

1 Peter 3:15 "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."

COVER STORY

Equipped to share



Artizo

In this issue:

Equipped to share: preparing to share

Anson Ann's: 4 ways to allow God to work

Kira's Auger: 3 "P's" of evangelism

David Short: 3 key ways to prepare

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Equipped to share

An interview with Anson Ann

Evangelism to me often comes through relationships, whether they are of friends, families or newcomers to church. I believe opportunities to spread the gospel are always God-given, because most of the time I find myself falling into a specific role, in a specific time and place, where I recognize I have an urge to share the truth or to clarify some common misunderstandings about the Christian faith to the person sitting next to me. Sometimes my friends take me by surprise when they start talking about religion in the middle of a casual dinner. Therefore, the first thing that I do to prepare myself for evangelism is to be constantly aware of the situation I am in, quickly recognize the role that God has put me into, and be ready to respond with a humble and gentle heart (1 Peter 3:15).

Secondly, I usually start listening carefully to what people have to say, because what the non-believers are asking is often filled with clues of what God wants me to do or respond. By listening carefully, I often hear their real concerns or their outcries hidden behind their questions. If I wait patiently enough and let them describe their questions clearly, I'll usually start to see their questions unravel, and slowly getting to their real concerns. So listening with patience is important.

I also believe conversions happen according to God's timetable. Unless it is a life and death situation, there is no need to answer all the questions in one single occasion. Therefore I usually keep a good relationship, and try to setup regular meetings to discuss the matter further. In doing

so, I get a chance to go back home and start praying for that person every night. I believe prayer is very important since it first demonstrates our reliance on God to change a person's heart, not by our own words. Also in the process we ourselves become more patient and more loving for to person, as God prepares us for the next meeting to share about our faith.

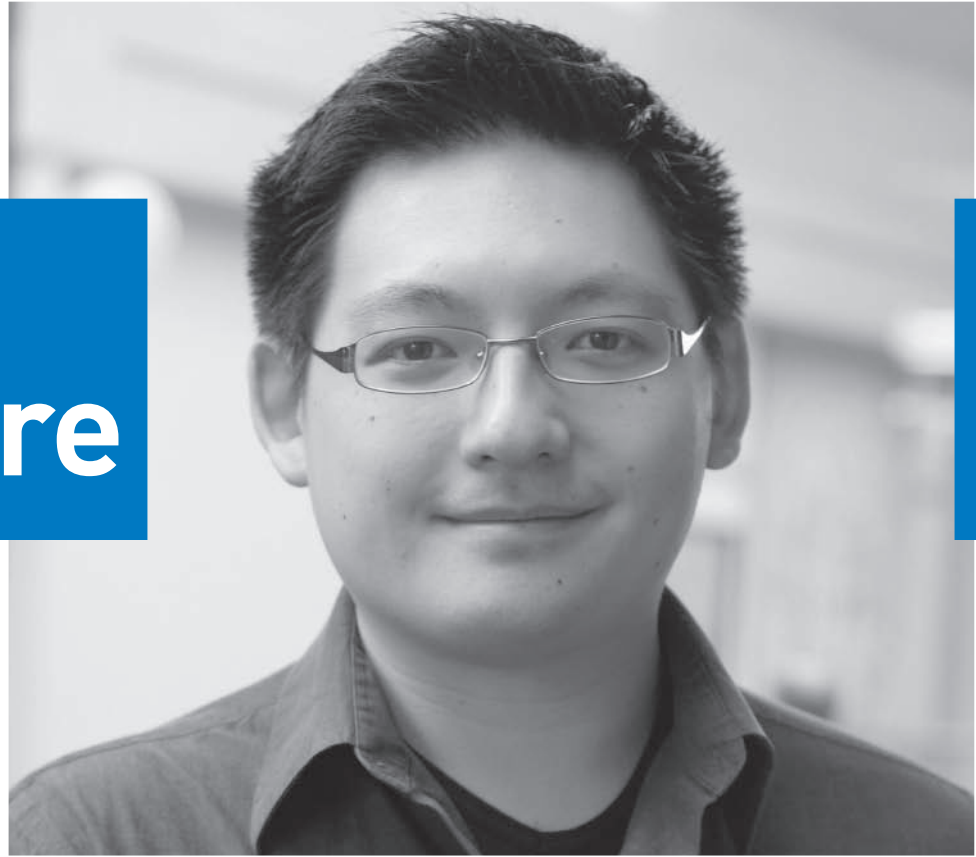
Another way of preparing myself for evangelism is to talk to my wife, since she is my other half. It is always good to see things from a woman's perspective, because they are often more sensitive to other people's feelings and the little gestures which I may not notice at all. I have to admit my wife has a higher EQ (emotional intelligence) than I do, and I rely on her spiritual discernment and her independent confirmation from God as to whether my evangelism is done appropriately and on the right track.

