OUTREACH

(Fishing)

Last summer I had a chance to visit Branson City, MO to enjoy summer break with my children. As usual, my Son Sam stayed home alone while my wife, Mary, my daughter, Grace, and I drove four hours from St. Louis to Branson City. For this trip I took a fishing rod to catch some trout in the river near the resort, expecting to get some to have fish soup for dinner. Still, I had no idea about fishing in America and my only experience of fishing was when I was young in Korea. We stopped by Wal-Mart to buy some hooks, bait, and other fishing materials, and we got some information about river fishing from a worker in the market. We drove more than an hour along the river to find a best site for fishing and finally reached a wooded hillside which people often use as a hiking course. At the river I tried fishing for almost one hour, but got nothing, not even a minnow. My wife and daughter had pity on me and encouraged me to come back next year for better fishing.

Through this painful and humiliating fishing trip, I learned an important lesson about ‘successful fishing’ which relates to ‘successful outreach.’ First, a fisherman must have basic knowledge about fishing. He must know how to use a fishing rod properly and skillfully, be informed about the best sites for fishing, know when the best hours are for fishing, and so on. But in my case, I lacked even this basic knowledge about fishing. I did not know how to use a fishing rod properly, had no idea where the best site for fishing, and did not have experience to distinguish fly fishing from bait fishing, and so on. We wasted more than an hour driving to find a proper river site until my daughter’s patience ran out. Next, a fisherman should have a professional attitude. While I was pulling up nothing from the edge of the river for an hour, a boat with two fishermen was passing by floating down the river. They had all the equipment for fishing with them in the boat. They were professional fishermen whereas I felt less than an amateur. If only visiting a river for fresh air with my family, I would be okay. But because I expected to catch some trout, I was disappointed and regretted my ignorance about fishing.

Fishing in the river and fishing on campus share some similarities in motivation, attitude, and performance. Our attitude, strategy, and actions should be well motivated, planned, and executed for its best result. There have been many methods, ideas, strategies, resources about effective outreach provided by sermons, lectures and books, but here I will take 5W1H as my approach to highlight the basic principles for successful outreach.

According to Merriam-Webster Dictionary the word ‘*outreach*’ means the extent or limit of reach. The definition of the word ‘outreach’ from Cambridge English dictionary is more familiar to us and more fit for ‘fishing’. “ *an*[*effort*](about:blank) *to*[*bring*](about:blank)[*services*](about:blank)*or*[*information*](about:blank)*to*[*people*](about:blank)*where they*[*live*](about:blank)*or* [*spend*](about:blank)[*time*](about:blank)*:* *“the*[*process*](about:blank)*of an*[*organization*](about:blank)[*building*](about:blank) [*relationships*](about:blank)*with*[*people*](about:blank)*in*[*order*](about:blank)*to*[*advise*](about:blank)*them.”* There appears no word ‘outreach’ in the Bible, but the word ‘preaching (kēryssō)’ (Mk 16:15, 2 Ti 4:2) or ‘witness’ (martys) (Lk 24:48, Ac 1:8) may be substituted for outreach. In modern terms the words ‘evangelism’ and ‘mission’ can also be interchangeable with outreach. Outreach requires more dynamic and diverse relational activities than simple ‘preaching’. Those who are sent have to be prepared to encounter strangers, initiate relationships with them, foster ongoing fellowship and help them thrive. Without a firm motivation and dedication, outreach may end in despair with a sense of failure. As I mentioned earlier, without basic knowledge and a well-planned strategy for outreach or fishing, we will repeat the same mistake which I made at the river in Branson City last summer.

5W1H starts with “Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How”. We don’t have to spend much time on the first four Ws because we are the ones who go for outreach on campus with the gospel of God regularly or at certain times. In order to achieve effective outreach, I want to focus on ‘Why’ and ‘How’.

