analyses to discern why the Church is so unfruitful; it may, nevertheless, be possible to unpackage Biblical teaching as to how to cultivate fruitfulness and apply this instruction to the current need of the church to become better equipped to obey and delight in the Great Commission. This seminar seeks to develop along this line of thought.

1. There are many indicators that in some regions of the world the Church is not growing because it is failing to follow through on the Great Commission's clear call to "make disciples" which includes fulfilling its evangelistic mission.
2. It may be necessary to look back over the Scriptures and take note of texts, which explain how the Church can become evangelistically fruitful once again.
3. Abiding in Christ to bear *much* fruit John 15.

4. Learning to love one another “by this will all men know we are His disciples” John 13:34-35.

5. Growing in character makes us useful and fruitful—II Peter 1:1-11

Definitions for the four characteristics of virtue:

- a. Courage: The habitual ability to suffer pain and hardship; it is endurance fortitude and staying power.

Clarifying comment:

Illustrations:

- b. Temperance: The habitual ability resist the enticement of immediate pleasure in order to gain the greater though more remote good.

Clarifying comment:

Illustrations:

- c. Justice: The habit of being law abiding and concerned for the common good and general welfare of one’s society. Justice seeks to:

- a. Secure and protect natural rights

- b. Be fair

- c. Render to others their due

Illustrations:

- d. Wisdom: The habit of being careful about the decisions one makes; it seeks counsel and advice.

Illustrations:

6. Filled with the Holy Spirit—Ephesians 5 (with consideration of a larger context).

[The Ministry of the Holy Spirit and Disciple-making

Disclaimer: I am not a fan of trying to reduce the complexities of the Christian faith down to simplistic formulas; nevertheless, faith in Christ should be transferable, it should be simple enough that it can be passed on to children, yet deep enough that the greatest of scholars remain perpetually fascinated.

Key Point: The historic Incarnation was a unique event; nevertheless, the days of the Incarnation have not ceased. God is still incarnating His ministry in the world; now it is the Incarnation of the Holy Spirit through the Body of Christ, the Church.

Note Jesus Ministry in Philippians 2:5-7 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Kenosis [emptied Himself]

1. Kenoo – to give up or lay aside what one possesses. As a military term it meant laying aside insignias of rank before going into battle.

2. The voluntary surrender of:
 - a. The outward manifestation of His Divine Glory
 - b. The independent use of His Divine Attributes
3. Jesus was not only the perfect sacrifice for sins and by His death made reconciliation with God possible; He also was the perfect example of one whose will was surrendered to the will of the Father. Throughout John's Gospel Jesus says, "All the Father told me to say, that I have said" or, "All the father told me to do, that I have done".

The Upper Room Discourse

John 13:14-15, 17 & 20 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you....If you know these things you are blessed if you do them....Truly, truly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.

John 14:12, 16-21, 23 Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father.
[Possibilities regarding the greater works spoken of here:

1. Greater by virtue of the remarkable nature of them
2. Greater by virtue of the number of them
3. Greater by virtue of the fact that those who lack capability can do anything at all (note the widow's might—it was smaller than the gifts of the Pharisees but it was considered greater, see Luke 21:1-4)
4. Greater by virtue of the corporate increase of them
5. Etc.]

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. After a while the world will behold me know more; but you will behold me; because I live, you shall live also. In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him...If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

Acts 1:8 You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth. [Jesus made a connection between the life of witness and the ministry of the Holy Spirit].

Sorting Out Terms Relative to the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Baptism by (or in) the Holy Spirit

John the Baptist's Teaching: Mark 1:8 "I baptize you with water; but He will baptize you *with* the Holy Spirit". (The preposition *with*, in this verse, can be translated, *in*, *by*, or *with*).

I Corinthians 12:13 "For *by* one Spirit we were all baptized into one body..." (Baptized is an aorist tense verb, which speaks of completed action in past time. *By*, here, is the same preposition used in Mark 1:8, and can be translated *in*, *by*, or *with*). It would appear that baptism *in*, or *by*, the Holy Spirit is the placing of the believer into the Body of Christ, to do His will in the world, i.e., the Holy Spirit's ministry is Incarnated through the Body of Christ.

Filling of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:18 "Be filled with the Spirit". (This is an imperative expressed as a passive present tense. How do you obey a passive imperative? In essence the text is telling believers to let it be done to them; or in other words, stop doing what is preventing this normative Christian experience from happening).

