

Special Interest Evangelism

By: Jim Darnell

Old typical methods of evangelism are not very effective in 21st century America. Gone are the days when you could nail a sign on a telephone post saying "Revival Nightly" and draw a crowd. These are days that call for creative ways to reach people with the gospel.

One of the most effective methods of outreach is special interest evangelism. Simply meaning you start with what people are passionate about. It may be golf, fishing, horseback riding, gardening, scrap booking, antique shopping, tennis, scuba or whatever. Go into their "world" and share the gospel.

My wife, Beth, and I have done this for years in the outdoor world. There is a huge world of outdoorsmen – fishermen, hunters, campers, etc. that rarely darken the door of a church building. But they will attend events that are outdoor oriented.

We do several "Sportsmen Banquets" each year across the nation. A church usually buys a shotgun as the grand prize, serves a wild game dinner, decorates the room with animal trophies and outdoor gear and brings in a special "inspirational" speaker. Lots of door prizes and outdoor related skits add to the fun. It's a natural for Christian outdoorsmen to bring their hunting and fishing buddies. The evangelism is not hard core. I tell lots of hunting and fishing stories and then bring in the good news of the Creator – Redeemer.

Churches that make their sportsmen banquet an annual event can build on the previous year.

Pastor Danny Tice and Bayshore Church in Delaware began their banquet back about 1993 and now have over 1200 (2 nights and a matinee) sportsmen attending. It has become one of their premier events on the church calendar.

Usually it is best to start your outreach in a neutral building. The unchurched don't like to come to a church building. After they come to trust you the event can be moved to the church fellowship hall.

Continuing outreach can be done by sportsmen small groups in the church. Regular meetings built around skeet shooting, father-kids campouts, fishing trips, etc. make it easy to involve outsiders who are passionate about these kinds of things.

I have a fishing club in our town. It's called the San Marcos Friendship Fishing Club. Many who attend are unbelievers. We are having good influence on their lives. We teach fishing skills at our monthly meeting and promote a fishing event several times a year. Friendships are forming and lives are being touched.

This kind of outreach is not limited to the outdoors. Start a golf group in your church. Golfing skills taught by good golfers will draw people. Do devotionals relating golfing techniques to life. Sponsor a local tournament. Do annual an outreach golf banquet and invite a Christian golf pro as the main speaker. The sky is the limit in this kind of outreach.

Many women love to antique shop. Start an antiquing group. Take a monthly antique expedition to a neighboring town. Have lunch together as you "hit the shops". It's so easy to invite unbelievers who love to antique shop to join you.

The Holy Spirit is the most creative person in the universe. He lives in us. Ask Him to release his creativity in you. We can reach people with the gospel in 21st century America. But we must be creative.

For an instructional sheet on how to conduct a sportsman's banquet please contact Jim Darnell at [**ggodarnell@EV1.net**](mailto:ggodarnell@EV1.net)