1. **The necessity of outreach**: Some may ask why we go out for outreach on campus. Others say that evangelism must be done from the podium in church, not on the street, in markets or on campus. So what does motivate us for outreach or fishing? As Christians who were saved by God’s grace and through faith in Jesus Christ, we have several reasons why we have to go for fishing on campus.

a. Outreach is a core expression of our love for God. Simon Peter failed in following Jesus as his disciple and in catching fish as a fisherman after he had disowned Jesus three times. Even though he reencountered the risen Jesus at Galilee beach, he had no confidence to see Jesus face-to-face because of shame and a sense of guilt. But Jesus forgave Peter and reinstated him with a final command in John 21:15, which says, “*When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs*.” Before he gave a mission to Peter, Jesus first asked Peter if he really loved him. This indicates that love goes ahead of mission. Love for Jesus is the main motivation for feeding Jesus’ sheep. Love for Jesus should be the main reason and the most lasting motivation for outreach on campus. Outreach is the expression of our love for God and loyalty to our Lord Jesus. We go out for fishing because we love Jesus and we want to express our love and obedience to his word. Jesus said in John 14:13, “*If you love me, keep my commands*.” By feeding Jesus’ sheep we prove our love for him. We were sinners like Simon Peter who sinned and made many mistakes before God. We had lived a meaningless and fruitless life in the world before we were called by Jesus. Jesus loved us, saved us, and called us to be fishers of men (Lk 5:10) and shepherds. Jesus not only saved us but also restored us to become a royal priesthood and ministers of Christ. His love for us endures forever and his kingdom never ends. Before we go out for fishing or outreach, we must examine whether we go out with the love of Jesus or not. When we go out with the heart of Jesus, our outreach and fishing will be a joyful and exciting journey.

b. Outreach is Jesus’ great commission. The synoptic gospels record Jesus’ great commission before his ascension at the end of each book. “*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you*…” (Mt 28:19,20) “*He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation*.” (Mk 16:15) “*He told them*, “*This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem*.” (Lk 24:46,47) This great commission tells us what his disciples must do as their first priority on this earth: preach the gospel to all nations. Preaching the gospel to all nations is not an option but a command. Outreach is not a matter of choice but obedience. Jesus is our Lord and a chief-commander in the spiritual battle against our enemy Satan. As good Christian soldiers we please our commanding officer through our obedience. But God does not force anyone to obey his command with an unwilling heart. He loves willing and cheerful workers in his kingdom. Peter said in 1 Pe 5:2. “*Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them---not because we must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be…*”

c. Outreach is God’s will for this world. God’s will for the world is salvation. God loved the world that he gave his one and only Son to this world. God did not send his Son Jesus to condemn the world but to save the world (Jn 3:16-17). In John 6:39-40 Jesus said, “*And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day*. *For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.*” In order to obey the Father’s will Jesus spent the whole night at the garden of Gethsemane in prayer. He denied his will in order to submit himself to God’s will. Jesus said in Luke 19:10, “*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*” When we participate in outreach, we often cannot avoid inner conflict between God’s will and our will. Complacency and procrastination drag us down to submit to our own will, not God’s. We need Jesus’ decisive prayer to obey God’s will rather than our own will.

d. Outreach is the expansion of God’s kingdom. The first message of Jesus as the Messiah was, “*The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”* (Mt 4:17, Mk 1:15). Jesus proclaimed the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God. Jesus traveled around the country by preaching the kingdom of God. He went out to call his first disciples (Mt4:18-22, Mk 1:16-20, Lk 5:1-11, Jn 1:35-51). He visited Samaria to expand his kingdom in the heart of a Samaritan woman (Jn 4:13-14). Jesus established his kingdom in a demon-possessed man by driving out demons (Mt 17:18, Mk 5:1-19, Lk 8:26-39). Jesus also went out to find the lost and to save them. He traveled around the land of Judea, Samaria, and Garasa to expand his kingdom by healing the sick, preaching the good news, and calling disciples. Wherever Jesus visited, the kingdom of God was established. Whomever he met, God began to reign in their hearts. Jesus taught his disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:9-10, “*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*.”

e. Outreach is God’s field training for his disciples. Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness (Mt 10:1, Mk 6:6b-12, Lk 9:1-8). Jesus appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two to every town and place to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick (Lk 10:1-23). Before Jesus sent them out, he gave them instructions for their trip. They must not take anything but their clothes. No purse, no credit card, and no bag were they allowed to carry. Jesus helped them to depend on God alone during their mission trip. They were like Abraham who obeyed and went by faith even though he did not know where he was going (He 11:8). The disciples had to fight against the evil spirits which would disturb their mission trip. They had to preach the gospel to the strangers, invite them to Christ, drive out demons, and heal the sick. Nothing was easy for them to carry out. Through their outreach they would become strong and courageous in doing the work of God. They participated in the work of God for world salvation and grew in God’s divine nature of holiness and righteousness. They also shared in God’s compassion for lost souls while they went out on fishing trips.

