

One more try . . . in simpler terms . . .  
How to reach out to “contemporary” people . . .



Contemporary people are likely to not be aware of the way they think or the names that we give to that kind of thinking such as Modernist, Postmodern, etc. There has however been a definite - though subtle - change that has taken place, and our culture has been affected by those changes in many ways.

People are more open today to talking about “*God*”, though their concepts may be quite “pagan”. They are less focused on individuality and success, and more focused on community and survival. They are often hurting, lonely, and suspicious of those who come across as “know it all’s” or on “power-trips”. Rather than “evidences and arguments,” they need genuine demonstrations of the love and grace of God at work in people’s lives.

We ought to get acquainted with their world - contemporary art, music, media, fashions, fads, ideas. It will give us places to start talking with them. There is a wide variety of thinking going on today. While you probably won’t ever have to debate or discuss Philosophical issues as such, you ought to be able to recognize how someone is thinking. Or how those ideas are being expressed in modern life and through the media. Have a Bible in one hand, a newspaper in the other.

We have to be willing to listen to them, to hear their stories and ideas. Find out what they as individuals think about life, God, most importantly themselves.

Sometimes you may want to push people, asking questions about their views of God, of man, of self and of truth, to help them see the implications of what they are saying.

In sharing God’s Story (the gospel) intertwine it with your own personal story.

Friendship evangelism is more important than ever. Look for ways to enter their “communities”.

We need to get involved with contemporary people in matters of common concern, however taking a clear Christian stand on the issues - being prepared to dialogue about what makes us different. Dialogue is best when initiated by them. But we should not confuse Christianity and “politics”.

Don’t make issues of “tribal ritualism and appearances” - for example: weird hair, dog collars, pierced “whatevers”, etc. Get to know the real hurting people underneath.

People are hungry for a place to belong and for “real” community.

We need to work hard at being the kind of community that Jesus taught and demonstrated His people should have: loving and supporting and forgiving one another, bearing one another’s burden and sharing one another’s trials and pains - the kind of community the world longs for, but won’t have apart from Jesus.

We have to go out of our way to sincerely welcome people as they are into our communities, making room for them to share and participate in our community worship and social life. More than ever our fellowships ought to be like families - a place someone can feel “at home” and “call home.”

**... without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe, as you hold out the word of life. Phil 2:15, 16**

**Dear children , let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. This is how we know we belong to the truth... I John 3:18, 19**

We have a lot of bad PR and stereotypes to overcome as Christians. Don't add to it. But be prepared to have to answer for it.

People are skeptical and suspicious. In a world where truth no longer matters, and power trips tend to dominate contemporary life, building trust will take time and patience - but is so important.

Avoid Pushy and quickie evangelism (such as the "Four Spiritual Laws, etc.); "heady, have all the answers" Bible studies; and "Love bombing" (emotional manipulation) - which smack of power trips - and are turn-offs.

However friendships and small groups where people are accepting, where hurts can be discussed and shared, and where people are sincerely loving, supporting and nurturing each other are definite turn-ons.

We should Expect people to take a long time getting acquainted with Christianity before they make any commitments.

We need to focus on "heart" issues, not "head" issues

Be real and genuine - people who have real problems too. Don't give easy answers or simplistic solutions. The Christian life is a journey, not a destination. It is good to have companions along for the pilgrimage.

A roadblock for contemporary people is often a sense of shame - personal unworthiness and low self esteem. Present the love of Jesus, not emphasizing their guilt, but rather the welcoming love of the Father for the prodigal.

Contemporary people will have a lot of "baggage" - broken relationships, abused or neglected childhoods, messed up lives, addictions, etc., that will take much time and much love to bring to the surface and bring healing.



Dealing with the matter of Truth verses preferences...

Try to Distinguish between...

**Truth** - propositions depicting the real world - which can be "tested" to a point

**Knowledge** - a person's grasp of these - which may be shaped by culture or perspective - and -

**Absolute Truth** - God's All knowing understanding.

Be slow to make claims to absolute truth, but suggest these is objective truth - truth that is not just culturally subjective and individual preferences. And there can be objective truth that comes through God's revelation, not human reason. We live all the time on the basis of objective truth. Use concrete illustrations and analogies when discussing propositions.



**In your hearts set apart Jesus as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. 1 Peter 3:15**