



BOLD Evangelism Conference July 2019
Transcending Culture
Cultivating a Spirit of Evangelism in the Orthodox Church

Table of Contents

† Thursday, July 4th 2019 2
TALK 1 (part 1) by Fr. John Boutros: Sweet Smelling Aroma 2
TALK 1 (part 2) by Fr. Abraham Fam: Be Bold 6

† Friday, July 5th 2019 9
TALK 2 by Fr. Abraham Fam: Separating Faith and Culture 9
TALK 3 by Fr. John Boutros: Keys to Evangelism in the North American Culture 12
Workshop #1 with Tasony Dalia: Creating a welcoming environment in your church 15
TALK 4 by Fr. Abraham Fam: Cultivating a spirit of Evangelism in the Coptic Church 16

† Saturday, July 6th 2019 18
TALK 5 by Fr. John Boutros: Evangelism in your church 18
A question asked during the Panel Discussion: As Orthodox Christians, should we evangelize to Protestant Christians? 22
Workshop #2 with Mena Mirhom: Commit to learn by practice 23
TALK 6: The Coptic Church from the perspective of a newcomer 23

† Sunday, July 7th 2019 24
TALK 7 by Fr. Abraham Fam: Working with the next generation for the next generation 24

† Thursday, July 4th 2019

TALK 1 (part 1) by Fr. John Boutros: Sweet Smelling Aroma

Evangelism today is a taboo word

But...

Outline of Biblical Usage

- 1) a sweet smell, fragrance (εὐωδιά in Greek)
- 2) a fragrant or sweet smelling thing, incense, on odour or something sweet smelling
 - a) an odour of acquiescence, satisfaction
 - b) a sweet odour, spoken of the smell of sacrifices and obligations, agreeably to the ancient notion that God smells and is pleased with the odour of sacrifices
- 3) metaph. a thing well pleasing to God

Where it is found in the Bible

- ❖ For we are to God the **fragrance** of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. +2 Corinthians 2:15
- ❖ And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a **sweet-smelling aroma**. +Ephesians 5:2
- ❖ Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, **a sweet-smelling aroma**, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.
+Philippians 4:18

→ Evangelism in the context of these verses = A sweet smelling aroma

Intercessory prayer

- ❖ Let my prayer be set forth before You as **incense**, The lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. +Psalm 140:2

Sharing

Evangelism is as one beggar saying to another, "I know where we can find bread". - Evagrius of Pontus

Speaking the Truth in Love

“Men and women who are truly theologically and spiritually educated reveal a boldness born of humility, a confidence tempered by tentativeness, a speech generated by silence, an apology inspired by charity. They resist premature closure of complex issues and superficial answers to complicated questions. They know how to live with ambiguity as they give, with meekness and gentleness, account for the hope that is in them. **They speak** the truth in love with an enlightened zeal that prevents them from replacing God’s righteousness with a righteousness of their own. **They evangelize** without seeking to convert. **They witness** without seeking to win. **They teach** without desiring to dominate. **They testify** to truths in which they delight and find life, whatever the cost of their convictions, because they simply cannot do otherwise. And they have infinite respect for everyone and everything.”

(Thomas Hopko (2004). *Speaking The Truth In Love: Education, Mission, And Witness In Contemporary Orthodoxy*)

- Am I excited when I talk about Christ?
- We can’t lie to people when we tell them about Jesus. There can be no form of deception in telling people about the Truth.
- We are messengers of truth.
- We are declaring what God says is right and wrong, not giving our opinion of what is right and wrong.
- You win respect with your ears, you lose it with your mouth.
 - Most people are not willing to listen until they themselves feel like they have been heard.
 - You should never start to speak until there has been silence between you and the other person for 5 seconds, and you should never start to speak until the other person spoke for at least 5 minutes.

Evangelism = to proclaim the victory of Christ in the enemy (death).

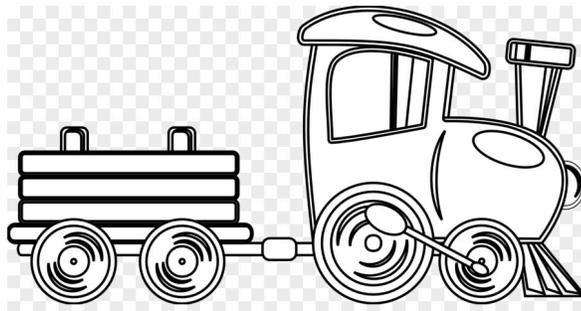
Convert

- To bring to repentance.
- To bring about a change of mind.
- To bring about a change of direction.
- A product of the conviction of the Holy Spirit working in the mind and heart of the listener, and put to action by the will.

