



# **Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People**

*Will Metzger*

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## **Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People** Will Metzger

Will Metzger's training manual on the message and methods of God-centered evangelism is now in its third edition! This revised and expanded version of the original guide published in 1981 is written to address the concern that many Christians, entrusted with the gospel message, have forgotten the message and their responsibility to accurately convey it. The recovery of a God-centered and grace-centered gospel is imperative, says Will Metzger. In the third edition of his critically-acclaimed training manual he expands on the topics of grace and worship. And he emphasizes the centrality of sovereign, saving grace that completely exalts God. In addition, he offers a narrative approach to witnessing with the story "Come Home," training materials for Christians who want to learn God-centered evangelism, and a study guide on evangelism suitable for individuals or groups. More than ever, Tell the Truth is ready to serve the church as a comprehensive, accessible and effective guide to God-centered evangelism.

## **Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People Details**

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Author : Will Metzger

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# From Reader Review Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People for online ebook

## Andrew Pendleton says

Favorite book I have read on evangelism. He seeks to equip his readers to be God-exalting in evangelism and to aim to communicate as much Biblical truth as possible with passion, love, and respect in any opportunity. Challenging, insightful, helpful, theologically-driven, and practical. I would highly recommend it to any Christian!

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## Ryan Linkous says

This is a pretty good book on evangelism that covers many practical areas, especially for someone interested in evangelism or an evangelism teacher. Metzger writes from the Reformed tradition about practical methods used in evangelism. I think this would be a good book to give to church members who inquire about evangelism resources because he works from a solid foundation, writes well, and does not get overly technical. He uses illustrations often.

I think my main area of pushback against Metzger is his utilization of truth like it is a steroid booster. He would say the answer to the deficiencies in modern evangelism boil down to the lack of truth. While truth is important, I believe that experience is valid. Giving an unbeliever a dose of truth, even if done in a loving way, is only one part of evangelism. I want to say: Yes, orthopraxy flows from orthodoxy, but proper doctrine is not the panacea to sin in our lives. The struggle against sin is real, even if one has proper doctrine.

Also, a few times, Metzler takes some lows blows against Arminians. He equate them with Pelagians with regard to the will (vs. Augustine) and also takes a potshot at "methodism."

However, it's still a useful resources and the appendices are a good place to begin practicing the pragmatic side of evangelism.

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## Paul says

Here are some of the quotes I enjoyed from the book:

- 1) "To remain silent and let others interpret our actions is wrong: God himself did not do this. The pivotal points of God's redemptive action in history are accompanied with verbal revelation... We must speak even when it is inconvenient... God didn't send a tract; he prepared a body" (Will Metzger, Tell the Truth, 25).
- 2) "Theology is foundational and will (consciously or unconsciously) mold our methods of witness" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 38).
- 3) "Anyone who makes the gospel sophisticated and abstract is not making a New Testament proclamation but is trusting in human understanding and his own wisdom (1 Cor 2:4-5)" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 56).

- 4) It is essential that people measure themselves by God's requirements (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 61).
- 5) "Very few gospel outlines sufficiently emphasize God's law, and this means God's grace loses its sweet flavor" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 61).
- 6) "Misdiagnosis of our real disease is spiritual malpractice" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 64).
- 7) If we turn evangelistic outlines into a formula, we depersonalize those we encounter (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 64).
- 8) "Good evangelists are doctors who use the surgical knife of the law summarized in the Ten Commandments and elaborated in the Sermon on the Mount to expose the sinful character of sin" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 66).
- 9) "In studying Acts we discover that the evangelists brought out certain gospel truths again and again. Their witness was also versatile. They were aware of unbelievers as individuals in unique situations. Yet, there was a basic grid or 'pattern of sound words' that proved a useful springboard for the memories of evangelists. It kept them on the track. They turned again and again to the pivotal points of the gospel. It was not, however, a straitjacket, inhibiting any creativity on their part" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 83).
- 10) "We must forsake any kind of evangelism that either overly exalts the mind or unduly neglects it" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 98).
- 11) "The particular evangelical subculture in which we have been converted will often set the pattern for much of our subsequent growth, attitudes and view of spirituality" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 100).
- 12) "Emotions have a valid place in our lives, but they are not to lead our lives" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 101).
- 13) "We should not consider... sovereignty and responsibility as enemies but rather see them the way the Bible does—as friends!" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 109).
- 14) "A scriptural emphasis on divine sovereignty and human responsibility should be at the heart of a right view of the human will and a recovery of fervent evangelism today" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 109).
- 15) "An experience of worship mobilizes us to witness" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 150).
- 16) "God, by nature, is a seeker of the lost" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 151).
- 17) "Worship emboldens Christians for worship" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 156-57).
- 18) "Theological conviction inspires and sustains evangelistic zeal" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 157).
- 19) "If we are waiting for that inner urge before we tell someone the gospel, it will probably never come. Our feelings were not meant to determine our actions. God calls us to obedience, not waiting for feeling" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 176).
- 20) Metzger quotes J.I. Packer: "All true evangelism is theology in action" (Metzger, Tell the Truth, 202).

