

*Ephesians 4:11-12 He gave some apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, to build up the body of Christ.*

At times I have met believers who made impression of having the „gift of evangelism.“ I asked some to teach me. (That’s what Ephesians 4:12 says gifted people are supposed to do – „teach other saints...” ) „What should I say to this friend?” I asked. „Pray and say what the Lord puts on your heart...” the spiritually looking reply came. Someone else told me: „Especially don’t prepare anything, that would be unnatural!”

What do you think I’ve learned from servants like that? – Nothing at all! I just walked away with remorse that I still can’t do it, and again I did nothing. And years went by...

If you have any gift, your job is not only to do the ministry well, but also to teach others – *to prepare the saints for the ministry*. By your talented improvisation – even if in a spiritually looking guise – you will only confirm your Christian friends are not up to it, and therefore unlikely they start doing anything...

If you really want to teach others something, put down your improvisation and introduce them to what we call the „IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM.“ Tools that are 1. simple, 2. biblical, and easily 3. transferable.

When it comes to a toolkit for ministering to unbelievers and new believers, we observe a range of responses in the Bridges to People training.

Some believers come to really learn something. After a while, you see them mastering one instrument after another with joy and ease. And some try it out with unbelieving people they meet the same evening! That’s wonderful...

Others filter everything through experience. (Often more through assumed experience or taken from hearsay, since they clearly have no experience with unbelievers themselves!) Then, when a tool points openly to Jesus, they bend it, mask it, or „talk it over“ because it seems „too much“ to them.

Another has a tendency to complicate everything. He collects flashcards and searches the internet for other options and variations. To explain the Gospel, has he not only the Bridge over the gap, but found the Three Circles, the Four Spiritual Laws, the Roman Road, EE (Explosive Evangelism), and perhaps other ways... When I ask which of these brings the greatest response among non-believers, I hear about which of these he „likes“ the most.

Asking which of those tools he has used in the past month with an unbeliever elicits embarrassed and, for some, offended response. When I don't know some of the tools and ask him to demonstrate it to me as if I were an unbeliever, usually I see only a guess what it might be; not that he would naturally show me how he normally uses it out there.

There are Christians who tend to change every instrument, supposedly „improving“ it. They talk about differences or even weaknesses. Most importantly! They're not going to use any of them anytime soon with unbelieving people anyway...

Someone else has a lot of questions as, „What if he reacts like this... What if he tells me this...“ That makes sense; that's why we have the most common questions or objections in the training. But at the same time, we expect the Holy Spirit to guide us in situations that, now and then, occur outside our scenario...

Those who do not have a gift of evangelism, and yet started with unbelievers out there, grasped the „IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM“. Minimum number of tools that are simple, biblical, and easy to pass on to other disciples.

Yes, in order to teach this to other people (I'm thinking of new believers and long-time believers), we need the „IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM“, which is simple, biblical, and transferable.

Real example: Peter accepted Jesus and was coming to Discovery. We prayed for his friends, and within a few months after his conversion, he invited three of his unbelieving friends to his own new Bible reading. They all were coming for a few months and one of them came to faith after a while! What a great joy...!

I don't know where we got the idea that to talk effectively with unbelievers you need to be able to improvise and perhaps have a degree in apologetics. Experience has confirmed many times that we just need the „IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM“ that we keep simple, biblical and transferable.

*Lord Jesus, thank You that on the road You have prepared by Your sacrifice, even fools do not go astray, as Isaiah says. (Isaiah 35:8)*