

“This is an important book that anyone interested in the evangelism of contemporaries who are deeply alienated from the gospel will read with much profit. Distilled out of twenty years of personal evangelism, this book reflects both a deep grasp of biblical theology and a penetrating compassion for people—and finds a way forward in wise, probing questions. How very much like the Master himself!”

—D. A. CARSON

Research Professor of New Testament  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“*Questioning Evangelism* provides an absolutely unique blend of apologetic information and practical evangelistic advice. Newman is a skilled practitioner and this book is must reading for those who want to learn how to bring apologetics into evangelism in a biblical and relationally sensitive sort of way.”

—J. P. MORELAND

Distinguished Professor of Philosophy  
Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

“Randy Newman goes way beyond how-tos and apologetics, bringing back the lost art of listening, dialogue, and the heart of evangelism in the spirit of Christ.”

—MARC V. RUTTER

National Director, Human Resource Leadership  
Campus Crusade for Christ International

“Randy Newman has penned a valuable resource for all of us who are trying to share the good news of Jesus with our contemporaries.”

—MITCH GLASER

President  
Chosen People Ministries

“Asking questions, the right questions, is an essential skill needed by all Christians. Next time I share my faith, I’m going to be asking some ‘gospel-paving’ questions!”

—LIEUTENANT GENERAL R. L. VAN ANTWERP  
Former Chief of Engineers, United States Army  
President of the Officers’ Christian Fellowship

“Newman’s purpose is not to explain what the saving message is. . . . He focuses instead on asking good questions to get the listener engaged in conversation, rather than a monologue, as so often happens in evangelism. . . . Why not give questions a try? You might find that you like it.”

—*Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*

“Exciting. . . . Randy Newman attacks [ordinary evangelical] ideas with very fresh questions to continue the conversation. . . . [This] is one of the very best books on questioning.”

—*The Lamplighter*

# **QUESTIONING EVANGELISM**



THIRD EDITION

# QUESTIONING EVANGELISM

Engaging  
People's Hearts  
the Way Jesus Did

RANDY NEWMAN

Foreword by Lee Strobel



KREGEL  
PUBLICATIONS

*Questioning Evangelism: Engaging People's Hearts the Way Jesus Did*  
© 2004, 2017, 2023 by Randy Newman  
Third edition 2023

Published by Kregel Publications, a division of Kregel Inc., 2450 Oak Industrial Dr. NE,  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505. [www.kregel.com](http://www.kregel.com).

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without the publisher's prior written permission or by license agreement. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com). The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked NASB1995 are from the (NASB®) New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. All rights reserved. [www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org).

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are from the King James Version.

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Names: Newman, Randy, 1956- author.

Title: Questioning Evangelism : engaging people's hearts the way Jesus did / Randy Newman.

Description: Third edition. | Grand Rapids, MI : Kregel Publications, 2023. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: LCCN 2022037078 (print) | LCCN 2022037079 (ebook) | ISBN 9780825447808 (paperback) | ISBN 9780825469640 (kindle edition) | ISBN 9780825470240 (epub)

Classification: LCC BV4520 .N46 2023 (print) | LCC BV4520 (ebook) | DDC 248/.5--dc23/eng/20220826

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022037078>

LC ebook record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022037079>

ISBN 978-0-8254-4780-8, print  
ISBN 978-0-8254-7024-0, epub  
ISBN 978-0-8254-6964-0, Kindle

Printed in the United States of America

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 / 5 4 3 2 1

To my Jewish mother,  
Rhonda Newman,  
who, at the ripe young age of seventy-five,  
found answers to her many questions  
and became a follower of Jesus,  
Savior, Rabbi, Redeemer, and Lord.



# Contents

Foreword by Lee Strobel . . . . .	11
Preface to the Third Edition . . . . .	13
Acknowledgments . . . . .	15
Introduction . . . . .	17

## Part 1: Why Ask Questions?

1. Why Are Questions Better Than Answers? . . . . .	23
2. Solomonic Soulwinning: What Does the Book of Proverbs Teach Us About Questions? . . . . .	40
3. How Do Questions Pave the Way for Answers? . . . . .	54