21) Metzger quotes Philip Graham Ryken from his book *Is Jesus the Only Way?*:

“On the one hand, Christianity is the most exclusive religion imaginable. It insists that belief in Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary for salvation. Jesus is the only way. You must go to Him to get eternal life. On the other hand, Christianity is the most inclusive religion possible because it makes salvation accessible to everyone. Salvation is offered for all people through one person. Whosoever believes in Him will not perish. Anyone who receives or believes in Jesus will live forever with God. There are no racial, social, intellectual, or economic criteria that prevent anyone from joining God’s family” (Metzger, *Tell the Truth*, 164).

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### **L. R. Bouligny Bouligny says**

I am always encouraged by the courage of others, and I enjoy reading accounts of different people’s experiences while carrying out this Christian duty. His accounts in this last section, subtitled, “Character and Communication in Witnessing,” certainly supplied what I was seeking in personal experience. I have to confess however, that I disagree with much of what he offers in this book. While I did find some of his charts and explanations concerning different levels of personal conversation, and how to gradually get to the heart of the issue, I found his techniques of using questions with already prepared answers very pedestrian and uninspiring. Having worked in counter-cult ministry for several years, I am familiar with all of the techniques used by the Jehovah’s Witnesses to “sell” their magazine and religion door to door. Their in-house book that supplies them with this type of question and answer dialogue is called *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, and it contains an appendix which teaches the cult member how to dialogue. It says, “If someone asks ‘Are you born again?’, respond by saying, ‘That is a good question. Many people believe that being born again is....’” I think this type of question and answer dialogue that Metzger offers reduces the work of the Holy Spirit and replaces it with a rote, memorized response. I appreciate his distinctions when it comes to man-centered witnessing and God-centered witnessing, but overall I thought many of his ideas lacked dependence on God.

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### **Nate Weis says**

My favorite book on evangelism.

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### **Mark says**

It is not easy to write a compelling book on evangelism while still upholding the complete sovereignty of God. Since the activity of sharing the gospel is such an outward-focused, human-activity-centered action, evangelism is often written about in a works-based way. To make matters worse, whenever God’s sovereignty is brought up, a common counter-argument against this doctrine is: “If God is completely sovereign, then why evangelize?” Both of these points are wrong, however. Evangelism, when seen in a biblical light, is not a man-centered activity. It is a gospel-centered, God-initiated activity that upholds the complete sovereignty of God in marvelous ways. Take Acts 13:48, for example: “... and as many who were appointed to eternal life believed.” The reason people fail to evangelize is not that they believe in the complete sovereignty of God; the reason people fail to evangelize is because they do not uphold the

sovereignty of God enough! They have believed that the responsibility of the task of evangelism falls solely on them, they have tried to evangelize in the efforts of their own flesh. They have failed and they have become discouraged. Therefore they no longer share the gospel.