Thus far we have thought about the necessity of outreach from God’s redemptive perspective. It is not too much to repeat and to remind of the motivation behind outreach. Our attitude toward God’s mission determines the success of our outreach. Why do we have to go out for fishing? It should not be out of obligation to the ministry, as a favor to God or as an accessory of our Christian life. Rather, it should flow out of our love for Jesus, obedience to his calling, participation in God’s will and a heart for this lost world. As we need regular exercise for a healthy physical body, so also we need spiritual exercise for our spiritual body through outreach. If we only receive the word of God, study the Bible, and discuss it at the table without practice, we can become, at best, teachers of the law or theologians. We need spiritual exercise by visiting campus, inviting students, preaching the word, and teaching the gospel. When we maintain a balance between theory and practice, our faith will grow healthy and strong.

1. **The strategy of outreach:** Another task which we confront for the successful outreach is to make a strategy for carrying it out effectively. As knowledge without love is dangerous, so love without knowledge is futile. Proverbs 19:2 says, “*It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.*” No matter how great our motivation and how wonderful our program for outreach, if we don’t carry it out properly, we will not achieve the goal we expect. Jesus said to his twelve disciples before he sent them out for outreach, *“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.”* (Mt 10:16). Jesus instructed them to be wise during their mission trip. Jesus is the best example of effective outreach and fruitful fishing of men. Let us study how Jesus prepared for his outreach and how he performed it during his life on this earth.
2. Jesus always prayed before he started his messianic work. Jesus’ messianic work started with prayer and finished with prayer. Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness and he fasted forty days and forty nights there (Mt 4:1,2, Lk 1:2). Through prayer, Jesus received strength and power to overcome Satan’s temptations and to carry out the messianic work. Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed (Mk 1:35). Before he called his twelve, he went up on a mountainside and prayed (Mk 3:12). After feeding the five thousand with five loaves and two fish, he went up on a mountain to pray (Mk 6:46). Jesus taught his frustrated disciples that they should depend on the power of prayer for healing a demon-possessed boy (Mk 9:29). Jesus is the Son of God, who has authority and power as the Almighty God. Still, he humbly prayed and asked for the Father’s will.

In Genesis 24, Abraham’s servant teaches us how to prepare and start a mission trip through prayer. He did not know where to go and whom he had to meet. He just obeyed his master Abraham’s word to find a wife for his son Isaac. When he arrived at Aram Naharaim, he knelt down and prayed to God for his successful trip. His prayer for finding a woman for Isaac was not vague, but vivid and detailed (Ge 24:12-14). The servant depended on the God of Abraham, his master, through prayer. Before we go out for fishing, we must pray like the servant of Abraham. We have to kneel down and pray for God’s help, guidance, and blessing for a successful trip. Our prayer topics should be clear and detailed. Prayer is complete dependence on God and an expression of our faith. Our sincere prayer opens the gate of heaven (1 Ki 18:36-38) and moves mountains (Mk 11:23-25). Our diligent prayer involves our mouth and lips. Our persistent prayer opens the heart of those who listen to our message. Why do those who go out for fishing feel powerless and fearful? They didn’t pray before they went out. Why are they not confident in doing the work of God? This is because they didn’t pray much. Why do they not see people as lost souls? This is because they didn’t pray for the lost soul with the compassion of God. Therefore, we must pray at least 30 minutes before we go out for fishing or outreach. We must pray earnestly for God’s help, guidance, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit before we leave for fishing.

