BUILDING ON FIRM FOUNDATIONS

REVISED CROSS-CULTURAL EDITION

EVANGELISM: GENESIS TO THE ASCENSION

Trevor McIlwain
EVANGELISM: GENESIS TO THE ASCENSION

Trevor McIlwain
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Overview

The lessons in this book cover Phase 1 of the chronological teaching program. These lessons are designed for evangelism.

The lessons are to be a resource for the teacher. They were written primarily for missionaries to guide them step by step as they write Bible lessons, but the lessons can be easily adapted for use in other situations.

The lessons have been written as though I were actually addressing a group of tribal people. However, I have not included all the reiteration and expansion of each point which I would normally give when teaching. The teacher is responsible to emphasize, illustrate, and expand each point until he is satisfied that his hearers have clearly grasped it.

The primary goals of each lesson are to tell clearly the Bible story and, while doing so, to emphasize the doctrinal themes important for evangelism. These doctrinal themes are exemplified through the actions of the characters and the historical events in the Bible.

Interspaced throughout the lesson are directives to the teacher, such as outline points, lesson developer’s notes, and teacher’s notes. The directives to the teacher are not intended to be spoken as part of the lesson. These directives are on a gray background, a visual cue that they are not meant to be spoken or read to the tribal people.

Proper use of the lessons will depend on a thorough knowledge of Volume 1, Guidelines for Evangelism and Teaching Believers. Be sure to read that volume prior to teaching these lessons.
Lesson 1

The Bible is God’s message to all people.

Lesson Outline

1. Think carefully about how we can know the truth.
2. We are going to begin telling you God’s message.
3. We believe all that God says in His Book.
4. God’s message is the most important message in the whole world.
5. God gave His message to chosen men.
6. The Bible has been translated into many languages.
7. We will teach you from the Bible a little at a time.

Lesson Outline Developed

Teacher: As you begin evangelism, you will build on the foundations that you laid down in pre-evangelism. (Refer to Part 2 of Volume 1 for more information on pre-evangelism.)

During your pre-evangelism ministry, you did not give your thoughts, or even what the Bible says, when you raised discussion topics which caused them to think about the basis for their beliefs. Now, however, you are going to introduce the Bible which will be the final authority for all the subjects you previously talked about.

Nevertheless, in this lesson you should not try to prove that the Bible is the Word of God. Some teachers have prepared lessons in which they immediately tried to prove that the Bible is the Word of God. In their very first lesson, they presented Old Testament prophecies with the New Testament fulfillment as proof that God is the author of the Bible. But until the students are taught, they would not have a frame of reference to understand these prophecies. For example, they would not have a clear concept for the time span between the Old and New Testaments, nor would they know about the Bible characters mentioned in the prophecies. This type of approach is contrary to the basic teaching principle of moving from the known to the unknown.

It is far better to leave the proof of the divine authorship of the Scriptures right where it is – in the Word of God itself. The great Bible teacher, Charles Spurgeon, when asked to defend the Bible, said, “What! Defend a lion? Let it loose!”

We, too, must let the Word of God “loose” in total dependence upon the Spirit of God and His promise to use His Word. The power of God is inherent in the Word of God. The proof that the Bible is the Word of God is in the Word itself. As we slowly but clearly teach the story of the Old and New Testaments, it will become evident that the Bible is truly God’s Word.
Lesson 1  The Bible is God’s message to all people.

1. Think carefully about how we can know the truth.

We want you to think carefully about the questions we are going to ask you. We are not asking for you to answer these first few questions. Just listen and think about them.

- **How can we know the truth about the beginnings of all things?**
  - Where did this world come from? Has it always been here, or was there a time when it began? Did someone make this world?
  - Where did all the people come from? Were they always here, or was there a time when they began to exist? How did they begin to exist? Did someone make them?
  - Where did all the different kind of animals come from? Were they always here, or was there a time when they began to exist? How did they begin to exist? Did someone make them?
  - Did the sky always exist? Was there a time when the sky began to exist? Did someone make the sky?

**Teacher:** Apply similar questions to the clouds, the rain, the wind, the sun, the moon and the stars. Be sure to raise the same topics which you did during pre-evangelism which caused the people to question the validity of their beliefs. If they ask questions, assure them that they will be answered as you continue to teach them. Do not become involved in trying to answer their questions on individual topics at this stage in the teaching program.