To Witness

martyria: to bear witness to the Christian faith

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life - 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us +1 John 1:1-2 NKJV



Witness

Evidence

Example of a witness in a court of law

- They tell the truth
- They say what they themselves have experienced
- They tell their story

→ Logic order: Happening of events; Person bears witness of events; Person testifies about the events

All of Christianity hangs on 2 simple things: The Incarnation and the Resurrection

Questions I must ask myself:

- What is the incarnation to **me**? What does it mean to **me**?
- God became man: what does that mean for **me**?
- The Word of life: He was manifested for **me**. How is this personal?
- What is **my** story? People love stories!
- What did I see, hear, experience? What happened, what changed?

Paying it forward: Doing good to other people who haven't done anything good to us

vs

Paying it back: people have done good things to us, we feel indebted, so we do good back

What is your witness?

- Every true story of witness heard is a story of **repentance**.
- The circumstance comes first, produces evidence and that evidence produces a witness.
- What is my witness? What is my story in 100 words or 45 seconds?
 - **In those 100 words:**
 - There has to be a before and an after, or else there has been no repentance story.
 - It has to be genuine and from the heart.
 - In the plot line: Christ is the Hero♥
- You have to equip yourself and be able to evangelize in a short story. Just be you!

Example 1:

Formerly, I was a superficial believer, easily abandoning God and my faith after a few slaps in the face from life. A year later, God showed me how small I am in comparison to the great plans God had for me, and how little my faith is. Now, God constantly reminds me of how he truly works for the best of those who love him, through everyday life, the people around me, and my church.

Example 2:

Born into the Christian faith, my relationship with God had been limited to asking for things and thanking Him for them. My relationship with God continued to be childish & superficial, almost not real; going to church, but was not living a Godly life. After going through a divorce and feeling very desperate I started to seek a relationship with God, I joined a church and together with all kinds of different people, I prayed and experienced the presence of God. I began accepting my circumstances and learned to talk to God as a friend. Now, I enjoy a relationship with God and continue to grow with Him.

TALK 1 (part 2) by Fr. Abraham Fam: Be Bold

Defining Boldness (*parresia* in Greek)

- It has to do with speech
- Fearless when speaking
- Boldness **is not**:
 - Being obnoxious
 - A personality trait
- Boldness **is** a spiritual conviction to speak about what we have seen and heard in Christ
 - We can't be bold of something we don't believe in
 - We should get to the point where we talk about Him, about what He has done for us, not hold it back
 - At some point, there will be a moment when we will have to speak to people.

Speak Freely

- Nowadays: we're afraid to speak. We should speak freely. Even if we are shy, by speaking, it might increase our courage to be bold.
 - **St Peter's Sermon:** But Peter, standing up with the eleven, ***raised his voice*** and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words." +Acts 2:14
 - Men and brethren, ***let me speak freely to you*** of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. +Acts 2:29

Boldness in the Message

- ❖ I am not ashamed of the ***Gospel***, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and then the Greek. +Romans 1:16

Boldness comes from GOD

- ❖ Now as they observed the ***confidence***... (the boldness, the *parresia*) of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and began to recognize them as ***having been with Jesus***. +Acts 4:13

Boldness to speak what you see and hear

- ❖ And then Peter and John answered, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge. We cannot stop ***speaking about the things we've seen and heard***.' +Acts 4:19-20
- We shouldn't be ashamed of who we are talking about and what He has done for us
- How important it is → it can bring salvation to someone!
- Our boldness is boldness in the message we are sharing
- If we don't believe in what we are sharing about, there's no point
- If I am not confident about where the message came from, I shouldn't speak

- ❖ because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with **power**, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. +1 Thessalonians 1:5
- The Word = there is power behind it = it will touch people
- We should be confident in that!
- Today, there is a lot of boldness in the wrong messages, and we must do something about it.

How can we speak?

- We need to have a way; we have to speak without intimidating or offending anyone.

Boldness of the Samaritan woman: Turn, Taste, Testify

→ Turn away from the water pot (+John 4:28)

→ Taste Living Water

→ Testify of His goodness (+John 4:39)

- ❖ Then, ***leaving her water jar***, the woman went back to the town and said to the people... +John 4:28
- ❖ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of ***the woman who testified***, "He told me all that I ever did." +John 4:39

As it is impossible to verbally describe the sweetness of honey to one who has never tasted honey, so the goodness of God cannot be clearly communicated by way of teaching if we ourselves are not able to penetrate into the goodness of the Lord by our own experience. – St Basil

- If we had an illness and were cured, we would testify and share and tell people about it!
- Why can't we do the same about God?
- We shouldn't be ashamed of what we're saying.
- We should **Turn, Taste and Testify**.
- There's a chance for anyone to turn, taste and testify. If we can be bold enough to encourage others, people will come out of the darkness and walk into the light.

Boldness comes from continuous prayer

- ❖ And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them. +Acts 4:23-24
- ❖ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness. +Acts 4:31
- Boldness doesn't come from us! It has to be something that is led from God; it is something I saw, something I tasted. If it doesn't come from God, it will have no impact.
- Prayer should be present at all times.
- Even before talking to a colleague, for example, one must pray. The Holy Spirit will then work through us.