b. Jesus taught them the work of the Holy Spirit for their mission trip: At the KIMNET conference in LA 2013, Pastor Ki Hong Han said about the importance of prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit in world evangelism: “World mission is done by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works through our prayer.” Jesus gave power and authority to his twelve disciples to drive out demons and heal the sick. The work of the Holy Spirit is essential to and critical for our successful outreach. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit which would empower those who carry out world evangelism. Jesus said in Acts 1:8, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth*.” The Risen Jesus appeared to his disciples and breathed on them and said, “*Receive the Holy Spirit*.” (Jn 20:22)

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom (Ac 2:1-12). He is the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17). Jesus introduced the Holy Spirit to his disciples as the Advocate or Another Counselor or Comforter (Jn 14:25). Jesus said, “*But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you*.” (Jn 14:26). This should be the greatest promise and privilege for those who go out fishing. The Holy Spirit will guide us on where to go, whom to meet (Ac 8:29, 13:2, 16:7), how to create conversation, what to teach, how to answer, and so on. He will provide us all the necessary wisdom and courage before and while we are on outreach. The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of their sins (Jn 16:8-9 Ac 2:37). The Holy Spirit opens their heart for the gospel (Ac 8:39, 10:44, 16:14, 19:6). The Holy Spirit provides words and wisdom for the disciples in the time of troubles and persecution (Lk 21:15).

Robert E. Coleman said about the work of the Holy Spirit in his book “The Master Plan of Evangelism”, “*It is only the Spirit of God who enables one to carry on the redemptive mission of evangelism… Jesus was God in revelation; but the Spirit was God in operation. He was the Agent of God actually effecting through men the eternal plan of salvation. Thus Jesus explained to his disciples that the Spirit would prepare the way for their ministry. He would give them utterance to speak (Matt. 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:12). He would convict the world “in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment” (John 16:8). He would give illumination of truth that men might know the Lord (Matt. 22:43; see Mark 12:36; John 16:14). By his power his disciples were promised the very ability to do the works of their Lord. (John 14:12)*” The Holy Spirit is a director, conductor, instructor, and pilot for each fishing trip. This is why we have to seek the Holy Spirit, receive the Holy Spirit, and depend on the Holy Spirit for successful outreach. Jesus asked his disciples to seek the Holy Spirit (Lk 11:13).

c. Jesus gave his disciples authority. Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness (Mt 10:1). Jesus said to them before he was ascended, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations…*” (Mt 28:18,19). The authority which Jesus gave them was not political, but spiritual which overcomes the world and rules the power of Satan. Those who go out for fishing should know they have received authority from the Lord of creation. They are not just a handful of religious folk, but ministers of reconciliation and ambassadors of Christ (2 Co 5:18-20).

Boldness and confidence are necessary elements for those who bring the gospel to the world. These two positive elements come from the spiritual authority given by the Lord Jesus. Why are we often timid, hesitant, shameful, and even fearful when we go out for fishing? This is because we forget the authority we have which Jesus has given to all preachers of his Word. We are not salesmen desperate to sell our products. We are the heralds of the message of salvation for those who are perishing. Paul said in Romans 1:17, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.*” The gospel has the power to bring salvation and judgment to the people. When we have absolute faith in the power of the gospel, we have confidence in what we are doing. If a drug salesman has no confidence in his products, how can he advertise them and persuade his customers to purchase them? A preacher should be even more confident and aggressive than the drug salesman. The salesman works for money but the preacher works for eternal life and the kingdom of God.

Outreach is not a burden, but a blessing. Steve Shadrach said in his book “The Fuel and the Flame”, *“The “E” word (Evangelism) is a scary one for a lot of people---Christians and non-Christians alike. We’d much rather use a softer, less threatening word like* ***share***.” The preacher goes out to share the good news of great joy for all people. Is there anyone who feels burdened when he or she tells the good news? Sharing good news is a blessing and a joyful occasion. We don’t have to worry about the response of the listeners in advance. The Holy Spirit will lead us and teach us what to say and how to create conversation. This is why we share the good news of salvation with confidence and a joyous spirit.

d. Go out two by two or solo? When Jesus sent out his seventy-two disciples, they went out two by two. Why two by two? Two are better than one. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, “*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.*” While one is preaching the word, the other can pray. When one is having difficulty answering, the other may provide the response. Two witnesses are more reliable and persuasive than one. Jesus also said, “*Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them*.” (Mt 18:19,20) When two pray, they become greater vessels for the Holy Spirit. Satan easily tempts a man when he was alone. But when two work together, Satan will lose power. Two-by-two outreach builds up teamwork in God’s ministry.

