

# New Roots Review

December 2017 Edition

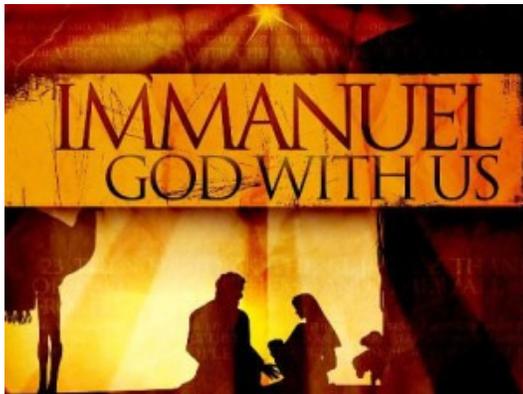


**NEW ROOTS  
MINISTRY**

## “Go, Tell It on the Mountain...” by Fred Wilgenburg

Lately I have noticed that, compared to some of my friends and colleagues, I am more passive in evangelism, at least in verbally sharing the Gospel, than they are. I wonder why? How about you?

For me, here are some potentially good reasons: 1) I want to be patient, knowing that seeds can be sown in



various ways, they can be watered in other ways (which can be considered evangelism), and God, at His perfect time and will, makes the seeds to grow (1 Corinthians 3:6). 2) Humm....I can't think of another good reason.

Here are my reasonable reasons: 1) I am thoughtful in approaching people and situations. Therefore, I strategize, I consider the setting, and I consider the person—their present religion and spirituality, and their present life situation. 2) I am careful as I might not know the person well. Perhaps the Holy

Spirit has been working on their spirit through another believer, including about considering a personal relationship with Jesus. They don't need me entering the picture and possibly burning fragile bridges of communication of the Gospel which have been built. 3) This isn't necessarily the case for me, but I have heard others describe how they don't share their faith verbally, but rather through acts of kindness or by bringing people to church events. 4) Humm....I can't think of another reasonable reason.

Here are some of my poor reasons: 1) Along with being thoughtful comes shyness, and even some embarrassment of my faith, if I know I am not among fellow believers. This feeling, which I strongly dislike, comes especially if I am among very secular people. 2) I believe I am spiritually-gifted as well as equipped for verbal evangelism, but I have heard others say they are not, and as well, they are not trained as pastors or missionaries. Well, it helps to be spiritually-gifted in the way of conversing, but a lack of this gift is not reason to neglect Jesus' great commission (Matthew 28:18-20). And, if you have been sitting in a church pew for many years, I think you are quite educated by now in sharing the Gospel. 3) The three “reasonable reasons” in the above paragraph might actually be poor reasons. As children of God, we are filled with the Holy Spirit (John 16:5-16, Acts 1:8) to be His witnesses, His



mouthpieces. When the Holy Spirit then grows His fruits (Galations 5:22) in us, quite naturally our conversing should become kind and gentle, with an interest in listening well. Then, as we pray that God is in our conversations, often it will be natural and (—>)

**Clarification after the last newsletter:** A reader expressed concern over my description of my friend who is a Jehovah's Witness, as my “brother in Christ.” My friend believes he is solely and completely saved from his sins by the death and resurrection of God's divine Son, Jesus, as described in the Bible. While I believe my friend has important theological misunderstandings, which we continue to discuss, and personally I have experienced that some verses in JW(s)' bibles are changed from the original, based on his profession of faith, I accept him as my brother in Christ. The reader felt I was implying that all JW(s) are Christians. I did not intend to imply that, nor do I believe that. Also, the reader was concerned that through my critique of what I believe is “less or weaker Christian education in (many) churches (today),” I was seeking to lift the spiritual status of my friend. That's a good point that I will further consider as I don't believe it would be appropriate to do that. **I apologize as that part of my newsletter was confusing and concerning to some.**

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*Ernesto, Gadisa, and Rogelio in Timothy Leadership Training. Plans are to place Ernesto as a bi-lingual chaplain on a commercial dairy farm for 3-4 hours/week, beginning in Feb., with more chaplains to follow.*

**Thank-you for the gifts that have been given in memory of my dad!**

My dad, Ed Wilgenburg, passed away a few weeks ago. In relation to my article—"Go, Tell It on the Mountain," besides many other things, I admire my dad for being a Gideon. He was a busy man, but still, for many years he went to local public schools to give pocket Bibles to children. In that unique setting, my dad was God's effective mouthpiece of the Gospel. "Thanks for being a solid example for me, Dad!"

## Continued...

appropriate to have the Gospel in the conversation. **I admit, that is Truth that I don't always live by, therefore these kinds of conversations can feel unnatural, and I become apprehensive of them.** And, when people seek to justify that they don't verbally share the Gospel because they share by actions, I understand that their actions of kindness are often very good, and effective. But honestly, are they not verbally sharing because they are embarrassed?

Ernesto is in Timothy Leadership Training ([www.TLTi.org](http://www.TLTi.org)) through New Roots Ministry. He is originally from El Salvador and we are training him to become a bi-lingual workplace chaplain. Here's an example of why I admire Ernesto as an evangelist: On the side from his regular job, he is a Spanish translator. He recently went to the hospital to translate for a man who was very ill and being asked to fill out a living will, in case he died. Following the interaction about the living will, Ernesto gently acknowledged the seriousness of the man's condition, and he went on to ask the man if he had personal peace with God, and assurance of going to Heaven when he died. In tears, the man acknowledged he did not really understand this. Ernesto asked him if he could have just a few minutes to share about this. The man accepted; he then received Jesus as Savior, and he received assurance that now not even his death could separate him from God's love (Romans 8:37-39).

This was not challenging for Ernesto who is personally aware of the gift he has received—God's amazing, unconditional love—and he is aware of the awesome opportunity, as well as the Holy Spirit-empowerment, to share about this gift.

Gadisa is also in Timothy Leadership Training. He is originally ethnically Oromo, from Ethiopia, and he has told me that many of the Oromo people who live in Sioux Falls are Muslim, but open to talking about faith. At a coffee gathering with Oromo



*It was a joy worshipping with Little Stone Church, a Nepalese/Bhutanese congregation in Sioux Falls. This growing congregation of about 75 people expresses such joy in worship! Most of them are formerly Hindu.*

friends, Gadisa met a Muslim man who had many struggles and anxiety. Gadisa gently asked this man about his Muslim understanding of Jesus. As the man described a confused view, Gadisa asked him if he could share about Jesus, based on the Bible. This man ultimately received Jesus as his Savior.

No matter our reasons for holding back from verbally sharing the Gospel, let's not. Jesus is the most wonderful Christmas gift, for us within our churches and homes, but also for every person! As He unselfishly shared with us, let us share about Him with others. "Go, tell it on the mountain,...That Jesus Christ is born!"