Note: Ephesians 4:22-24 "...lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the

new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

Ephesians 4:30 “Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God”.

Ephesians 5:1&2 “Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and **walk in love**, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us...”

Ephesians 5:8 “**walk as children of light**”.

Ephesians 5:15 “**Be careful how you walk**, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is,... be filled with the Spirit”.

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

There are many gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in the scriptures: Romans 12:6-15 (prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, mercy); I Corinthians 12:7-11 (wisdom; knowledge; faith; healing; miracles; discerning of spirits; speaking in tongues; interpretation of tongues). These lists are not exhaustive. The first persons mentioned in the Bible as being filled with the Spirit were Bezalel, the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah and Oholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, who were filled with the Spirit to do artistic work. Exodus 31:1-6. Also, Samson was filled with the Spirit of the Lord to do mighty feats of strength, Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14.

Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Galatians 5:22-23 “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...”

Three Kinds of People

1. The Natural man I Corinthians 2:14
2. The Spiritual man I Corinthians 2:15-16

3. The Fleshly, or Carnal, man I Corinthians 3:1-3

Spiritual Breathing (with a little help from Campus Crusade for Christ)

1. Exhale I John 1:9 “If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness”
2. Inhale Ephesians 5:18 “Be filled with the Spirit” [Note I John 5:14-15 “And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know we have the requests which we have asked from Him”]

Follow God’s Leadings to be Witnesses]

7. Fruitfulness is a way to evaluate mature faith: See the book of Jude

Ways to Bring the Gospel into Everyday Conversation

Jesus used things as simple as a request for a cup of water and as complex as the theology behind a poor man’s blindness as means to open the door to the Gospel in order that he might present it to a willing hearer. This seminar seeks to explore how conversations can be initiated and deepened so the evangelist can have an opportunity to make the Gospel known to others by connecting its message to felt needs and beyond to the deepest need each of us has to be reconciled to the God from whom we are sorely estranged.

1. We do not take Jesus to anyone, He is already there; we go to make explicit what He is already doing implicitly.
2. Conversation: Points of connection.

Understanding God and His ways with us makes us more sensitive to discern His ways with others.

a. Note Jesus met people where they were and used what was available to bring into the light the deeper spiritual need. Points of connection:

1) Baron von Hugel's observations:

- a) "I want to make the most of whatever light people have got, however slight it may be, to strengthen and deepen whatever they already possess if I can". *Letters to His Niece*. P. x.
- b) "Our Lord tells us not to put out the smoking flax, not to break the bruised reed—and yet I always see *this*. God makes lovely little flowers to grow everywhere, but someone always comes and sits on them". *Ibid*.

2) Seek to connect with people where they are in any given moment or setting:

a) Pray for God to open your eyes...

b) A growing understanding of the nature of life itself, i.e., that which should be secured by virtue of a liberal arts education training the student to see and connect more widely with a variety of people. Learning the art of asking questions and listening (in a way that reveals genuine interest in others) will also open doors for the Gospel. Go as deep as the person you are speaking with will allow. Begin with public things common to you both and move to the areas others leave open to you through their answers.

(1) Commenting on public things—what do you have in common?

(a) Note what Jesus did:

- i. With Nicodemus in John 3—there was a theological question. Note Jesus use of the metaphor of birth. [Some things can only be explained analogically: 1) Definition, 2) the Pupil's Metaphor, 3) the Master's Metaphor 4) Transposition]

- ii. With the Woman at the well in John 4—there was water. In asking for water Jesus stepped outside of cultural conventions and awakened in the woman curiosities that lead to deeper heart issues.
 - iii. With the sick man at the Pool of Bethesda in John 5—there was sickness and a pool whose rumours and traditions enslaved many.
 - iv. With each and every encounter he had—a one on one—as it is recorded for us in the Scriptures. Learn from these.
- (b) What is there available with which you can begin a conversation? Begin with what is present. Ask public questions. Listen to the answers and ask other questions based on the information someone gives you (that volunteered information comes with permission to ask more questions). Pray. Be sensitive. Wait for God to *show up*.

- i. At Borders there are books
- ii. After a movie it is the plot; or situations and how the characters responded to those situations [cf. *The Rock*; *Pleasantville*; *As Good as it Gets*; *Forest Gump*; etc.].

After a movie—questions:

Which Character did you most identify with and why?