Boldness today is the easy way

- ❖ But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand. +Acts 4:4
- Being bold is difficult, and when it's not easy, we shy away from it.
- We must not shy away from it when it's difficult.
- If it were easy, we wouldn't be at this conference.
- We must be confident in His message.

Boldness means starting relationships and friendships with people

- If we want boldness and evangelism, we must connect with people.
- Building relationships and friendships over time so that one day, we share with them what we know.
- The courage we need to have is connecting with people in the world; not letting them impact us, but knowing that one day, we will share a story of hope with them.
- We need to make time to develop these friendships.
- If we want to tell a story to someone who is standing at the other end of a river, we can't do that by shouting. We must build a bridge to get to the other side.

Boldness is getting conformable being uncomfortable

- Being bold and evangelism are not easy, but we don't know what we can say that can change the life or journey of someone.
- We belong to Him. So if He and His disciples were like that, bold and evangelizing, then we must also be the same.
- Let's not be afraid of being uncomfortable.
- We must speak of what we have seen or heard.
- "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words."
 - This is true, but there is a time where we need to speak, where someone will need an encouraging word.
 - There should be no hypocrisy, and we should have a genuine relationship with God.

† Friday, July 5th 2019

TALK 2 by Fr. Abraham Fam: Separating Faith and Culture

- ❖ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. +Galatians 3:28
- We don't want any culture to feel rejected. Culture shouldn't be a divider.

Church is responsible for:

1. Learning and preserving the faith
2. Celebrating all cultures
3. Adapting to the host culture in your area (culture we move into; wherever we take our faith and church to)

Goal = create a Christian Orthodox culture in our church

1. Learn and preserve the faith

- ❖ Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle. +2 Thessalonians 2:15
- There are 2 extremes:
 - We water down the Orthodox faith
 - We impose our faith in other people's lives
- We must preserve the faith without making people feel bad about not doing something.
- ❖ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. +Colossians 4:6
- We must encourage others to know about our faith without imposing it on them.

2. Celebrating all cultures as one

- ❖ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. +Galatians 3:28
- Disciples of Christ: had different professions, and different cultures, so we can have difference of opinion and still celebrate all cultures as one.
- E.g. Celebrating Canadian holidays = we are one with them

3. Adapting to the host culture you live in

- Not the negative things about it
- The good points about it (food, sports, style, clothing)
- We are resistant because it's not our own culture
- Sometimes we judge the culture as foolishness
- Is my church really adapting to the host culture?

Steps to adapting to the host cultures

1. **Know your own culture:** know *who* you are and this will help adapt *where* you are.
2. **Celebrate the beauty of God's creation:** different countries have their own beauty (food, art, music); look at the beautiful side to every culture and God's beautiful creation.
3. **Observe and imitate behaviours** (different handshakes, and even headshakes!)
The more we observe and imitate, the more they will trust our evangelism.
We need to learn these things to be able to connect with people (building friendships).
4. **Learn the things you *shouldn't* do.**
5. **Ask good questions about the culture.**

→ If we really care about evangelism, we'll go through these things (1-5)

6. **Seek to learn and grow**
Problem: we spend too much time criticizing people and their culture
7. **Proclaim the Gospel clearly:** know your audience, know how to share the message in a way they understand
8. **Contextualize the Gospel message:** know the people and culture, adapt the Gospel message to the people and culture you are taking it to.
The world has become one big city – because of social media.
We need to figure out how to meet people where they are.
Can we plant our church in any place in the world and survive?

Consider 1 Corinthians:

- ❖ For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law though not being myself under the law that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.
+1 Corinthians 9:19-23

Churches tend to approach culture from one of 3 perspectives:

- **Isolation** takes place when a church is so far removed from culture that it can no longer communicate the Good News in effective ways.
- **Domination** occurs as a church lashes out harshly at what are perceived as evil aspects of culture.
- **Incarnation** is the best approach of making disciples.

How to adapt to the host culture without losing your morals

1. Be oblivious to the host culture - **FAIL**

Coptic Church can be anywhere and it can be the same exact everything (e.g. Nairobi or FL or Egypt = if church looks the same... we have a problem! Different languages are spoken in each country, therefore sermons should also be in different languages)
Oblivious = don't know what's going on around you, you're in a bubble

2. Hide from the host culture - **FAIL**

God never wanted us to be scared. We must be ready and not afraid. We have to be able to adapt and not hide, or else we'll never win anybody.

3. Criticize the host culture - **FAIL**

If we continue to do that, how can we love others? We are automatically judging.

4. Embrace people and offer an alternative - **PASS**

Build bridges with the people in the community; offer love and a better way.
We have the cure; why not share it with others?