## Part 2: What Questions Are People Asking?

4. Why Are Christians So Intolerant? . . . . .	75
5. Why Does a Good God Allow Evil and Suffering and Things Like Pandemics? . . . . .	101
6. What Do Christians Have Against Science? . . . . .	119
7. Why Should We Believe an Ancient Book Written by Dead Jewish Males? . . . . .	134
8. Why Are Christians So Homophobic? . . . . .	154
9. What’s So Good About Marriage? . . . . .	174
10. If Jesus Is So Great, Why Are Some of His Followers Such Jerks? . . . . .	199

## Part 3: Why Aren’t Questions and Answers Enough?

11. The Question of Compassion: “What If I Don’t Care That My Neighbor Is Going to Hell?” . . . . .	218
--	-----

- 12. The Question of Anger: “What If I Really *Want* My Neighbor to Go to Hell?”..... 233
- 13. The Question of Silence: “When Is It Time to Shut Up?”.....247
  
- Epilogue: Unanswered Questions .....263
- Study Guide.....269

# Foreword

The email was snarky, with decidedly hostile and mocking undertones. At the end, the person—someone I didn’t know—posed a pointed question: “If your God is loving, why does He allow so much pain and suffering in the world?”

I wasn’t in a good mood when I read the missive. Part of me wanted to answer in a similarly negative style, but I quickly realized that wouldn’t be the right approach. So I started to write a detailed five-point answer to the pain-and-suffering question—you know, the kind of theologically sound response you learn when you study Christian apologetics.

I paused. I deleted what I had written. Instead, I simply typed, “Of all the questions in the universe, why did you choose to ask that one?” I hit Send.

The answer came the next day. This second email had a totally different tone—the anger was gone, and the writer was much more sincere. He described his impressive academic achievements and how he had climbed to success in his career—only to lose his eyesight and health to diabetes. His job evaporated. His friends drifted away. Now he was living on welfare and food stamps. He was suffering from depression, loneliness, bitterness, and fear.

My heart went out to him. As for him, he responded that he felt heard and valued. Suddenly, the door was open to a fruitful spiritual conversation.

This, in short, is the power of a question. And that’s what this book is about—how to share God’s message of hope and grace through probing questions. That’s right—sort of like Jesus did.

Nobody teaches the art of question-asking better than my friend Randy Newman. When you meet Randy in person, you’re immediately drawn to his self-deprecating humor, his undeniable intellect,

and his big heart for God and people—all of which bleed through the pages of this must-read book.

Years ago, Christian apologists would figuratively line up the targets of their evangelism and machine-gun them with facts, evidence, and arguments. That no longer works. For the most part, evangelism happens through relationships, which are better nurtured by provocative questions than a memorized gospel speech.

Let Randy teach you how to be a more effective ambassador for Jesus in the twenty-first century by doing more listening than talking, by validating the other person as being made in the image of God, and by respecting their spiritual journey.

And, of course, by asking good questions—like Randy learned from the Master Himself.

LEE STROBEL

Author of *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for Heaven*  
Founding Director of the Lee Strobel Center  
for Evangelism and Applied Apologetics  
Colorado Christian University

## Preface to the Third Edition

Our world is getting hotter. No, I'm not talking about global warming or climate change of our physical planet. I'm referring to the social, cultural climate into which we proclaim the good news about Jesus. That emotional temperature is rising dramatically. If there ever was a time when many people were receptive to the gospel (perhaps in the 1950s) or coolly neutral toward our message (perhaps the 1980s), today the tone has morphed into one of hostility. At one time, people said, "Come to your Bible study? Sure, I'm open-minded." Then, they switched to, "Hey, what's true for you is true for you but not for me. You can believe whatever you want." Today, they say, "You believe what? How can you be so closed-minded and bigoted? You're what's wrong with the world!"

When I first wrote *Questioning Evangelism* almost twenty years ago, the evangelistic temperature was already beginning to climb. Today, it's scorching. But along with the heat has come a hunger. The unavoidable suffering of a pandemic has intensified people's longing for answers—for both their heads and their hearts. The fruit of godless living has yielded a level of pain and relational alienation that cries out for comfort. Into this difficult time, the gospel is even better news than we may have realized in previous years.

Thus, I offer more questioning of how we do evangelism. I've also added a chapter on science because that challenge to our faith has gotten particularly hot in recent years. As with the previous two editions, I am certainly not questioning whether we should evangelize. I'm questioning how. But behind and beneath that questioning lies a certainty, a conviction, and yes, even an eagerness to spur us all on to tell people what they must hear. May God embolden us beyond all we ask or imagine.