What did you find most admirable in the character you identified with?

Which character did you find most irritating and why?

What were the unmet needs of the character you found irritating? What did that character want? What

was he, or she, trying to get? Was the character going about it in a good way or a bad way? How do you make judgments as to what is good or bad?

Were the needs of the various characters good ones or bad ones? Were they fair? Was their attempt to fulfill their needs fair? Explain your answer.

What do you think Jesus would do for this person if He were to meet those needs in a loving way?

- iii. At Starbucks or Caribou there is coffee—how it is grown, economics, social justice issues etc.
- iv. At Blockbuster it is movies: “Seen anything good lately”?
- v. A walk in the park—it’s the weather; the dog being walked; etc. [Bob at the park—sharing a bench and a fritter]
- vi. On an airplane—its travel and the pilgrim longing—or fear of travel; etc.
- vii. At a funeral—its death; missing loved ones; etc. [Pat at the funeral]
- viii. Commenting on commonly shared and noted current events; etc.
- ix. When hearing a piece of music...

(c) Have generic—unthreatening—follow-up questions in mind.

- i. Where are you from? Listen carefully to the answer for opportunities to go deeper.

- ii. Do you have siblings?
 - iii. Are you married?
 - iv. Do you have children? Listen. Relational issues are often the places of our deepest joys...and our deepest sorrows. Being honestly in touch with your own relational successes and struggles may help you open up the conversation further. Be careful not to talk too much about yourself. Use your own experience as a transition to open the other person up.
 - v. Validate pain, anger, disappointment, bitterness and struggle. Do not shy away from these things. These may seem like barriers to faith; in fact they may simply be the rubble of human brokenness which, when dealt with and cleared away, open the route to a person's heart and lead to his, or her, willingness to accept the Gospel with eagerness. [Note: The bombing of Dresden; the Oklahoma City bombing; the issue of hypocrisy in the church; and, note, Anne LaMott on bitterness].
 - vi. Note the Mission Statement of Wheaton College: "Wheaton College exists to help build the Church and improve society worldwide by promoting the development of whole and effective Christians through excellence in programs of Christian Higher Education. This mission expresses our commitment to do all things for Christ and His Kingdom". [The Liberal Arts should lead to: Good reading; self-awareness; sociological connectedness; psychologically and emotionally being in touch; these should open us up to people and the complexities that go with them]. Note the Humanities and the constellation of subjects that go along with the complexities of being human.
- (2) This is all part of looking for an opening for the Gospel. Note Thomas Traherne, *Centuries* I. 23. "The noble inclination whereby man thirsteth after riches and dominion [that is money and power], is his

highest virtue, when rightly guided; and carries him as in a triumphant chariot, to his sovereign happiness. Men are made miserable only by abusing it. Taking a false way to satisfy it, they pursue the wind”.

(3) Note the argument of the book of Ecclesiastes; it becomes a means for connecting the Gospel to those who have sought God in all the wrong places.

(a) The poetic books are the “How to” books of the Bible.

(b) Ecclesiastes is “How to _____”

(c) Note the flow of the argument:

Ecclesiastes 1:1&2

Ecclesiastes 3:11

Ecclesiastes 2:25

(4) Albert Schweitzer, who had five earned doctorates, made this observation in *The Decay and Restoration of Civilization*. Vol. 2. p. 2. “There is one elementary fact which is quite obvious. The disastrous feature of our civilization is that it is far more developed materially than spiritually”. [written in 1922 before TV, VCR, DVD, Video Games, PCs, CDs, I-Pods, Blackberrys, etc]

3) Watch for the deeper point of connection—seeking after God may look different for each person. Jesus is the only way to God; but, the route to Jesus will be unique for each person. What can we surmise by spiritual hunger when the Scriptures say, unequivocally “No one seeks for God”? (Romans 3:11—note the background of this verse: Paul is quoting from Psalm 14. The text there is referring to the fool who has said in his heart there is no God. It refers specifically to this person who does not seek for God. Nevertheless, Paul universalizes the claim and applies it more widely.) We must ask the question: What does spiritual hunger mean? It may mean different things for different people—but, do not neglect the

fact that it might mean for some that God is doing a work of awakening, and wooing, this particular person to Himself.