Besides praying and seeking support from someone close to me, evangelism of course cannot be done without God's words. I always bring my Bible and in preparation, memorize some key Bible verses. I have found that somehow just by reciting God's words bring comfort and conviction. For those in distress, I usually use Psalm 23. For those that need to see hope, Revelation 21:1-4. For those that need to hear a clear gospel message, John 3:16-21. They usually feel "cut to the heart" after listening to that Bible verse. Therefore, I do believe

that God speaks directly to people's hearts through His powerful words.

As I do all of this work for God's kingdom, having support from fellow workers is also essential. I just joined the Artizo program this past September and have found it incredibly helpful to my own spiritual formation and as a source of prayer support. On one hand, I receive personal mentorship from my trainer, in which he guides me through the theological foundations to make sure that I understand the gospel correctly and clearly. On the other hand, I meet with other Artizo trainees every week to share about our ministries and pray for each other. Not only do they pray for me as a worker in Christ personally, but they do also extend their prayers towards those whom I am ministering to, praying for each one of them by name. That gives me much encouragement and support because I know the struggles that I encounter in evangelism are not only my own concerns, but I do have fellow brothers and sisters that care very much and deeply for the same work that I am doing. As we pray for each other, the Holy Spirit works in and through us towards the very same goal, which is to bring people closer to Christ and ultimately give glory to God. So for those who want to do evangelism more effectively, I encourage you to come and join us at Artizo – it will benefit you and the way you do evangelism. ■

Anson Ann is a 1st year Artizo intern



An interview with David Short

In my private life, I seek to have opportunities to share the gospel with people—some I meet in different contexts and with our neighbors. There are three pieces in my mind and heart when I think about how I prepare for this kind of meeting. The first is the text in 1 Peter 3 that speaks about always being prepared to give an account for the faith, to make a defense for the gospel when you are called to give an account, but also with care for the person and reverence for Christ in our hearts. I take that to mean we should be equipped and understand the gospel well enough ourselves to be able to share it with people in a variety of different contexts. The casual conversation with someone you are sitting beside on a plane is different than the person who comes to talk about a crisis, but in all those contexts it is crucial of us as followers of Christ to be ready and able to speak the gospel with authenticity. So I prepare in terms of the content and structure of the gospel. What is the gospel? Is it a vague statement about the love of God or is the gospel about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for our sins? Thus, the first part of preparation is understanding the content of the Gospel.

The second part is being personally ready at any moment and that readiness really comes from praying. I find in my own life if I'm praying for opportunities to share the gospel they come up, but if I'm not praying they don't seem to come up and I have often felt at the end of a conversation how badly I have missed an opportunity to share the gospel about Christ. It's usually 24 hours later that I realize what I should have said and how I should have said it.

on-going deepening understanding of the gospel is the one thing that holds me motivates me

I think the third thing is the ongoing fellowship of other Christians to help make us 'hot' and set our hearts on fire for the joy of evangelism. Personally, I always find sharing the faith very scary. Its harder, much harder, to share the gospel one to one than it is for me to preach the gospel to a hundred or a thousand people and so the fellowship of like minded Christians I find encourages me and shames me into recognizing what a treasure we have and how important it is to share the gospel one to one.

The thing that wraps the whole package together for me is a growing understanding of the gospel itself. It's interesting to me that the apostles and Jesus hardly ever urge us or command us or entreat us to do the work of evangelism. There is very little about that in the New Testament. It used to puzzle me, but I think that when you come to see the gospel properly, it so grips you that you can be transparent with it to other people. I find that the ongoing deepening understanding of the gospel is the one thing that holds me and motivates me to move forward in this task. That is why the Artizo internships are so valuable because the interns are not just hearing the gospel they

are immersed in ministry. There is nothing more exciting than seeing God at work through his gospel.

