

Be Active in Sharing Your Faith

I came across an article suggested by Marvin Olasky from World Magazine. It was written by Rod Dreher on May 26th in the American Conservative, titled *Big Journalism Embraces Propaganda Model*. (<https://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/big-journalism-embraces-propaganda-model-joe-rogan/>). The digest version of the article points out, in our day we tend to have a strong opinion and then we accumulate voices to confirm our view - discounting any other view. I quote at length a portion of the article:

“Researchers have a name for the kind of divide America is currently experiencing. They call this an “intractable conflict,” as social psychologist Peter T. Coleman describes in his book The Five Percent, and it’s very similar to the kind of wicked feuds that emerge in about one out of every 20 conflicts worldwide. In this dynamic, people’s encounters with the other tribe (political, religious, ethnic, racial or otherwise) become more and more charged. And the brain behaves differently in charged interactions. It’s impossible to feel curious, for example, while also feeling threatened.

In this hyper vigilant state, we feel an involuntary need to defend our side and attack the other. That anxiety renders us immune to new information. In other words: no amount of investigative reporting or leaked documents will change our mind, no matter what.

Intractable conflicts feed upon themselves. The more we try to stop the conflict, the worse it gets. These feuds “seem to have a power of their own that is inexplicable and total, driving people and groups to act in ways that go against their best interests and sow the seeds of their ruin,” Coleman writes. “We often think we understand these conflicts and can choose how to react to them, that we have options. We are usually mistaken, however.”

Once we get drawn in, the conflict takes control. Complexity collapses, and the us-versus-them narrative sucks the oxygen from the room. “Over time, people grow increasingly certain of the obvious rightness of their views and increasingly baffled by what seems like unreasonable, malicious, extreme or crazy beliefs and actions of others,” according to training literature from Resetting the Table, an organization that helps people talk across profound differences in the Middle East and the U.S.”

I am not going to speak to race relations—although the above article has a bearing on our views of what is going on in our nation. What I would like to address is, with the article above in mind, how do we go about “evangelizing” a secular society that is hell bent on removing God or distorting Him? So how do we “share Jesus” in a society of pseudo Christians, radical atheists or religious Muslims?

1. Go out of our way to engage them! In John 4 we discover Jesus “had to pass through Samaria” (ESV). Most “good” Jews would have gone out of their way to avoid Samaria. But Jesus had a divine appointment with a person totally alien to His culture.
2. Ask the question! “Why do you call me good?” “Who do people say that I am?” “What does the Scripture say?” These are just a few questions Jesus used to direct the conversation to address eternal issues.
3. Tell a story! Make it your story! Revelation 12:11 says: “And they have conquered him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb and **by the word of their testimony...**” (ESV) Your story, like Paul’s recorded twice in Acts, is the tool God has given you to bring about change. Make it real, humble and authentic.

We are living in a time that desperately needs Jesus. Deliverance will not come from anywhere else. Philemon 6, “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.” (84 NIV)

Pastor Eldon Carlson
CBNC Networking Director