Two-by-two outreach is not always effective. It may reduce opportunities for creating personal relationships between a preacher and a listener in fishing. Two-by-two outreach is also more obvious in public, causing some to close their hearts before they even receive the invitation.

Solo outreach is good for building up personal relationships between the one who preaches and the one who hears by sharing personal issues with each other. For example, Jesus met a Samaritan woman when he was alone. Jesus made conversation until she opened her heart to respond to Jesus’ request, although it was negative. Jesus was patient until she confessed her innermost problems before him. Their topic of conversation started as water, then went to her husband, and then finished with worship. Likewise, when we go out for fishing, we can take time to build up personal relationships with listeners. Salvation is personal. Confessing sins and turning one’s heart to the Lord are personal matters. People are not willing to share their personal problems in public. They are waiting for someone who can listen to them and talk with them personally.

Solo outreach is not always recommended, however. The preacher may be distracted and tempted when he or she is alone. They may easily become dispirited and discouraged by unexpected difficulties and challenges when they struggle alone in the middle of outreach. They have to fight a lonely spiritual battle.

e. How to create a conversation: Starting a conversation with strangers is a difficult task not only in outreach but also in all occasions related to creating relationships. Comparatively it is not difficult for us to talk about the things of the world, but it will be a different story when we try to draw their attention to the gospel. Even before we bring up the gospel, some politely and others rudely refuse our offer. So, we often struggle to overcome our inner doubts and fears when we go out fishing. What to say? How to start drawing their attention to the gospel message? We find answers from Jesus who is the author and the perfecter of our faith and the expert on the topic of successful outreach.

\* Straightforward invitation (*Follow me*): This was done by Jesus when he called Levi. When Jesus saw Levi sitting on the tax collector’s booth, he simply called him, “Follow me!”, and Levi left his booth and followed Jesus. As Jesus did, we also approach people and simply ask about Bible study saying, “Are you interested in Bible study?” or “Do you want to study the Bible one on one?” If they show interest in Bible study, we make an appointment for Bible study to continue the relationship. If they refuse our invitation, we simply say, “Thank you!” and go to another person. This is a fast and simple invitation for fishing. Though it is the fastest way to get a response, however, it is also an easy invitation for people to reject later because we didn’t take the time to create a relationship while passing by. Easy come, easy go!

Even so, if our situation for outreach does not allow sitting and talking or taking time for building up relationships, this straightforward invitation is useful and effective. Even though it rarely occurs, we find those who are seeking for Bible study or a spiritual adviser. God will provide those who are spiritually ready and prepared for us. Jesus knew Levi’s spiritual condition. Levi was seeking new life and direction when Jesus called him. When we pray for a lost soul, the Holy Spirit will open the hearts of those who are seeking and lead them to Bible study. This invitation is good and effective for solo outreach.

\*The invitation at the well (*Will you give me a drink*?): In John 4 Jesus met a Samaritan woman who came to draw water and he asked her to give him some. It was unusual for a Jewish man to talk with a Samaritan woman because at that time Jews did not associate with Samaritans (Jn 4:9). Jesus also had to overcome not only ethnic and political barriers, but also gender and religious ones. The woman’s first response was defiant and hostile. But Jesus didn’t give up on her. With patience and persistence Jesus found the way to continue their conversation until she opened her heart little by little and showed her interest in Jesus’ offer. The important thing in Jesus’ creating conversation with her was that Jesus found the common interest he shared with her, which was ‘water.’ Jesus was physically thirsty at that time because of a long journey from Jerusalem to Samaria. The woman was spiritually thirsty for the living water which could quench her thirsty soul. Their conversation started with the matter of ‘water’, then ‘husband,’ and then ‘worship.’ The process of opening her spiritual eyes was gradual and it developed through the physical and then the spiritual. Finally Jesus identified himself as the Messiah and she believed him (Jn 4:26).