# Acknowledgments

The word *grateful* prompts joy and warm affection for the many people who encouraged me during the writing of this book—listening to my ideas, reading a chapter or two (or more!), helping me formulate the flow of an argument, or telling me what really didn't connect. I owe a lot of thanks to Ellen Beauchamp, Jim Beavers, Barbara Brand, Mike Calkin, David Case, Dave Fossum, Mitch Glaser, Derrick Lovick, Mark Lundquist, Dave McGaw, Mike Metzger, Jim Roembke, Joe Scimecca, Stan Wallace, David Walnut, and George Selden for their time and suggestions.

I'm grateful to the members of the Pentagon Prayer Breakfast, Burke Community Church, Barcroft Bible Church, McLean Bible Church's Life Builders' class, and the faculty fellowships at George Mason University and the University of Maryland for allowing me to "try out" my ideas in messages to them.

Thank you to my greatest encouragers and challengers—Lin Johnson, Spencer Brand, Patrick Dennis, Don Carson, and J. P. Moreland—for taking the time to evaluate my writing and urging me to keep going.

I am delighted to say to my three sons—Dan, David, and Jon—that Dad will be more available now that this project is complete. It would be a display of God's grace if this book helps you reach out to your peers—people I can't even begin to figure out!

Most of all, I'm grateful to my wife, Pam, for loving me and cheering me on. At times, you believed in me and this work more than I did. Writing the chapter on marriage was a delight—because of you.



# Introduction

**Y**ou may think that this book is just plain weird. When it comes to evangelism, I think differently than a lot of people. I ask questions that other people don't ask. I come up with answers that many people don't think of. And answers that a lot of people find knock-down, drag-out invincible leave me unconvinced.

Maybe you think like I do. Or maybe you know people who ask the same kinds of questions that I ask. Or maybe our world has changed so significantly that we need to rethink evangelism.

The questions that I ask are not unreasonable. People often say, "Good question." When I say that certain answers are unconvincing, it's as if I've shouted something about the emperor's new clothes. And in response to the answers that I offer, people often tell me, "Gee, I wish I'd thought of that."

For a long time, I wondered if I should just keep quiet and cling to the proverb, "Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise" (Prov. 17:28 *NASB1995*). Wishing to find another option, I tried out my questions and answers on some real live non-Christians. In the course of writing this book, I met with dozens of amazingly kind and thoughtful people who were making progress on their own spiritual journeys. They were gracious in allowing me to join them for part of the trip. Some of them were students, a few were professors, and most were ordinary folks from various walks of life. One of the first people to share his uncertainties with me (and allow me to share some of my ideas with him) was a fireman who read Nietzsche!

Along the way, I received enough encouragement to write this book.

My prayer is that readers will be encouraged and aided in the task of telling others the best news ever announced. I'm not calling into question the validity of evangelism. I'm calling Christians to use questions in the venture of evangelism. I have two fears, however.

The first is that some people might see *Questioning Evangelism* as a criticism of other books on evangelism or apologetics. Such landmark works as Josh McDowell's *More Than a Carpenter*, Paul Little's *Know Why You Believe*, or C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* come to mind. It would be the height of presumption for me to criticize such works. These books (and many others like them) are gifts from God to His church, and He has used them in amazing ways. I give away copies as often as I can, because they're very effective—with certain people.

I also like several newer books in the evangelistic arsenal. Lee Strobel's *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for Faith* are best sellers for a good reason. They are well-written, well-reasoned, and compelling works that our Lord has used and will continue to use to bring many into the kingdom. Two recent additions to our apologetic toolbox deserve careful study and wide dissemination: Timothy Keller's *The Reason for God* and Rebecca McLaughlin's *Confronting Christianity*.

A diverse audience, though, requires diverse approaches. *Questioning Evangelism* offers another approach. If Jesus teaches us anything about evangelism, it's that He used a variety of methods with a variety of people.

Any evangelistic approach, though, requires three skills. The first and most basic involves *declaring* the gospel, including the ability to clearly and concisely articulate the message of salvation. A tool such as Cru's "Knowing God Personally" is helpful in presenting the message clearly while avoiding unnecessary distractions or confusing rabbit trails. Declaring the gospel also includes the sharing of one's own story or testimony. Every Christian needs fluency in articulating how the Lord changed his or her life and the difference that change makes daily.

