

Liberty Theological Seminary

Book Critique: Share Jesus Without Fear

A Paper
Submitted to Dr. David Wheeler
In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Course
Contemporary Evangelism
EVAN 525

By
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Bibliographical Entry

Fay, William, and Linda Evans Shepherd. *Share Jesus Without Fear*. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999.

Author Information

William Fay was the CEO of a large company and the owner of one of the nation's largest brothels before becoming a Christian. Since turning to faith, he graduated from Denver Seminary in 1987. He has witnessed to over 25,000 individuals over the years, has created a number of resources and seminars based on *Share Jesus Without Fear*, and has a radio program called *Let's Go With Bill Fay*.

Linda Evans Shepherd is an experienced author, with close to thirty books written. She has won multiple awards, including the 2012 and 2013 Selah Award. She is a nationally known speaker, the founder and leader of *Advanced Writers and Speakers Association*, the President of the non-profit ministry *Right to the Heart*, as well as oversees *Finding God Daily*, an online devotional, and *Thinking About Suicide*, a ministry for the hurting.

Content Summary

Share Jesus Without Fear, by William Fay and Linda Evans Shepherd, attempts to cover all aspects of the witnessing process, including understanding the need to share faith, a proven method of communicating the gospel message to those who are not believers, how to respond to potential questions and pushback, as well as next steps for those who do respond to the gospel message.

The authors suggest that some of the signs of a dying Christian life include not sharing

faith, only having Christian friends, and avoiding those who are lost.¹ This is a serious issue in that only five to ten percent of believers have shared their faith in the typical year.² Ultimately, the great commission is a mandate for all believers, not something that can be simply left for others to do.

One of the critical revelations in the book regarding the importance of relational evangelism is the reality that only 17% of new conversions come through event based outreaches; 75-90% of new believers come to faith because a friend shared the good news with them.³ It is hard for the reader to ignore the question that begs; if only 5-10% of believers sharing their faith result in 75-90% of new conversions, what would the church look like today if the majority of believers actually lived out Christ's command to reach the world for Him?

After introducing the need, the authors then move on to qualify the believer's responsibility. Throughout the book, and especially in the beginning, it is made clear that it is God's responsibility to save the lost. The believer's only job in this area is to share the good news and leave the results between God and the hearer. In other words, as long as a believer shares their faith, there is no failure regardless of the outcome. It was powerfully stated, "Even if you share stupidly, unlovingly, or with poor timing, our heavenly Father can use it. What He can't use is your silence."

The authors also frequently remind the reader that the average person needs to hear the gospel 7.6 times before accepting Christ.⁴ This becomes a critical part of the encouragement the authors share in that sharing faith and not seeing a conversion is not a failure, not only because it

¹ Fay, William, and Linda Evans Shepherd, *Share Jesus Without Fear*, (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999), 6.

² *Ibid.*, 5.

is God's role to save, but also in that the believer sharing their faith may be the first, third, or sixth step in that journey towards hearing the message enough times for it to fully resonate with the listener and result in a profession of faith.

Over the years, William Fay has developed a particular method for witnessing which is the basis for this book. In short, he provides a variety of “conversation joggers”⁵, or tools for steering a conversation to matters of faith. Essentially, these joggers primary purpose is to direct the conversation to five progressing questions that culminate in a call to faith.⁶ These questions are:

1. Do you have any kind of spiritual beliefs?
2. To you, who is Jesus Christ?
3. Do you think there is a heaven or hell?
4. If you died, where would you go? If heaven, why?
5. If what you are believing is not true, would you want to know?

The following chapters and discussion in the book demonstrates how to effectively use these questions. The authors also provide seven critical “share scriptures” they use to allow the Bible to speak to the listener.⁷ These scriptures lay out the need for a Savior, as well as the process for inviting Him into one's life. There are also “commitment questions” which can be used to help guide the listener to a faith decision.⁸ Additionally, the authors provide answers to common objections that can be used in sharing faith. Throughout the book are incredible stories of sharing Jesus that result in conversions; it is hard to not be inspired reading them!

Evaluation

There is no mistaking the authors' purpose in writing this book; they want to see every believer equipped and living out the great commission, reaching the lost of the world for Christ.

³ Ibid., 11.

⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁶ Ibid., 32.

⁷ Ibid., 44.

⁸ Ibid., 61.

The book is a powerful call to action with the use of scripture and clear identification of the believer's responsibility. The book stays focused on this theme throughout, and concludes with a variety of resources in the back, making it both compelling to read and useful for practical application.

Without a doubt, the main theme of the book; that believers are required to share their faith, is convincing. However, it is not communicated in a way that is overwhelming or intimidating.

By using scripture throughout the book, Fay and Shepherd provide convincing, well supported and understandable direction for the reader. They systematically work through the topic, providing the need, rationale, tools, and guidance for applying those tools.

The reality is that there are a great many evangelistic resources out there. What makes *Share Jesus Without Fear* stand out in comparison to other books is Fay's particular background. Having shared the good news with over 25,000 individuals, he is more than qualified to speak on the topic and with that kind of experience supporting his method it is easy to see its effectiveness.

Share Jesus Without Fear has a number of strengths. It is well written and easy to read. The flow of the book is smooth with natural transitions from one chapter to the next. It is written in such a way to build a full picture of why Fay's method is important and how to do it without being overwhelming. At the same time, it maintains enough detailed instruction so as to not gloss over any of the steps.

It was also valuable to see well thought out responses to 36 common ways that a listener could push back. For many believers, these potential land mines are one of the things they find most intimidating about sharing faith, so having Fay lay out simple, memorable responses to

each of them is a powerful resource.

It is hard to go more than a couple pages without finding a story of someone being led to the Lord; this is both a strength and a weakness of the book. It is a strength in that the stories are incredibly inspiring! They also provide real world examples for how the various tools in the book could look in actual use.

However, it is a weakness of the book that the evangelistic examples basically all end in conversions. While there are a handful that are mentioned which do not result in a conversion, they are for the most part glossed over with very little explanation or detail given. For the reader it would be easy to come away with the impression that this evangelistic method has an almost 100% success rate, which could lead to great disappointment if their own application of it results in a much lower percentage of conversions. Granted, the book does make the point that success is in the sharing, not the result, and that the average person needs to hear the gospel 7.6 times before coming to the Lord, but the overall tone of conversion story after conversion story gives the feeling that the reader could expect to be that 7.6th encounter frequently.

The intended audience is believers in general. Because of its easy reading style, clear and concise laying out of a memorable evangelism method, and lots of stories to illustrate it, it is well suited for believers at any stage of their walk with the Lord.

The book itself is clearly the culmination of years of refinement and presentations on Fay's *Share Jesus Without Fear* method, which makes it very transferable to ministry use, and teaching in particular. With its systematic approach to building the method up one block at a time, it would be simple to use this book and its accompanying workbook in a church class or group environment. As such it is a great resource for ministry leaders.

In conclusion, *Share Jesus Without Fear* is a solid and practical resource. It is well

written, and useful for individual believers, small groups, and Christian class environments.

Through the use of solid tools and stories based on their experience, the authors make a strong case for evangelism as a responsibility for every believer, as well as provide great, understandable and easily communicated tools for following through on it.