The invitation at the well is the most popular and recommendable way of fishing. We have enough time to introduce the gospel message and to build up a personal relationship through deep conversation. We establish relationship of trust while exchanging personal information and sharing common interests. If they don’t want continuous relationship or Bible study, they will at least have a positive memory for the next time they are reached out to. One sows, and another reaps. The sower and the reaper will be glad together (Jn 4:36,37, 1Co 3:6).

For a successful invitation ‘at the well’, it is important for us to find common interests to meet people halfway, and to have the patience and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to continue the conversation. Water was the common interest between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Fish was the common interest when Jesus called Simon Peter (Lk 5:4). We can always find some common interest such as school studies, work, politics, sports, entertainments, business, events, relationships, and so on. The conversation should not be too personal so that we may not violate others’ privacy. We also need wisdom to transition our conversation topics from worldly to godly and from physical to spiritual. If we spend most of our conversation on worldly things, we may lose a chance to share the gospel or to listen to their inner struggles. We need consistent and prompt wisdom to develop our conversation focus from this world to God’s kingdom. We must not forget to pray for them, if they want, before we depart. We believe in the work of the Holy Spirit while we pray together. They will remember that spiritual moment and appreciate our spending time with them. However, we must not force them to pray for our sake. Don’t forget to get their contact information for the next meeting or Bible study. It is important to carry a personal name card and invitation card to record their information. These days we often use a Smartphone to exchange mutual information.

\* The gospel tract and table ministry (*Come and See*): John 1:37-39 tells us how Jesus called Andrew. “*When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means “Teacher”),” where are you staying?” “Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon*.” It was unusual for Jesus to invite others to where he stayed. We wonder where Jesus stayed during his messianic ministry because he traveled around the country to preach. The “come and see” strategy stimulates motivation for those who are not available for at-the-well conversation. The preacher distributes the gospel tract to passengers on the street, at bus station, in subway, in the public park, and in campus. It is like sowing seeds on the field. The sower provides them with an opportunity to read the gospel tract or the Bible verses written on the invitation card. It may be easier than other ways of outreach, but doesn’t give any chance for personal relationship with others. Don’t forget to leave contact or church information on the back side of the tract and card.

If the campus ministry is registered as one of the official student organizations, a table ministry is very effective to recruit students and invite them to Bible study. It gives more credibility and sincerity to students who are interested in participating in the group activities. The group should provide programs and events which they can participate regularly in such as weekly group Bible studies, prayer meetings, worship services, Friday night hangouts, etc. A weekly Bible study, symposium, and seasonal conference with invitation cards can inspire students to join the group. For example, last year I invited many students to Christmas worship service which would be held in Danforth Student Center in Washington University in St. Louis. I smiled and greeted them saying, “Merry Christmas! Do you celebrate Christmas? If yes, I want to invite you to our Christmas worship service on campus.” Unlike other normal days I received much better and more positive responses than other years. Some of them continued to study the Bible one on one after attending the worship service on campus. We can do the same for Easter Bible conferences and Bible symposiums on campus.

\* Survey invitation (*Who do people say I am*): “*Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Messiah.”* (Mk 8:27-29). While Jesus was walking with his disciples, he asked his their public opinions about him. Jesus didn’t ask them to check his popularity among his people, but to help them to have personal faith in him as the Messiah. “What exposure did you have to religion growing up?” “Do you believe in God?” “Have you ever read the Bible?” “Do you believe in Jesus?” “What is your view of Christianity today?”… Generally students are willing to respond to the survey whether they are interested or not. It doesn’t take long and they don’t need any commitment to anything, but express their opinions. Through their answers on the survey, we know their spiritual condition, viewpoint, and interest, and gain their contact information for the future if it is allowed. Among them some may show their interest in Bible study or ask for more information, and we have a chance to invite them to a group meeting or one-to-one Bible study.