The second evangelistic skill is *defending* the gospel. Anticipating common questions, acquainting oneself with helpful discoveries from the past, and planning how to deliver this information in a logical sequence have to be part of "always being ready to make a defense" (1 Peter 3:15 NASB1995).

The third skill—and this is where *Questioning Evangelism* fits in—is built upon the foundations of declaring and defending the gospel. That skill is called *dialoguing* the gospel. Often neglected and difficult to

master, but absolutely essential, this skill of giving and taking—asking questions and bouncing ideas back and forth—might be just what our postmodern audience needs. We need all three skills if we're to be Christ's ambassadors in the twenty-first century.

My second fear is that some people might view *Questioning Evangelism* as a technical handbook. If so, they might be tempted to use its approach to evangelism in a cookie-cutter, mechanical way. Doing so, however, would prove unfruitful and frustrating. I don't want people to respond to my examples by saying, "I've got to memorize this so the next time someone asks me that question, I'll say these words, use these phrases, ask these questions," and so forth.

Instead, I hope that readers will develop a different way of thinking about people, their questions, and our message. And because of that difference, our evangelistic conversations will sound less content/persuasion driven and more relationship/understanding driven. They'll sound more like rabbinic dialogues than professorial monologues. They'll be an exchange of ideas that lead both participants to the truth of the gospel. For one participant, it will be the first arrival at that point; for the other participant, it will be a rediscovery and a new appreciation of the message of the cross.

The goal of *Questioning Evangelism* is to help people know *how* to think about an issue more than *what* to think. This book will help followers of Jesus to develop their minds ("the mind of Christ") more than their methodologies, giving readers a sense of what to *say*. More important, though, readers will grow in confidence, knowing what to *ask*, because this book is about questions—questions that Christians can ask to move the conversation in a Christ-ward direction, questions that non-Christians are asking (either directly or indirectly), and questions that Christians can use as answers!

Some of the questions that people ask today are the same old questions that people have asked for millennia. For example, "Why does a good God allow evil and suffering?" But people today ask that question as we struggle to emerge from a pandemic while grieving the loss of millions (that's not an overstatement) of lives, making the question less sterile than it might have been in the past.

Some of the questions have been asked before, but the temperature in the tone is hotter now. When someone asks, for example, “Can Jesus really be the only way to God?” it might be more an accusation than a sincere inquiry. After all, the eternal state of the proverbial “heathen in Africa” is no longer the issue. Rather, it refers to the Hindu who lives next door, the Muslim whose desk is next to yours, the Jew who coaches your son’s soccer team, or the New Age, crystal-clinging, tie-dyed T-shirt-wearing unmarried couple living together down the street.

Some of the questions *are* new. Twenty years ago, few people brought up the issue of homosexuality in the context of an evangelistic conversation. Now, however, people raise that question often, and frequently word it as an attack: “Why are you Christians so homophobic?” And it’s not just about homosexuality (a rather old-fashioned term which has been completely replaced by “gay”). Today we speak of LGBTQ+ and are open to adding several more letters after that.

A number of questions that lurk within evangelistic chats are unspoken. At one time, only a few rogue fraternity brothers had the boldness to ask why they should stop sleeping with their girlfriend(s!). And even then, their questions were more defense than honest inquiries, with a fair amount of guilt mixed in. Today, because of the sexual revolution, marital fidelity and chastity are on the defensive and modern questioners might wonder (aloud or in their jaded hearts), “What’s so great about marriage?” or, “If I believe in this God you talk about, will I have to go along with His [your?] antiquated, stifling, and unhealthy ideas about sex?” or, “Why should I have sex with just one person for the rest of my life?”

Whether the questions are old or new—or angry varieties of either—we should be more engaging and less confrontational in our sharing of the good news. We must find new hinges upon which to swing open new doors. We must be disciples of our Lord and rabbi, Jesus of Nazareth, so that more and more people will join us in that great gathering of worshippers around the Lamb. If He sees fit to use this book toward that end, giving you confidence along the way, I will be grateful.

PART 1  
**WHY ASK QUESTIONS?**



## CHAPTER 1

# Why Are Questions Better Than Answers?

I'll never forget his name.<sup>1</sup> It was one that I'd never heard before—Artyum. He was from Ukraine and was possibly the most sincere seeker I've ever met. I just didn't know what to do with him. We struck up a conversation on the center lawn of the American University in Washington, DC, on a springlike day in November. It wasn't supposed to be that warm. But there we were, Artyum and I, basking in the sunshine, when the calendar said that we should have been inside sipping cups of hot chocolate.