Will Metzger's book *Tell the Truth* counteracts this wrong way of thinking. Metzger passionately upholds the sovereignty of God and uses that doctrine to show how, through God's strength and initiative, believers can enter into God's work of evangelism. Metzger says, "There is hope, encouragement and liberation to be found when evangelism is built on a God-centered gospel. The doorway into a hopeful and joyful witness is found by focusing on God as Creator and Redeemer" (22). Oftentimes books of evangelism will focus more on the author's success stories than the glory of God, portraying what Metzger calls "me-centered" gospel content (36). The gospel is about what happens to me and when I pick myself up by my own moral bootstraps and evangelize and here are ten of my success stories for what happened when I evangelize. Metzger shares all this not to simply put down the Armenians. He says this because those who are converted under a "me-centered" gospel will begin to live "me-centered" Christian lives, which is really no kind of Christian life at all.

Another way that Metzger's appeal for evangelism is both helpful and biblical is that he steers clear from the "lifestyle evangelism" approach. The Bible clearly says that the only way the gospel can be internalized is if it is heard (Romans 10:14). Metzger carefully and Biblically builds his case for sharing the gospel with words, not just with a lifestyle. He continues: "We must speak even when it is inconvenient. God is bigger than our sins, our ignorance, our pride. He will honor his word in our mouths" (25). The gospel message really must come out of our mouths if people are to be saved, and we really must speak it, even when it is inconvenient. Yet God is sovereign in it all, and he will use weak and broken vessels to bring salvation to the lost.

The first part of the book covers the sovereignty of God in evangelism in an excellent way—but it is very general. The second part of the book moves to very specific situations and covers the ins and outs of the everyday challenge of evangelism. The front cover of the book describes it as "a training manual on the message and methods of God-centered witnessing." This second part is so helpful because after laying the groundwork for why God-centered witnessing is the Biblical method, the individual believer still needs to be informed and equipped in how to actually go about witnessing in a God-centered way. Metzger provides numerous examples, suggestions and scenarios for how to practice God-centered evangelism. This is an extremely helpful way for even a new believer to begin witnessing in his sphere of influence.

Even though large portions of the book are very practical, Metzger does not lose sight of the bigger picture. After providing numerous practical examples, he says, "God-centered evangelism is a way of life. It does not advocate a method but encourages a knowledge of people and how to apply a macrogospel to the conscience and heart" (205). This is not "lifestyle evangelism" where a believer simply lives a so-called "godly" life before unbelievers, hoping that their mere lifestyle will be compelling enough to draw the lost to Christ. It is "a way of life," meaning that people who are made whole by the gospel are now speaking the true gospel to the lost, and the lost are receiving it. Metzger goes on: "Witness should be natural, educational and bold. It is something we are, not just something we do. 'Personal witnessing' is the phrase that best describes the evangelistic life to which all of us are called. Will you tell the truth?" (205).

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## **Jacob Stevens says**

This wasn't the easiest book to read, but I was good. It is essentially a training manual for evangelizing. Metzger's premise is that we take the Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People. Some of the resources that are included at the end of ed. 3 are a gold mine. I would recommend this book to those looking to have a more holistic view of what sharing their faith can look like.

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## **Jim says**

This is possibly the best book on Evangelism I have read.

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## **Mark A Powell says**

Terrific resource that gives fresh life to evangelism. Less a methodology and more an examination of proper motivations and goals.

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## **Cole Brandon says**

Contributes nothing new to the conversation. The advocated methods are outdated. Perhaps it was needed and effective during its first publishing in the 80s, but it is no longer. Also, the allegory at the beginning is just weird.

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## **Volkert says**

Recommend to me by friends, including Ben Patterson, the main speaker at our church family camp in 1982. This book promotes "God centered evangelism," exposing the faults of the all too prominent "man centered evangelism." Excellent book, good theology, but not for the "new Christian." Food for thought and action.

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## **Brian says**

Tell the Truth is an excellent guide to God-centered evangelism, set out in four parts. Part one, "The Whole Gospel," defines the "content of our message." Part two, "To the Whole Person" focuses on "conversion of the total person." Part three, "Wholly by Grace," shows how God's gracious work in Christ is the "foundation for evangelism." And part four, "Offered by Whole People," discusses "character and communication in witnessing."