5. Use the culture to reach culture - **ULTIMATE**

- Not changing what we believe, but the way we express it
- Use social media to win people
- Find a way within the culture to reach out and make a difference

The vision we need to project in our church

- Build bridges, not barriers
- Connect, not divide
- Never make any group in the church feel rejected
- See someone different: learn about them (sports, foods, music) → embrace the people and build bridges

TALK 3 by Fr. John Boutros: Keys to Evangelism in the North American Culture

Culture provides context

- Most of us don't state the context when we assume it to be obvious.
- In a multicultural environment, the implicit needs to be explicit.
- We need to discuss what is **our** culture.
- Culture affects meaning
 - e.g. Bat (the bat animal vs baseball bat) → the sentence/context will give the meaning
- **Culture** = Shared and specific values held by a group of people
- Different cultures exist in every church and in every house (30% of our families have at least 1 member of different culture)
- Faith influences all the aspects of our culture (e.g. fasting will affect your food selection)



What is your culture?

- ❖ And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man. +1 Corinthians 15:49
- Jesus doesn't want us to be out of the world. He wants us **in** the world, but **sanctified** by His word of truth.
- ❖ "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world." +John 17:15-16

Acts 17 (Short for Sermon on the Mount)

Acts 17:22-33

- ❖ Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; "for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, "so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; "for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." So Paul departed from among them.

What was the result of the sermon?

- What did St Paul do knowing he was speaking to Greeks, philosophers, who thought that crucifixion was a shame? He speaks so carefully, the truth, without turning them away.
- ❖ And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this matter." +Acts 17:32
- What we get out of this: some will mock and some will listen. The Holy Spirit softens the heart of people.

How did St Paul present a culturally-appropriate Gospel?

- St Paul started by complimenting them and their strong faith. He told them they were religious. Then he places the Gospel in their context. He frames the Gospel from a philosophical view.
- We should also start framing our Gospel from what people care about today. Focus on what people consider credible, not what people consider interesting.
- ❖ Therefore, although God has overlooked such times of ignorance, he now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has set a day on which he is going to judge the world in righteousness, by a man whom he designated, having provided proof to everyone **by raising him from the dead.** +Acts 17:30-31

→ St Paul doesn't mention the name of Jesus once in Acts 17.

He preached the Gospel without mentioning His name, and so should we. We should mention the Word to people in the form of general statement/quote, without mentioning Jesus.

At the First Council of Jerusalem

- ❖ Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God. +Acts 15:19
- Our problem in the Church: we don't know what to do with the new people who show up in our church, or we couldn't care less.
- The Gospel can be offensive as it is, so it shouldn't be more offensive by our actions.
- We should remove obstacles from these people's way and make them feel welcomed instead.

Strength is for service not for status

- ❖ But we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbour for his good to build him up. +Romans 15:1,2

→ Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, and not just do what is most convenient for us. **Strength is for service, not status.** Each one of us needs to **look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, "How can I help?"**

+Romans 15:1,2 (the message)

- Even the Son of God came to serve. Strength is for service not for status.

Are we ready to serve?

- The Gospel was originally written in Greek by people who didn't know how to read or write Greek. Why did they write it in Greek? For evangelism. At the time, it was the universal language of the people that they were writing it to.
- Are we ready to use the language that the people know and are used to? Are we ready to learn something new?
- Western Culture vs Eastern Culture
 - Western culture likes to ask questions and understand, but Eastern culture likes authority (don't ask or discuss)
- We live in a Post-Christian Culture = Christianity was a thing; it came and it went.
- If we want people to know we're interesting, we must show that we're interested in their interests.

Conclusion

I must be:

1. Committed to Unity +Galatians 3:28
2. Committed the person who has not yet joined the Body of Christ (every branch that can get grafted into the body of Christ must be grafted) +Romans 15:1, 2
3. Committed to not putting obstacles in the way of those who are coming to the Faith +Acts 15:19

Church should be a place where people feel loved and don't need to go elsewhere to find that love. We must go out of our way to make people feel welcomed.

Workshop #1 with Tasony Dalia: Creating a welcoming environment in your church

Welcoming Environment:

- **“Be our guest” mentality:** entire church should be ready to welcome a foreigner, don't think of what you can get from them (baptize/convert them), but be happy to welcome them in their Father's home.
- **Intentional in what we do:** we should intend to welcome any new comer, and not leave it to chances or conditions.
- Have **welcoming ushers & umbrellas** (in case of rain) available.
- **Have a connection table:** package containing pamphlets (about books, introduction to the faith), QR code, free coupon for next time they come (e.g. monthly free tea with the priest, this also opens chances for them to ask questions and learn more).
- Remember, if a new person comes
 - → 4% chances they will stay
 - but if they come 3 times → 70% chance they will stay (based on Zambia's experience with Fr. Abraham)

So we must put every effort to get them to come at least 3 times = be creative!
- **Be excellent in details:** Are bathrooms clean? Sink and toilet functioning properly? Are crying rooms clean? Also good to have some coloring books and crayons available for kids. Are there sitting areas outside?