We talked about the weather, classes, hometowns, and things like that. Then he asked me what I did on campus. When I worked for an organization with the name Campus Crusade for Christ (now known in the United States as Cru) and people asked, "What do you do?" it didn't take long to steer the conversation toward the gospel. It's one of the perks of being a crusader.

As a trained evangelist, I steered our chat to the point where a little green booklet became the focal point of our conversation. "Knowing God Personally" is an adaptation of Bill Bright's "The Four Spiritual Laws" and is a good evangelistic tool for sharing the gospel. I still believe that as much as ever. But what happened that day at the American University changed my thinking about some of the ways we do evangelism.

---

1. Portions of this chapter originally appeared in Randy Newman, "Stop Answering Questions," *Discipleship Journal*, January/February 2002: 24–29. Unless otherwise noted, all scenarios are drawn from actual encounters and many are composites.

I'd been trained and had conducted seminars in how to introduce the booklet, how to progress through the booklet, how to avoid distractions during the booklet, how to bring someone to the point of decision at the end of the booklet, and how to walk him or her through that eternity-changing moment of conversion after concluding the booklet. I could state the advantages of using such a tool (and there are many). I could show the drawbacks of just winging it and not using such a focused tool (and there are many). And I could share stories of how God has used it to lead many people to the Savior.

I read the first point: "God loves you and created you to know Him personally." I don't remember pausing at that point. I don't think I even breathed. But somehow Artyum interrupted.

"What do you mean when you say the word *God*?" he wondered aloud. "And what do you mean when you say the word *love*? And, most importantly, how do you know all this is true?"

It was a difficult moment for me. All of my training had told me to sweep away any and all questions with, "That's a good question. How about we come back to that when I'm done reading the booklet?" That line had worked well many times for me. The inevitable result was that the questions would be forgotten and never brought up again. That's because many questions that are asked early during an evangelistic presentation are not real questions—they're smoke screens. The questioner is trying to avoid the conviction that is sure to come when one confronts the gospel.

So they stop the presentation before it gets uncomfortable with, "Well, we can't really believe the Bible; it's got too many contradictions in it," or "There are so many religions in the world, how can anyone know which one's right?" or a million other pretentious comments that *should* be swept away with the "that's-a-good-question" line.

But Artyum's questions were different. They weren't smoke screens. I know the difference between an honest inquirer and a truth avoider. Artyum's questions were foundational. Could I progress to the second page in the booklet and read, "People are sinful and separated from God," if he was stuck on the words *God* and *love*? What would be in store for us when we hit the word *sin*?

I mentally reviewed the background data that I'd gathered earlier in our chat and connected it to our present discussion. Being from Ukraine, Artyum had been reared in an atheistic, communist world, reading Nietzsche and Marx and thinking deeply about life. He was a history major who loved philosophy and was bothered by the intellectual shallowness displayed by most Americans. He wasn't annoyed by my initiation of evangelism. He genuinely wanted to work through his questions. Unlike me, however, he didn't feel any pressing need to work through the booklet. He did feel, though, a sense of importance about working through real interaction about weighty questions.

What followed was a ninety-minute discussion, revolving around questions that strike at the foundation of faith: "How do we know what we know?," "What do we know for certain?," and "What difference does it all make?" Toward the end of the conversation, I was asking more questions of him than he was of me.

Artyum helped me rethink the task of evangelism. *Questioning Evangelism* is the result of that process. And in all of the examples in this book, Artyum's is the only name that I haven't disguised. Although I refer to real people in real conversations, all other names have been changed. But I've kept Artyum's name, hoping that someday he'll see this book and contact me, telling me that he's come to faith in Christ. He didn't that day on American University's lawn. I lost track of him soon after the weather returned to normal November temperatures.

### Why Are We Frustrated?

I came away from that conversation both excited and frustrated. Communicating at that level of intensity and truth-seeking was invigorating. That level of excitement was relatively new, but the frustration was all too familiar. Another nondecision. People don't as readily "pray the prayer" with me as they do with famous speakers I've heard. Those natural evangelists are always sitting down next to someone and sharing the gospel. And they always lead every person to a salvation decision. (And it's always on an airplane!)