- 4) Some could be critical here believing that an attempt to connect the Gospel to human need is too anthropocentric. In fact, if the need is genuine, then it is connecting the Gospel to those features in one's humanity that God has set in place. It is working with the raw features embedded in what it means to be human. In this way it is theocentric for it is working in cooperation with the way humans are created. Augustine wrote, in the *Confessions*, "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee".

b. Some observations about human need and human culture:

- 1) Note the curious fact that all cultures are religious cultures:

- a) Harold Best's observation—everybody must worship...

- b) C. S. Lewis's observation—not everything about the other religions is necessarily false.

- c) Rudolph Otto—common characteristics of all the World Religions.

- 2) Working with the deep longings that exist in the human heart:

- a) Evelyn Underhill's three deep cravings:

"[There are]...three deep cravings of the self, three great expressions of man's restlessness, which only mystic truth can fully satisfy. The first is the craving which makes him a pilgrim and a wanderer. It is the longing to go out from his normal world in search of a lost home, a 'better country'; ...the next is that craving of heart for heart, of the soul for its perfect mate, which makes him a lover. The third is the craving for inward purity and perfection, which makes him and ascetic, and in the last resort a saint". *Mysticism*. "Mysticism and Symbolism" pp. 126-127.

(1) The Pilgrim longing.

(2) The Lover longing.

(3) The ascetic saint longing.

b) C. S. Lewis's three longings:

(1) Myth—Classical times.

(2) Lady—Medieval times

(3) Nature—Romantic times.

c) This is not an exhaustive list—other possibilities:

(1) Wanting to make sense of our experiences.

(2) Wanting to be safe.

(3) Etc. [Note Donald Miller's *Searching for God Knows What*]

c. Looking at the questions a culture is asking and studying to see how the Christian faith and the Gospel speaks to these questions. Note: *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine*. Charles Cochrane. OUP 1940. [See **Appendix XII**]

What are the dominate questions of our culture and how might the Gospel speak to these?

Note:

1. Lewis *The Discarded Image*
 - a. Every age is destined to become a discarded image
 - b. World Views are works of art but they are not last words
2. Charles Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture: A Study of Thought and Action from Augustus to Augustine*. Oxford University Press, 1940.

Why did Christianity spread?

- a. Roman Roads; Pax Romana; common language
- b. What were "the fullness of times?" Galatians 4:4
- c. Cochrane explains that Christianity spread because classical culture was asking questions for which it had no answers

These questions:

- a. Can civilization be safe?
 - 1) cf. Fall of Rome
 - 2) Augustine's The City of God
- b. The threat to human security is found in human abuse and excess. How can the human temperament or nature be tamed and subdued in order to make life in the commonwealth secure?

- c. Can you have ethics without God?
- d. If not, then whose God i.e., if it is a question of arbitrary gods, then why can't Caesar be god?
- e. If it is a certain god then comes the great epistemological question "how do you know, you know which god it is?"
- f. Are questions of religion clarified by nature or are questions of nature clarified by religion?
- g. Can reason stand on its own, or must it be held in check by that which is real?
 - 1) Are questions of right and wrong, truth and error a mere fantasy or are they issues worthy of consideration and resolution?
 - 2) Is reason capable of finding out about truth and the good or is it simply the servant of desire creating clever excuses and rationalizations to justify indulgence? (cf. the Stoics and the Epicureans).
 - 3) Or is the pursuit of truth and understanding a mere utilitarian exercise?
- h. If there is an objectification of what is reasonable i.e., true and good, then questions of prescription and morality arise.
- i. When questions of morality arise, they are followed by questions of choice and human freedom. What is the nature of freedom?
- j. To rescue knowledge from the "grip of circumstance" I must ask do I owe a debt to the past? Is there a continuum, a body of accumulated knowledge that acts as a check and balance on the excesses of my own circumstance or period of time?
- k. What should an ordered society look like?

1. How can the society function when the individual in society has a propensity for corruption?
 - 1) Issues as presented in the O.T. law
 - 2) Issues as presented in Romans 1-3
 - 3) Issues as understood by all the world religions
 - 4) The true value of the Gospel as “good news” and a bold contrast to all other options

 - m. What is the nature of man?