TALK 4 by Fr. Abraham Fam: Cultivating a spirit of Evangelism in the Coptic Church

We need to have the Mind of Christ

Have an open mind = what Christ wants to be done

- ❖ Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. +Philippians 2:2-5
- ❖ For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to advise him? But we have the mind of Christ. +1 Corinthians 2:16

Mind of Christ = loving, unity, put others' needs above my own

1. Spiritually Mind

- We must be *spiritually minded* if we want to pursue an evangelism program.
- If my relationship with Christ is not strong, I will not be able to change someone else's mind because I won't care about what He cares about (e.g. loving the unlovable, the lost sheep).
- If we all focus on the mind of Christ = look out for others' needs.
- In any culture, if we can pray for this mind of Christ, we will be okay. We will put our needs aside and put others' interests above our own.
- ❖ Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. +Romans 8:5-6
- Are we more set on the things of the flesh of the spirit?
- Focusing on things of the flesh = being selfish instead of selfless

2. Humble Mind not double mind

- ❖ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. +Romans 12:16
- Nothing can work well without humility.

3. Like minded

- ❖ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus +Romans 15:5
- Convince people to go towards the mind of Christ
- Never talk down to anyone; have a soft mind to listen and grow from someone else

4. Pray to Renew your mind

- ❖ And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. +Romans 12:2
- Pray that if something in me that needs to be changed, that **He** may renew it. Pray for **His** will.
- Never say: this is the way I am. We need to have a soft mind and have faith that God can renew our mind.

We need the Mind of the Early Church continued to have the Mind of Christ

- ❖ And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.
+Acts 2:42-47
- I must ask for what is stubborn in me to be renewed by Him.

Mind of Evangelism Today

- ❖ Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! +John 4:35
- If we are stubborn within the church and have different visions, how can we change what is outside the church? If we don't have fellowship and unity within the church, how will we welcome others and teach them about unity?
- People outside need and want God, and are ready.
- The problem: *I* am not ready and *my* mind is not renewed and *I* am not spiritually minded.
- If our mind is not set right to the Mind of Christ, the minds of those who are outside the church is a **mind of suspicion**. They know if we are a child of Christ or not.

Mind of Suspicion to Mind of Surrendering

- **Building friendships** = builds trust before you can build Christ in someone's life
- Having a mind of Christ allows us to take people from suspicious to curious
 - → This looks interesting. I am curious to learn more.
- Then from curious to contemplating (something they're thinking more about, when they see something unique about Christians)
 - → Now it's on my mind. I am contemplating and thinking more about it.
- Then from contemplating to seeking (trust has been developed)
 - → Now I really desire to seek out this new life with God and am searching.
- Then from seeking to surrendering
 - → I am Yours God.
- It may take month or years to bring a person to this point
- It's a long-term journey from suspicion to surrendering.

All of us as a church need to change our mindset.

If we don't have the right mind, we won't be able to change anyone.

We need the Mind of patience

- Patience is also a form of action.
- Renewing my relationship with Christ → **My** renewal, **my** repentance, **my** change.
- We need Him to renew us for this.
- Best evangelism program is **my** change.

† Saturday, July 6th 2019

TALK 5 by Fr. John Boutros: Evangelism in your church

If we do everything the same way, we will have the same result.
If we keep doing the same things today, we will reap the results of yesterday.
If we want a different result, we must do something different today.

Everyone has a way to do things. Even Jesus did, He had a custom. So did St Paul.

- ❖ He went to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day He went into the synagogue, as was His **custom**... +Luke 4:16
- ❖ As was his **custom**, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures... +Acts 17:2

Everyone is passionate about something. God revealed to us a particular need.
What do we have influence upon? Can the Holy Spirit work through me to influence the custom so that it may be a custom of evangelism?

We should be attacking (in a benign meaning), not defending

- ❖ “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it**” +Matthew 16:18
- So Church should be prevailing. The Church is invading Hades – not the other way around – and **Jesus promised** that the church would be victorious! Isn't this enough for us to know?

Just start growing! Where can I have an influence?
How you receive people may change your life. Even by just one decision.

- ❖ And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone I will make him a helper comparable to him.” + Genesis 2:18

Whatever hurt you got from people, God will heal you from it. **He is your heart surgeon.**
Think of the invincibility that comes from that.