One of the strength's of Metzger's book is it's clarity on the gospel and it's contrast between God-centered and Me-centered evangelism. Here's a summary of the contrasts in regard to each one's views on God, humanity, Christ, and response to Christ. The language and wording of this summary is largely taken from Metzger, although somewhat paraphrased by me.

### View of God

The point of contact with unbelievers for Me-centered evangelism is love ("God loves you") or friendship (Jesus wants to be your friend). But God's ownership and sovereignty are blunted. In God-centered evangelism, the point of contact is creation (God made you). God's ownership rights as creator are

emphasized, as well as his love and grace. Justice and love are seen as equally important attributes of God. In Me-centered evangelism, God is impotent before the sinner's will. In God-centered evangelism, God is able to change and empower the sinner's will. The message is not "God is a friend who will help you," but "God is a king who will save you."

#### View of Humanity

In Me-centered evangelism, man is seen as fallen, yet with the ability or potential to choose what is good and to choose God. The sinner is one who seeks the truth, but lacks information. He needs love, friendship, and a new life. He makes mistakes and is imperfect, and needs forgiveness for specific sins. He needs salvation from the consequences of sin - unhappiness and hell. In God-centered evangelism, man is seen as fallen and unable to come to God by his own will-power. His mind is at enmity with God, and he does not seek after God. He needs a new nature (regeneration), not just information. He needs salvation from both the guilt of sin and the enslaving power of sin in his life. In Me-centered evangelism, man is seen as sick and ignorant. In God-centered evangelism, man is seen as dead and lost.

#### View of Christ

Me-centered evangelism views Christ as a Savior from failures, from sin, and from hell. He exists for man's benefit. The emphasis is on Christ's role as priest. God-centered evangelism emphasizes Christ's role as priest also, but also his kingly and prophetic roles. Jesus is viewed as Savior and Lord. His death is emphasized, but also is law-fulfilling life. In Me-centered evangelism, an attitude of submission to Christ's lordship is optional for salvation. In God-centered evangelism, submission is essential.

#### View of Response to Christ

Me-centered evangelism offers an invitation to be accepted. God-centered evangelism gives a command to be obeyed. In Me-centered evangelism, man's choice is the determining basis of salvation. God responds to our decision. Appeals are made to the desires of the sinner to escape hell. The sinner is saved by faith - repentance is not emphasized, and is thought of as "works." Assurance of salvation comes from a counselor using the promises of God and pronouncing the new believer as "saved." In God-centered evangelism, God's choice is the determining basis of salvation. We respond to God's initiative and grace from the whole person (mind, heart, and will). Truth is driven home into the conscience of the sinner. Man is saved by faith alone, but saving faith is always accompanied with repentance. Assurance of salvation comes from the Holy Spirit applying biblical promises to the conscience and effecting a changed life. In Me-centered evangelism, the sinner holds the key in his hands. In God-centered evangelism, God has the key in his hand.

Now, Metzger acknowledges that for most of us, our evangelism falls somewhere between these two positions. Most of us are not so extremely Me-centered as this contrast might indicate. I would even argue that many Arminians are not necessarily Me-centered in their approach (consider John Wesley or C. S. Lewis). Nevertheless, this Me-centeredness is latent in much of our witnessing, and Metzger has done us a favor by clarifying the God-centered content of the gospel.

This book is helpful in many ways, including much practical advice for personal witnessing and giving realistic expectations for it. I found the book encouraging. If you want to be a more effective witness for Jesus and the gospel, you should consider reading it.

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## **Nate H says**

### **Best book on evangelism out there**

He lays a thorough theological foundation and then he gives some ways go go about sharing the gospel. It's uniquely theological and very practical. Highly recommended

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## **mpsiple says**

Pretty good / not bad. Some helpful thoughts on keeping the main thing the main thing. But \*lots\* of filler.

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## **Josh says**

A very helpful book urging a God centered evangelism theology and method.

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