 - n. Is man’s nature perfectible so that with is his social structures and institutions can also be made perfectible?
 - 1) What are legitimate expectations for
 - a) Individuals?
 - b) Institutions?
 - 2) What are principles which can help governing individuals and institutions in light of their potential for corruption?
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3. Terry Eagleton *After Theory*
 - a. Summary of Post-modernism
 - 1) Modernity

- a) Enlightenment and its reaction against the Church—Voltaire’s *Ecrasez l’ Infame* (“Crush Infamy”) an out cry against the church.
 - b) Enlightenment and the exultation of reason.
 - c) Enlightenment and the importation of Western values and Colonial Imperialism.
 - d) The failure of the Enlightenment experiment.
- 2) Conditions that led to Post-modernity
 - a) Critique of Enlightenment values
 - b) Concern about Enlightenment values as cultural assumptions
 - c) Derrida’s paper on *Difference*, Toronto 1968.
 - 3) Deconstruction of texts
- b. Why is Post-modernism losing its hold?
- 1) We will never go back before Post-modernity
 - 2) Post-modernists also had their own assumptions
- c. What is next?
- 1) A return to the objectivity of texts—something to appeal to.
 - 2) The need for dialectically safe community guarded by love.

Essentials of the Gospel:

1. God loves us
2. We are estranged from God
3. Jesus Christ is God's provision for our sin—through Him we are forgiven and reconciled to God
4. Each is called upon to put his or her trust in Christ

I Peter 2:24 He Himself bore our sins in his body on the cross that we might die to sin and live to righteousness, for by his wounds you were healed.

1. According to this verse do you know where your sins are right now?
2. If your sins are on Christ, what does that make you?
3. 2,000 years ago, when Christ died on the Cross for you [in a sense putting forgiveness in a trust account for you to draw on one day], how many of your sins were in the future yet to be committed?
4. How many did He die for?

II Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

I John 5:11-12 And the Witness is this that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son does not have the life.

Do you know John 3:16?

Personalize your message by telling your own story of your pilgrimage to Christ. Note how others have done it:

1. Augustine, *Confessions*
2. C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*
3. Frederick Buechner's three books of spiritual autobiography: *Telling Secrets; Now and Then; Sacred Journey*

Do not be afraid of closure.

The Navigator Bridge:

Man

God

Campus Crusade for Christ's two circles:

Philippians 1:18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.

Begin follow-up:

John 6:47; John 17:3; Matthew 13

The Importance of Follow-up

1. Begin with assurance

- a. John 6:47 “Truly, truly I say to you he who believes has Eternal Life”

- b. John 17:3 “And this is eternal life: that they may know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent”

- c. Matthew 13 The Parable of the Good Samaritan

2. The Navigator Wheel

- a. Christ is the hub of your life

- b. Spokes:
 - 1. Prayer

 - 2. Bible

 - 3. Obedience

 - 4. Fellowship

 - 5. Stewardship

- c. Witness

3. Reproducing a Reproducer

Appendices:

Appendix I

Calvin's Soteriology in Relation to Evangelism: An Overview

Preliminary thoughts on the Nature of Man and how it affects our Theology:

1. Theology Proper—the doctrine of God.
2. Christology—the doctrine of Christ.
3. Biblical Anthropology—the doctrine of Man.
4. Soteriology—the doctrine of Salvation.

Man is not sinful *by* nature. *By* nature he is made in the Image of God [*Imago Dei*]. That Image is not lost at the Fall even though it is corrupted. This was a matter Calvin understood well as evidenced when he wrote, “the depravity and wickedness, whether of man or the devil, and the sins thence resulting, being not from nature, but from the corruption of nature”. [*Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Bk. I, Ch. XIV, Sec. 3]. Thus it should be said man is good *by* nature but sinful *in* nature. Clarity must be established at this point lest we impugn God for human failure; or, misjudge the capacities and limitations of humanity. Later Calvin writes, “Although we grant that the image of God was not utterly effaced and destroyed in him, it was, however, so corrupted, that anything which remains is fearful deformity; and, therefore, our deliverance begins with that renovation which we obtain from Christ, who is, therefore called the second Adam, because he restores us to true and substantial integrity”. [*Ibid.* Bk. I, Ch. XV, Sec. 4]. Calvin's concern is to understand not merely the effects of the Fall upon man but also what man's condition of utter helplessness means when it comes to Soteriology.

Calvin's Five Points—Tulip

1. Total Depravity (Romans 1:18-32; 3:9-18; Ephesians 2:1-5)

- a. “The doctrine of total depravity does not mean man is as bad as he can be; there is always room for deprovement” –John Gerstner.