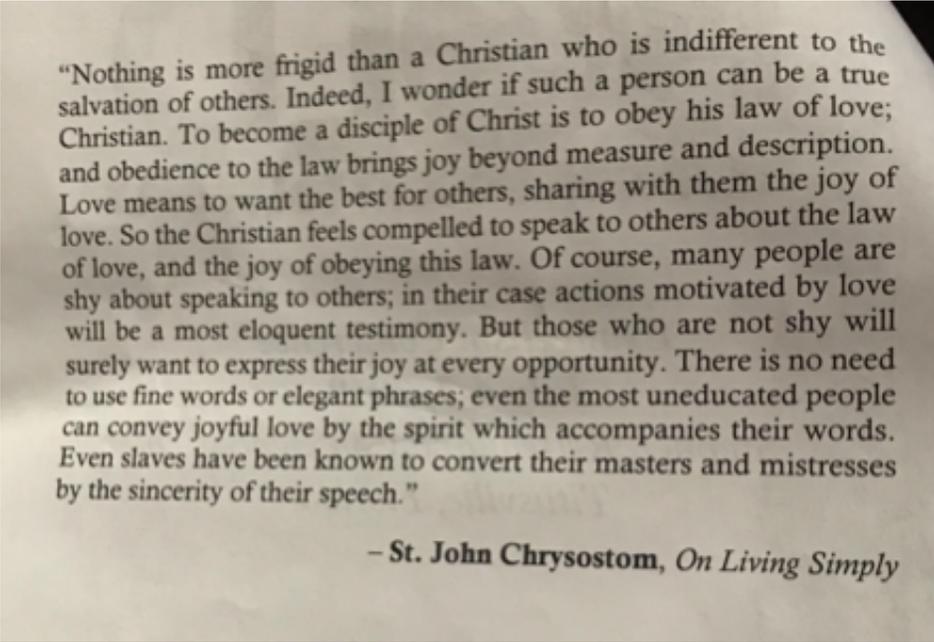
By sticking together, we are stronger

- ❖ ...one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer; +Ecclesiastes 4:12 TLB

If anyone falls, he falls alone. But no one is saved alone. – Alexei Khomiakov (1804-1860) Russian theologian, philosopher, poet and amateur artist

No one should wish to be saved alone without all others to being saved. – Elder Porphyrios, *Wounded by Love*, p. 89 (1906-1991) Athonite hieromonk known for his gifts of spiritual discernment and clairvoyance

Caring for the salvation of others is not optional.

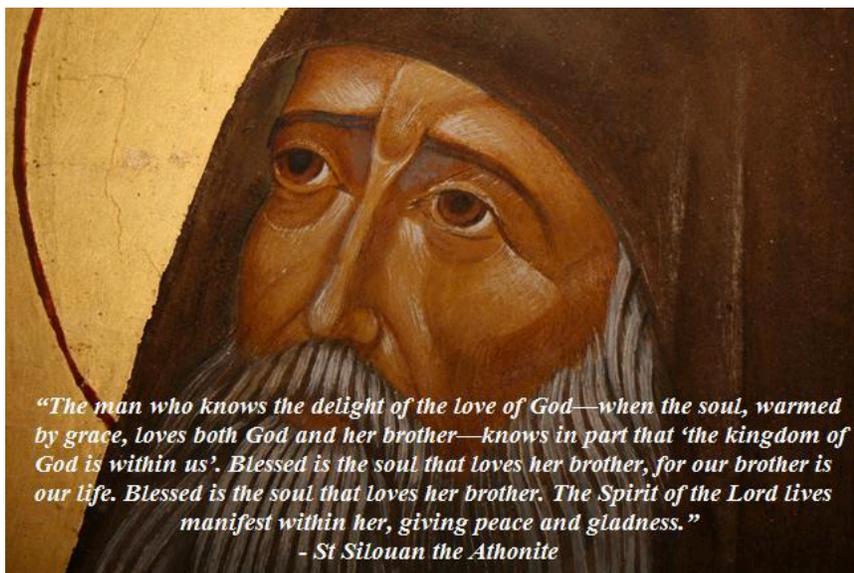


"Nothing is more frigid than a Christian who is indifferent to the salvation of others. Indeed, I wonder if such a person can be a true Christian. To become a disciple of Christ is to obey his law of love; and obedience to the law brings joy beyond measure and description. Love means to want the best for others, sharing with them the joy of love. So the Christian feels compelled to speak to others about the law of love, and the joy of obeying this law. Of course, many people are shy about speaking to others; in their case actions motivated by love will be a most eloquent testimony. But those who are not shy will surely want to express their joy at every opportunity. There is no need to use fine words or elegant phrases; even the most uneducated people can convey joyful love by the spirit which accompanies their words. Even slaves have been known to convert their masters and mistresses by the sincerity of their speech."

– St. John Chrysostom, *On Living Simply*

Love all, pray for all, weep for all, repent for all. – St Isaac the Syrian

Evangelism is not optional.



What about pastoral care?