- **How can we know the truth about the Creator?**
  - Who made all the things we see around us?
  - Where is the Creator who made all things?
  - Is the Creator like us? Does He need to eat? Does He need to sleep? Does He need to drink?
  - Is the Creator powerful or weak?
  - Is He good or is He bad?
  - Does He have any enemies? Are they stronger than He is?
  - Does the Creator love us? Does He know when we get sick or when we die?
  - Can a person hide from the Creator?

- **How can we know the truth about death?**
  - Why do people die?
  - Where do people go when they die? Is the place of the dead a good place or is it a bad place?
  - Will those who have already died ever come back to life again?
  - How can we know that what we believe about those who have died is correct?
  - Do you know someone who has died and then come back to explain what happens after death?
• How can we know the truth about the spirits?
  ○ Are there spirits that we cannot see who have power over people and the things that happen to them?
  ○ Where did the spirits come from?
  ○ Did the same Creator who made us also make the spirits?
  ○ Are the spirits stronger than the Creator who made the world and everything else?

• How can we know the correct answers to any of these questions?
  All over the world, people give different answers to these questions. How do we know which answers are correct? Is there anyone who can definitely tell us?

2. We are going to begin telling you God’s message.

We are here to tell you God’s answer to these questions and His message to you. We know that God’s message is true, and we want you to also know the truth.

• Previously we did not tell you God’s message.
  We have discussed many things with you about God, people and the spirits. Previously, we did not tell you what we believed about these things because we were not yet ready to begin teaching you God’s message. We did not come here to tell you what we think or what other people say. We came to tell you what God says.

• Only God can tell us the truth.
  No one can know or understand who God is, where He is or what He is like unless He tells us. As you listen to God’s message, you will learn about God, and you will learn what God says about all the subjects we discussed with you previously.

  God’s thoughts about all these different topics are written in this book called the Bible.

  **Teacher:** As you teach this lesson, hold or touch the Bible as you refer to it. If you do not have a Bible in the tribal language, take Bibles in other languages, such as your own and one in the national language, to the meeting.

  It is good to show more than one copy of the Bible so that the people will realize there is more than just one copy of the Bible in the world. Having different translations will help when you explain that God’s words have been translated into different languages.

  Even though the people may not be able to read, pass the Bibles to them. Let them open and look at the Bibles. They need to see that the Bible is a real book and is made of paper like other books. You do not want them to be superstitious about the actual book.

• Many people in this world do not know God’s message.
  Our ancestors did not understand many of the things we talked to you about until they heard God’s words which are written in this book.
Lesson 1

The Bible is God's message to all people.

Many people all over the world do not know the truth about God. Some of them do not know the truth about God because they have not heard God’s message that is written in this book. Others do not know the truth because they refuse to listen to and believe what God says in the Bible.

You have chosen to listen to God’s message. If you listen and believe what God says in the Bible, you will learn the truth about God.

3. We believe all that God says in His Book.
   - We have read God’s Book, and we believe all God says.

   In the Bible, God has taught us the truth about God, people and the spirits.

   **Teacher:** Give a testimony about believing God’s message. Your testimony at this stage should be limited to these points:
   - How you actually came to know God’s message and His thoughts about the topics you have discussed with the people.
   - That you believe God’s message.
   - That God taught you that His message is for all people.
   - That you have come to them so that they, too, can hear, understand and believe God’s words.

   Include the testimonies of other team members, your wife and your children who are believers. You may wish to ask other Christians present, “Do you believe God’s words which are written in this book?” Call on them by name, and give them the opportunity to answer. If they wish, they may also give a short testimony, but be sure that you have instructed them prior to the meeting that they need to limit what they say to the points above.

   In your testimonies, do not talk about sin, hell, salvation or the Savior. The people would not understand what you are talking about because you have not yet taught them about God, and they probably do not realize that they need to be saved.

4. God’s message is the most important message in the whole world.
   - God’s message is the most important message you will ever hear.

   **Lesson Developer:** Give an illustration about important messages. In choosing the illustration, consider what type of message would be very important to them and who would bring them that important message. For example:

   - If the chief called all of you together because he had an important message, all of you would want to listen and understand what he had to tell you, wouldn’t you?
   - Or if you knew your enemies were preparing their weapons to attack you, your village scouts would check to see what the enemy was doing. When the scouts came running back to the village, you would quickly gather around and listen carefully to their report. The scouts’ message would be important because it might save you from being killed by your enemies.