- b. The doctrine of total depravity does not mean that unregenerate men and women are incapable of doing any good.
 - 1) Romans 7:18 “In me dwells no good thing” must be understood and reconciled with Luke 11:13 “If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children...”

 - 2) There is a common grace whereby God “gives gifts to men”—not merely spiritual gifts to the regenerate—but gifts to all for the benefit of mankind.

 - 3) Note: Dr. Jonas Salk and his work in development of a Polio vaccine.

- c. Regarding the Doctrine of Original Sin:
 - 1) G. K. Chesterton once observed that the Doctrine of Original Sin is the one Biblical doctrine which is empirically verifiable.

 - 2) The Doctrine of Original Sin is not original in the sense that it is creative. It is as original as the first club foot, or the first case of cancer, or gangrene. It is as original as the first murder, or the first case of pedophilia, or the first act of torture.

 - 3) It is not a doctrine which seeks to switch blame from our primordial parents to their progeny. Nobody has to say with any degree of anxiety, “Why should I be punished for Adam’s sin”? Just go out and live a perfect life and stop worrying about it! The problem is, we can’t. The Doctrine of Original Sin is not an attempt to ascribe blame but rather an attempt to explain a universal phenomenon—that all are prone to sin.

 - 4) It is rather a doctrine that attempts to explain the universal phenomenon that all people have a propensity to exercise moral deficiency; we all tend, at some level, to live beneath our own moral aspirations.

- d. If we are sinners, and if our sin is offensive to a Holy and Righteous God, and, if our sin has effected us totally, then there is nothing we can do to repair the damage. We are left to the Mercy of God and are hopeless without His Grace.
 - 1) If our reason is affected, we cannot think our way out of our depravity.
 - 2) If our volition is affected we cannot repair our condition by sheer will power.
 - 3) If our emotions are affected we cannot feel ourselves free from the devastation of our fallenness.

- e. The Scriptures say, unequivocally that “we are dead in our trespasses and sins” Ephesians 2:1.
 - 1) If we are dead then there is nothing we can do to enliven ourselves.
 - 2) Play reveille at a military cemetery till you are blue; not one of the dead will respond and line up for “roll call”. Being dead they cannot respond to physical stimuli. So too those who are dead spiritually cannot respond to spiritual stimuli unaided by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit.
 - 3) Out of fairness to the Wesleyan and Arminian traditions it must be admitted that the same book that reminds us we are dead in our trespasses and sins also uses another metaphor to describe our spiritual condition. It says, “Awake sleeper and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you”. Ephesians 5:14. George MacDonald made the following observation about this text in his *Diary of an Old Soul*. November 5.

“Wake, thou that sleepest; rise up from the dead,
And Christ will give thee light.” I do not know
What Sleep is, what is death, or what is light;
But I am waked enough to feel a woe....”

2. Unconditional Election (Psalm 65:4; Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:3-6; Titus 3:3-7)

Salvation is not conditioned by anything we can do. God is no man's debtor. His actions are not conditioned by our behaviour. God is non-contingent and self-existent. His compassion is necessary and finds no reason for any of His act of compassion outside of Himself. While His creatures may be the beneficiaries of His acts, they are not the conditions of His acts. He needs to look nowhere beyond His own character to determine reasons to do what He does. He does not make mistakes. He does not consider what to do then after much deliberation arrive at some conclusion. He does not reason the way His creature do. He doesn't begin with propositions and then through a series of inferences reason to conclusions. He has never had a new idea. His knowledge is immediate; as the ancients said of Him, He has vision. All thoughts are always before Him. He has known throughout eternity those who would be His. He did not foreknow those who would choose Him and then condition His decision to elect them based on their decisions. That would have made His election contingent upon the choice of His creatures.

- a. Without God choosing us we would never have chosen Him.
- b. Augustine said of Cicero, "Wishing to make man free, he became sacrilegious". In Cicero's attempt to preserve the freedom of man he detracted from the Sovereignty of God.
- c. C. H. Spurgeon said, "There is no doubt in my mind that God chose me before I was born; He didn't have any reason to choose me after I was born".
- d. How does it work exactly? I do not know; but, I am sure of this:
 - 1) No one in Hell will say, "I got here because God was unjust".
 - 2) No one in Heaven will say, "I got here by virtue of my cleverness and self effort".