- **Pastoral:** caring for the sheep – looking in; **Evangelism:** going out – looking out
- 80% congregation is “loving out”; 20% congregation is “loving in”
- So both are important, but..
 - The **rule** is to look out, the exception is to **stay in**. The majority is called **to go out**.
- ❖ And He said to them, “**Go** into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”
+Mark 16:15

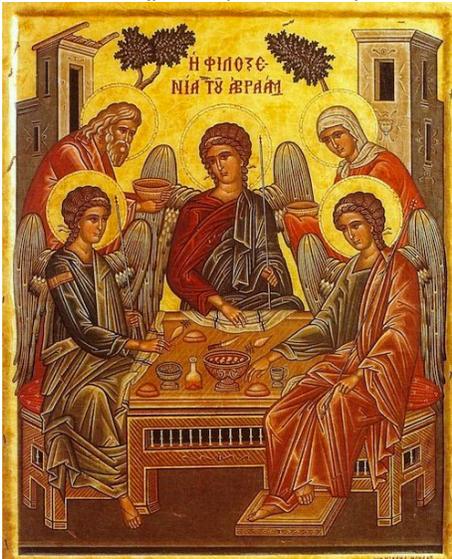
What can I do today?

- Wherever you go, stand somewhere where someone is alone;
- Invite people to speak who haven’t spoken in a conversation, address them by name, give them a chance to speak;
- Explain context, refuse inside jokes (Why do we make them anyway? Because we are insecure);
- So we must be radically inclusive: never allow anyone to be outside of a circle;
- Effacing boundaries – interact;
- Choose your words carefully;
- Encourage discussion which doesn’t equal serial dialogue
 - Serial dialogue is when one person is the centre of the discussion and others respond to him. It makes spectators not participators. Discussion is when everyone is allowed to participate and comment to everyone’s statements. We must aim for discussion.
 - Sometimes people like to be called out.

No one ever came new to a church because they lost argument, they came because they won a friend.

- ❖ Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. +Hebrews 13:2

Icon of hospitality and Holy Trinity



It’s not optional; it’s the very nature of God! It’s who He is.

- ❖ Accept one another, then, ***just as*** Christ accepted you, **in order to bring praise to God.**
+Romans 15:7 NIV

- When He says “just as” = God has raised the bar for me.
- If He didn’t give up on me, I shouldn’t give up on others either.

Assume positive intent. – Indra Nooyi, Outgoing Chairman and CEO of PepsiCo (2006-2018)

- When people do weird things, whatever people may do or say, assume positive intent. It changes your approach on that person before passing judgment on them.
- ❖ Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don’t see things the way you do. And don’t jump all over them every time they do or say something you don’t agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. **Treat them gently.** +Romans 14:1 MSG

Learn to ask Questions & Foster Discussion

Help where you can

- ❖ Those of us who are strong and able in the faith need to step in and lend a hand to those who falter, **and not just do what is most convenient for us.** **Strength is for service, not status.** Each one of us needs to look after the good of the people around us, asking ourselves, **“How can I help?”**+Romans 15:1,2 (the message)

Manage my own insecurities

- My time and how I’ve been hurt = what’s holding me back from loving others

When feeling anxiety and worry, pray:

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who are everywhere present, and fills all things, O Treasury of good, and bestower of life, come and dwell in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save, O Good-One, our souls.

Or say the Jesus prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me!

The Imperative of Evangelism

Only 3 ways the church can grow:

- 1-Immigration
- 2-The birth rate
- 3-Evangelism – meet Jesus, the Creator of the universe and fall in love with Him

A church without youth is a church without a future. – Pope Shenouda III

- If it isn’t growing, it’s dying.
- It takes 3 generations for a church to be extinct. A church without youth is not a church.
- Start with people where they’re at. If it’s with parents’ concern about their children, let it be that. Choose your own adventure.

A question asked during the Panel Discussion: As Orthodox Christians, should we evangelize to Protestant Christians?

The following answer was given to us by His Grace Bishop Basil, General Bishop in the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States.

Ministry of Apollos

- ❖ Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man *had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord*, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.
+Acts 18:24-28

This example explains to us that Apollos was mighty in scriptures (he was a Jew), had been instructed in the way of the Lord, was fervent in spirit, and he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord. But he knew only the baptism of John. So there were some things that were lacking in his understanding of the Christian faith. Aquila and Priscilla, being faithful Christians at the time, heard him, took him aside, and explained to him the way of the Lord more accurately.

So this gives us a scriptural evidence that even if the Protestant Christians have faith in the Trinity and in the Incarnation, and some of the other doctrines of the Orthodox Christian faith, they do not have the sacraments, and even if they have a partial understanding of the sacraments, **the fullness of truth is in the Orthodox Church.**

There is a part of the faith that needs to be evangelized to the Protestants. We do not neglect the fact that they are Christians believing in the Holy Trinity, however we also do not neglect the fact that we have the fullness of the truth.

The Apostolic faith that we have received, we are called to deliver it to all. Even if there is a part of their faith that is missing, we are responsible for ourselves, as Orthodox Christians, to feed one another and to correct one another, that if we are missing a part of our faith, whether that be evangelism or something else, that we grow in our faith, to grow in the fullness of the Orthodox faith that we are baptized in.