Some people have told me that my lack of evangelistic fruit results

from lack of prayer. I certainly don't pray enough, but I wonder if that's all there is to it. Other people have told me that I don't push hard enough in "closing the sale." I don't know how to respond to that; the gospel isn't a product that we sell. On introspection, I've wondered what I haven't said to work the same magic as so many others.

I've found that I'm not alone in my frustration. In fact, frustration might be the most common emotion that Christians associate with evangelism (followed closely by guilt, confusion, and despair). Our frustration is multifaceted. We're frustrated that our message doesn't yield more decisions, genuine fruit, cultural impact, or advancing of God's kingdom in the way Jesus talked about.

First, we just don't have as many evangelistic conversations as we know we should. The message that has gripped our hearts and forms the centerpiece of our lives remains unspoken, unshared, and unproclaimed. We miss opportunities to tell people what Jesus means to us. Our culture's secularism has silenced us when we should be sharing. We wonder why the topic that is so often on our minds is so seldom on our lips.

Second, most of us don't hold a candle to people who are gifted by God as evangelists. And when we actually do step out in faith and share Christ, not as many people as we'd like bow their heads and pray "the sinner's prayer." So hearing about the successes of a Billy Graham only adds to our frustration. Instead of motivating us to be bold, the success stories discourage us. That's not an excuse, though. Paul told Timothy, who was a timid nonevangelist, to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. 4:5). So we find ourselves clinging to the promise that God forgives even the greatest of sinners—assuming that *sinners* means those who are evangelistic failures—and hoping for a method of evangelism for nonevangelists.

Third, we're frustrated by the lack of lasting fruit. If you've ever "led someone to Christ" and then later found that person totally uninterested in spiritual growth, you know the pain I'm referring to. True, not all the seeds in Jesus's parable landed on good soil. Still, we wonder why some plants spring up and then wither in the sun, or on

the rocky soil, or under the distractions of this world. We wonder why, for all of our evangelistic efforts, the number of people who go to church has decreased dramatically while the number who say that they have no religious faith continues to rise.

Fourth, we're frustrated by our lack of saltiness—that is, cultural impact. If we're supposed to be the “salt of the earth,” a preservative, why is our culture decaying?

These frustrations are realized in an environment of such religious diversity that many of us question some of our basic assumptions about Christian belief. Different religions are not theoretical concepts practiced in other countries; they're embraced by the people next door.

Our local library advertises seminars on yoga, meditation, crystal usage, and the teachings of Mormonism.

The reality of pluralism (the existence of differing points of view) tempts us to consider the assertions of relativism (the validity and truthfulness of all points of view). In our most honest moments, we wonder how we can hold to Jesus's claim that “no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Our frustration and intimidation, then, lead to a condition that borders on evangelistic paralysis, or what one speaker referred to as “spiritual lockjaw.”

### Is There a Better Way to Evangelize?

We can have better results from our evangelizing. Our efforts can produce more fruit, advancing the kingdom further than has been recently achieved. A better way exists, and it looks, sounds, and feels more like Jesus, the rabbi, than like Murray, the used-car salesperson. It involves more listening than speaking, inviting rather than demanding a decision. Perhaps the most important component to this kind of evangelism is answering questions with questions rather than giving answers.

Maybe I think this way—responding to questions with questions—because I'm Jewish. I grew up with dialogues that went like this:

RANDY: How's the weather down there?

GRANNY BELLE: How could the weather be in Florida in the middle of July?

Or

RANDY: So, how have you been?

UNCLE NAT: Why do you ask?

Or

RANDY: How's your family?

AUNT VIVIAN: Compared to whom?

I'd like to think, though, that I answer questions with questions because I'm following the example of Jesus. It's uncanny how often our Lord answered a question with a question.

A rich man asked Jesus, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" That question was a great setup for a clear, concise gospel presentation. I can almost hear a disciple whispering in Jesus's ear, "Take out the booklet." How could Jesus not launch into the most perfect model for every evangelistic training seminar for all time? But how did he respond? He posed a question, "Why do you call me good?" (Mark 10:17-18).

When religious leaders asked Jesus if it was right to pay taxes, Jesus referred to a coin and asked, "Whose image is this?" (Matt. 22:20). When the Pharisees, "looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus," asked Him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" Jesus's response was a question: "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out?" (Matt. 12:10-11).

I once did a study of how Jesus answered every question that was asked of Him in all four Gospels. Answering a question with a question was the norm. A clear, concise, direct answer was a rarity.