3. Limited Atonement (I John 2:2)

- a. In this matter Calvin was not trying to say that God gave grace begrudgingly. His concern was to address the issue of Universalism—that doctrine that suggests that all make it to Heaven in the end—whether or not they have accepted God's

provision for sin in the Atonement of Christ. If one is not a Universalist he, or she, must explain why it is that some make it into Heaven and others do not. Calvin attempted to explain it by writing of the limited application of the atonement.

- b. The explanation is that the death of Christ is sufficient for all (thus the offer of salvation is universal and a *bona fide* offer); but it is only efficacious (or, efficient) for the elect.
- c. If the death of Christ is not particularized in its efficiency, then the conclusion of the Universalist that all will make it into Heaven in the end becomes the remaining alternative whether or not a person has accepted God's provision for salvation in Christ.
- d. How would you answer the question: "Will there be anyone in Hell for whom Christ died"? Where you fall on this question will clarify where you stand on this point.

4. Irresistible Grace

- a. The elect find God's grace irresistible.
- b. This does not mean grace is not extended to the non-elect.
 - 1) Every moment of life, in a world God has made, is an exhibition and demonstration of His grace to that person.
 - 2) Every moment judgment does not fall on a society unresponsive to Him and unsundered to Him, or, in rebellion against Him, it is a demonstration of His grace.
 - 3) Furthermore:
 - a) The Scriptures remind us that it rains on the just and the unjust.

- b) The very kindness of God leads to repentance—all receive of that kindness.
- c) The elect find God's Grace irresistible.
- c. Only the elect respond to God's salvific grace. Those who are not elect suppress the grace that comes to them in their unrighteousness. Cf. Romans 1:18.
- d. Illustration: Moses at the Burning Bush.

5. Perseverance of the Saints (I John 2:19; I Timothy 4:16; Hebrews 3:12-14)

- a. This does not simply mean, "once saved always saved"; it is far more complex than that. Jesus reminded his disciples that there are tares among the wheat (Matthew 13:24-30). Jude reminded his readers that there are apostates in the Church (Jude 4).
- b. The sinning Christian will find no support for his acts in this doctrine as long as he continues to live in unrepentant sin. This doctrine is no safe harbour for sinful behaviour. The person claiming to be a believer yet living in rebellion may be an apostate
- c. Nevertheless, the saints persevere. They may have lapses as; Abraham did; and Moses did; and Aaron did; and Naomi did; and David did; and Elijah did; and Peter did; etc. but they come back as testimony to the fact that this is a mere lapse and not a permanent condition.
- d. Perseverance simply means that the saints hang in there in their walk with God.

Appendix II.