However, we do not neglect the fact that we are also responsible for evangelizing, not only to non-believers, but also to those who have a partial faith or a partial understanding of the faith, whether they were born and raised in it, or were born and raised Orthodox and they strayed from that faith. We are responsible to evangelize to all of these, that all may come to the fullness of the truth.

Workshop #2 with Mena Mirhom: Commit to learn by practice

The sample survey

You can conduct a survey for non-believers by having the coming questions printed and asking pedestrians if they are willing to participate.

- We're conducting a survey, would you like to participate? If they answer yes:
- Do you believe in a higher power? Why/Why not?
- What is your religious background? Your spiritual journey? How did you come to it?
- How do you describe Jesus?

You can give a gift in the street; it can be as cheap as a bottle of water or some candy.

Ask questions and engage in conversations with pedestrians.

Great to be done on occasions like 4th of July when everyone is out and about.

TALK 6: The Coptic Church from the perspective of a newcomer

One of the questions asked: What was awkward to you when you first joined?

Some of the answers given: The throne of the Bishop, kissing priest's hand, why do men and women separate in church? why do men commune first before women?

→ We may need to be equipped with answers for such challenging questions.

Beautiful comment from one of the newcomers:

People are starving for love! People are in pain. People see the world through the wounds they've been through. So we must meet them at their pain. And love them, and lead them to repentance, and talk to them about Jesus. They're hungry.

† Sunday, July 7th 2019

TALK 7 by Fr. Abraham Fam: Working with the next generation for the next generation

What can I do?

- ❖ Meanwhile **praying** also for us, that **God would open to us a door** for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains. +Colossians 4:3
- Unless we pray that God opens the door, we will never go anywhere.
- I must **pray** that God opens a door for me and for the church to take the next step.
- It's really difficult if we're not serious in prayer.
- God is the one who will open the door for the church to be a church of evangelism.
- This will take time so we must be patient, pray persistently, and not be discouraged along the way.
- With time, evangelism will be a way of life in our church. It will become a second nature.

What must I do to help the next generation and the lost sheep and the non-believer, to receive the faith?

- ❖ And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," **we also believe** and therefore speak +2 Corinthians 4:13
- Because I pray, I believe and I speak.
- When we speak to anyone, we must make sure it's done in humility and wisdom or else the door will be shut.
- Remember that evangelism is God's will. It's on His agenda.
- There are 2 billion unreached people, who don't want to be reached.
- People who have already been reached, the easy ones, have been reached already.
- What we have ahead of us: the broken ones, so it will be difficult.
- We must also include how the next generation will reach out to the following generations.
- ❖ All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is **reaching more and more people** may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God. +2 Corinthians 4:15
- Pray, Believe, Speak = we can reach all nations

- ❖ After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
+Revelation 7:9-10

- This should take place here on earth, now!
- Our generation should be bold evangelists, so we must believe and know that God *will* open doors.
- The next generation is counting on us. If we don’t do our part, the church will die after 3 generations.

No excuses: we must do!

- ❖ Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations. Then said I: Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth,’ For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you,” says the Lord. Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. +Jeremiah 1:5-9

- Don’t play it safe. Safe is risky! Going back home and just going back to routine is risky.
- What we’ve heard and what we know → we’re responsible for it.
- We can’t have everything we want right now but we need to take a step to start with.
- Whatever excuse we have, it will not work.
- We must move forward our church to evangelism!!
- Us, as attendees of this conference, must pray that God opens the door for us. If we believe in Him who makes all things possible, we must move and take initiative.
- What God opens, no man can shut.
- ❖ He who is Holy, He who is True, “He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens” +Revelation 3:7
- Example given: if there is a building on fire and your children are inside that building, would you think twice before saving them? No. Likewise, how many people are on fire in this world and need saving?
- If we think we can’t, that’s when we should!
- We must get out of our comfort zone, and we must *do*.

How can I do?

- hospitality
- mission trips
- mission activities: hospitals, prisons, homeless
- Egyptian festivals with evangelism touch
- sports day and competition
- outreach dinners
- utilizing the holidays

Through the failure, God will humble us, and correct us, and show us that we need Him to open the door and guide us through it all. So delays and challenges are okay.
Let's just try to persuade a few, and our reward from our Saviour will be great.

Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter. – Charles H. Spurgeon

We must preach all nations. It's no longer an option; it's a way of life.

It's through evangelism that we will gain spiritual growth. We can't wait till we reach a certain spiritual level. We still need a guide and spiritual father, but evangelism is part of our spiritual growth.

Remember, there is comfort when we cry to the Lord.
In Missionary stories, failure and discouragement are very common.
But we need fellowship and a good support system.
Throughout the Bible, we see how much there is failure and success.

How much is this a war that we're trying to get people to Him, to His Kingdom?
The enemy is there and fighting. So we must think of the people in the fire that need saving.

We love God, we want to serve God.
We cannot let fear take over and prevent us from taking a step forward.