Unlike other ways for outreach, when following up after the survey, one should be careful not to embarrass those who participated in the survey. If we try to contact an unwilling person through their given information, it may cause trouble and damage future invitation. The surveyor needs wisdom and faith if he wants to continue to have fellowship with them.

1. **What do you say? (Controversial questions and answers):** When we go out for fishing, we are often asked about some controversial topics and issues which make us hesitant to answer at that moment. Even though we answer and explain many things to support our response, it still may not be enough to satisfy them. Some students may ask us with curiosity, and others with hostility, and still others for the argument itself. How would Jesus answer them? In Matthew 19:3-12 some Pharisees came to Jesus to test him. They asked, “*Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?*” (Mt 19:3). In ages past and present, divorce has been one of the controversial issues in family and society. The Pharisees asked Jesus if Moses commanded that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away for any and every reason. This question was a trap for Jesus. Jesus didn’t answer with ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Rather he answered them by explaining the creation of marriage, the meaning of family, and the motivation for divorce (Mt 19:4-9). Jesus was asked by the vicious religious leaders with the same kind of controversial issues such as paying taxes to Caesar (Mt 22:20-22, Mk 12:13-17) and condemning a woman who was caught in the act of adultery (Jn 8:2-11). Jesus didn’t answer them with ‘yes’ or ‘no’, but spent time to explain the meaning and the purpose behind those questions.

Here are some examples of questions which we are frequently asked:

1. Why are Christians so intolerant?
2. Why does a good God allow evil and suffering?
3. Why should anyone worship a God who allowed 9/11?
4. Why should we believe an ancient book written by dead Jewish males?
5. Why are Christians so homophobic?
6. What’s so good about marriage?
7. If Jesus is so great, why are some of his followers such jerks?

(‘*Questioning Evangelism*’ written by Randy Newman)

1. If there’s a loving God, why does this pain-wracked world groan under so much suffering and evil?
2. If the miracles of God contradict science, then how can any rational person believe that they’re true?
3. If God really created the universe, why does the persuasive evidence of science compel so many to conclude that the unguided process of evolution accounts for life?
4. If God is morally pure, how can he sanction the slaughter of innocent children as the Old Testament says he did?
5. If Jesus is the only way to heaven, then what about the millions of people who have never heard of him?
6. If God cares about the people he created, how could he consign so many o them to an eternity of torture in hell just because they didn’t believe the right things about him?
7. If God is the ultimate overseer of the church, why has it been rife with hypocrisy and brutality throughout the ages?
8. If I’m still plagued by doubts, then is it still possible to be a Christian?

(*The Case for Faith* written by Lee Strobel)

1. There can’t be just one and true religion
2. How could a good God allow suffering?
3. Christianity is a straitjacket
4. The church is responsible for so much injustice
5. How can a loving God send people to hell?
6. Science has disproved Christianity
7. You can’t take the Bible literally
8. The clues of God
9. The knowledge of God
10. The problem of sin
11. Religion and the gospel
12. The (true) story of the cross
13. The reality of the resurrection
14. The dance of God

(‘*The Reason for God’* written by Timothy Keller)

**Conclusion**:

Those who go out for outreach are compared to sowers, fishers of men, spiritual fighters, and so on. But perhaps a herald of the good news may be the best description for them. The seeds which farmers scatter are the seeds of new life. The fishing rod and net which a fisherman carries are the tools to bring many dying souls onto the lifeboat. The sword and spear which a soldier takes are the weapons to defeat our enemy Satan. Above all, the message which the herald spreads is the good news of great joy for all people of all nations. We go out for outreach because we love God who saved us from the hell of death. Those who love God invite students on campus not because they have to, but because they are willing. We need wisdom and faith in our mission field. This is because we are also spiritual constructors who build up healthy and godly relationships with those who respond to our outreach. The salvation of those were invited and heard the gospel message during the outreach does not belong to the realm of our responsibility, but theirs. It is under God’s sovereignty. Only God knows the result. What we can do is preach the word in season and out of season as Paul the Apostle said (2Ti 4:2). Indeed, our labor in the Lord is not in vain. “…*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*…” (Mt 6:9-10).