Dr. Bob and Mrs. Kirby an Example of Evangelistic Stewardship

Dr. Bob and Mrs. Kirby—Luke 16:9

This story illustrating Luke 16:9 was one I heard Dr. Bob Smith—a philosophy professor at Bethel College and Seminary—tell many years ago. During World War II Dr. Bob lived in a neighborhood which, typical of most neighborhoods, had a woman who was a grouch; her name was Mrs. Kirby and she lived right next door. If Dr. Bob's boys ever happened to cross even a corner of her yard going down the street to play with their friends Mrs. Kirby was out of the house with a broom to chase them away. One day when Dr. Bob returned home from a very busy day teaching Mrs. Smith told him she had occasion to see Mrs. Kirby hanging out her laundry and noticed that Mrs. Kirby's wrists were all red and swollen. When Mrs. Smith enquired if Mrs. Kirby was alright Mrs. Kirby explained that the ringer-roll on her washing machine was broken and she was having to wring out all of her laundry by hand. Mrs. Kirby used a variety of washing machine that was very common during World War II but you hardly ever see them anymore. These machines had a large round tub which sloshed the clothes around to clean them then one had to manually feed each garment through two ringer rolls that pressed the water out of the clothes to speed up the time it would take to dry on the clothes line. One of these ringer-rolls for pressing out the water from the clothes was broken on Mrs. Kirby's machine. Upon hearing of the problem, Dr. Bob went over to Mrs. Kirby's and asked if he could look at the machine in an attempt to fix it. Mrs. Kirby was surprised at Dr. Bob's kindness. The next day on his way home from work he stopped off at a hardware store and bought a new ringer-roll. He returned once again to Mrs. Kirby's house and installed the ringer-roll and everything worked fine again. Mrs. Kirby asked what she owed Dr. Bob for the ringer-roll. He told her it was alright he bought it for her as a gift. She then asked, "Well, what do I owe you for the labor"? He told her this was also a gift. She was very much taken in by these kindnesses. Then Dr. Bob said, "Mrs. Kirby, one day one of my boys is going to be outside playing baseball in the street and he is going to hit a baseball through that big beautiful picture window in your living room. When this occurs, I'll come over and clean up the mess and replace your window; in the meantime, please be kind to my boys". From that day on Mrs. Kirby started baking cookies for the Smith boys; and, even kept part of her strawberry patch set aside for the boys to pick fresh strawberries (even though boys tend to trample more than they actually pick). The Smith's realized that Mrs. Kirby had a hearing problem so when they saw an ad for a two week trial offer on an \$80.00 hearing aid--if you didn't like it you could return it after two weeks with no cost or obligation--they used some funds they set aside for ministry purposes like this and sent away for the hearing aid. \$80.00 during WW II would be equivalent to something like \$400.00 by today's standards. Well, the hearing aid came in the mail mid-day on the day Mrs. Kirby left in the morning to visit her sister 200 miles away. Dr. Bob and Mrs. Smith got in their car and drove the 200 miles to take the hearing aid to Mrs. Kirby. This was during the time when gasoline was rationed because of the war. Mrs. Kirby was shocked to see the Smiths pull up at her sister's home and even more shocked to find out they were willing to purchase the hearing aid for her if she liked it after two weeks of trying it out. Mrs. Kirby went for a walk and returned after about a half hour with tears in her eyes saying she hadn't heard birds sing in years. Well, it wasn't long after that the Smiths had the privilege of leading Mrs. Kirby to Jesus. And, it wasn't long after that Mrs. Kirby died. Dr. Bob preached her funeral. Dr. Bob, observed, "One day I'm going to die and go home to Heaven, and when I get there I think Mrs. Kirby will be there to greet me and I imagine she will say, 'Dr. Bob, remember that ringer roll?'".

"Make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness so that when it fails they may welcome you into eternal dwellings". Luke 16:9.

Appendix III.

The Doctrine of the Trinity (An Applied Summary of Trinitarian Doctrine from Nicaea through Chalcedon)

As for the Trinity: "Relational attributes in a non-contingent being presuppose that relationship is necessary in that being". Every non-Trinitarian I have shared this with, once they grasp the concept begins to freak out because it underscores an inherent conflict in non-Trinitarian Monotheism. C. S. Lewis's friend, Charles Williams put it like this about the Muslims, "They denied love to God except by means of his creatures". And Lewis wrote, "In God all the concrete reciprocities of love exist from time in memoriam."

Now for the questions:

1. If you ask a non-Trinitarian Monotheist if he or she believes God is a contingent being or a contingent being what would he or she say? That is, does God's existence depend on anything else or is he self-existent and necessary? If they understand the question my experience is that 100% of the time they will say, "Non-contingent."

2. If you then ask, "Do you believe God is a God of love?" They will answer "Yes." Since love is a relational attribute the question then arises:

3. Who is the object of God's love? If they answer we are; or his creation is. Then the theology of that person is highly suspect. On the one hand, if God needs His creation to fulfill His nature to love then God is a contingent being in need of something outside Himself. If this were the case he is not a non-contingent being but a contingent one. He needs his creation in order to express his love. On the other hand, if God is non-contingent and yet possesses relational attributes we must then assume that God is a being in whom a relationship exists as a necessary one. All non-Trinitarian Monotheists are reduced to nonsense at this point. And this is why I say: "Relational attributes in a non-contingent being presuppose that relationship is necessary in that being". Any one may legitimately claim that there are mysteries in matters of faith. It stands to reason that the existence of an infinite God would be beyond the grasp of any kind of full comprehension by his creatures. We call these things mysteries of faith and expect that they are so. Nevertheless, it is unwise to play the mystery card too quickly for all of us today comprehend some things that were beyond our grasp ten years ago. To claim a thing as a mystery too quickly may be an excuse for laziness of thought and investigation. Furthermore, it may cloak nonsense developing in one's faith. There may be matters that are supra-rational and beyond the grasp of reason but there should be nothing that is irrational about the faith. Contradictions lead to faith that is preposterous. Christians have injunctions against such thinking. They are told to test the spirits to see if they are from God. They are told to beware of those who say, "Thus saith the Lord when the Lord hath not said." Christians should be neither lazy nor irrational about matters of faith.