There are a variety of different motivations for doing the work of evangelism. There is obedience to the call of Christ to make disciples, there is love for people and the desire to see them saved, but I think above all else is the motivation you see Paul show in Acts 17. He comes to Athens, looks around the city, sees all the idols and is seized by a paroxysm because God is not glorified. It is not that these people are pagans and being led astray - though that is part of it- but he has a deep and profound ache that God be glorified. That all the honor and glory paid to these pagan idols, that all the lives that are being wasted and frittered away are all in the end due to God alone. That motivation for the gospel only comes as we are gripped more deeply and fully by what the gospel is all about. That is why our training in Artizo is single-minded focused on what God has done for us in Christ. ■



An interview with Kira Auger

I came to Christ because I was invited to church. It may sound strange to say this, but growing up not believing in Jesus as Lord and Saviour actually helps motivate me when it comes to evangelism. When, by God's grace, I came to know the immense comfort and hope of the Gospel and accepted Christ's sacrifice for me, it was a gift I wanted to share. Paul was right when he wrote "Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men."

That being said, most of us, myself included, aren't natural evangelists. Most of us feel uncomfortable and unqualified. The Artizo program, with its faithful teaching and prayer time, has helped equip me to better share the Gospel. Through the weekly meetings,

the comprehensive reading list and the many opportunities to practice, Artizo encourages both competence and confidence in its interns.

My guided studies in Artizo have shown me that we are all called to evangelize. I'm grateful to those Christians who were willing to share the news of what Christ has done for me. So, when I see people around me suffering the spiritual separation from God that I once knew, I pray for opportunities, I practice and I persevere. I still don't feel qualified, but I'm convinced that God can work through me, especially when I don't let my excuses get in the way. ■

Kira Auger is a 2nd year Artizo intern

MEET THE INTERNS:



Ben Vanderheide



Jim Salladin



Ed Neundorf



David Robinson



Anson Ann



David Gifford



Jeremy Grahm



Ger Jones



Kira Auger



James Wittenberg

Kira's 4 "P's" of evangelism

- 1: Praying for opportunities.** I ask God for to ready the hearts of people I will meet, and to also get people to start the conversation with me.
- 2: Practice.** By practicing what I will say, I am ready to get to the point better and say the appropriate things.
- 3: Persevere.** I don't let my excuses get in the way, and I keep doing it.

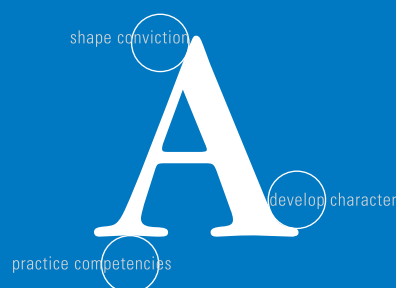
Anson's 4 ways to allow God to work

- 1: Be prepared.** Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.
- 2: Patient listening.** If I wait patiently enough and let them describe their questions in clarity, I will get to understand their real concerns and hear the clues of how God wants me to respond.
- 3: Becoming a keeper.** It's better to build a relationship overtime where I can keep praying for this person.
- 4: Powerful words.** I always bring my Bible and memorize key Bible verses in advance.

David Short's 3 ways to prepare

- 1: Personal readiness.** We are meant to understand the gospel well enough ourselves so that we can share in a variety of context, when God gives us the opportunity.
- 2: Encouraging one another.** Set our hearts on fire for evangelism through spending time with other Christians.
- 4: Deepening our understanding.** Spend more quality time with God and study His word, so that we can't help but sharing it out of excitement rather than a sense of duty.

The Artizo Institute trains able, faithful, innovative and confident gospel ministers to know and understand the Bible, lead effectively, proclaim the gospel, and be able to train others to do the same. Artizo prepares young leaders for full-time ministry by allowing them to serve the body of Christ in their local church with experienced gospel ministers as mentors.



Artizo

ARTIZO INSTITUTE

1490 Nanton Avenue

Vancouver, BC

Canada, V6H 2E2

p: 1 604 731 4966 ext 21

f: 1 604 731 4903

e: info@artizo.org

www.artizo.org