

Eight Testimonies

Testimony¹ of nature (Psalm 19:1-6)

The heavens declare God's glory and prepare people to receive the other testimonies.
Especially impactful for urbanites.

Testimony of good deeds (John 5:36; Acts 10:36-39)

Jesus said, *"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you"* (John 20:21).

God sent Jesus on mission. How did Jesus pursue that mission?

Peter shared with Cornelius and his household that Jesus *"...went around doing good."*

Jesus performed good works that testified to the fact that "God was with him."

Jesus was provocatively generous; his generosity piqued people's interest.

To paraphrase Leslie Newbigin: *we want to live and speak in ways that cause people to ask the question to which Jesus is the answer.*

Testimony of Scripture (John 5:39)

All of Scripture points to Christ.

In a post-modern age, people eschew theory and gravitate toward narrative and the pragmatic.

E.g. The story of Jesus › how he related to friends, family and enemies, what he said and did, what he liked and disliked.

Let's not forget the wisdom and poetic books; they are potent too.

Testimony of answered prayer (John 14:14; 15:7; 1 Jn.5:14-15)

Tom Julien advocates prayer for unbelievers as part of our evangelism.

Prayer demonstrates the authenticity of our faith. We do not just talk about God, but we also talk to God.

God's generosity and care for people is revealed as he answers those prayers.

Answered prayer reveals God's power in a way similar to Jesus' miracles.

Corporate testimony (John 13:34-35; 17:22-23)

Palpable love and unity authenticate the truth that Jesus came from the Father in a way that individuals can "feel" His love for them.

Lesslie Newbigin explains, *"No amount of brilliant argument can make it sound reasonable to the inhabitants of the reigning plausibility structure. That is why I am suggesting that the only possible hermeneutic of the gospel is a congregation which believes it."*²

Testimony of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11)

God alone can reach into a person's heart to give true understanding, conviction, regeneration and transformation.

Testimony of the couple (Ephesians 5:22-33)

The relationship and interaction of wife and husband (sacrificial esteem and love) reveal the kind of relationship that Christ has with his bride, the Church.

An especially powerful demonstration of the Gospel in a world that is relationally ill.

Personal testimony (Colossians 4:2-6)

Prayerful, flesh-and-blood doctrine is the very evidence that people are looking for as they seek practical help for daily life.

Pray for open doors into people's hearts, for wise behavior that generates questions, for "salty" words that make people thirsty for Jesus, for readiness to seize opportunities, for clear presentations of the Good News.

¹ Testimony: "evidence or proof provided by the existence or appearance of something" (Oxford American Dictionary).

² *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, 232. See also Francis Schaeffer's, *The Mark of the Christian*.

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Institutional or relational : evangelize or testify ?

Philosophy	Institutional		Relational	
Approach	<p>Approach people based upon a connection with a Christian <i>institution</i>.</p> <p>People therefore identify the Christian with the Church.</p> <p>The believer prays that this connection will open a door for personal testimony or that people will come to the local church to discover Christ.</p>	<p><i>"I am an evangelical; this is the church I go to."</i></p>	<p>Interact with people based upon the quality of Christian life (individual and collective) that is due to a <i>relationship</i> with Jesus.</p> <p>People therefore identify the Christian(s) with Christ.</p> <p>The believer prays that this relationship will open a door for testimony and further sharing of Good News.</p>	<p><i>"I know Jesus; we have a relationship with him."</i></p>
Principle	<p><i>Evangelize</i> : "seek to convert (someone) to Christianity."</p>	<p><i>"You need to know Jesus."</i></p>	<p><i>Testify</i> : "serve as evidence of something's existence"</p>	<p><i>"I know Jesus."</i></p>
Starting point	<p><i>Announce the plan of salvation</i>: sin separates us from God, the cross is the solution.</p> <p>It is not readily obvious to people how this is "Good News."</p>	<p>Bad news is shared first.</p>	<p><i>Incarnate the Good News</i>: show generosity because we have freely received from Jesus.</p> <p>This incites people to ask questions about the Good News that they have observed and experienced.</p>	<p>Good News is demonstrated and shared first.</p>
Explanation	<p><i>Positive aspects</i> : forgiveness, grace, new life.</p>	<p>Good news is explained second.</p>	<p><i>Negative aspects</i> : sin, repentance, the cross.</p>	<p>Bad news is explained second.</p>
Principal & secondary influence	<p>1) The Christian's <i>words</i> take precedence.</p> <p>2) The life of the Christian and the community are part of the evidence furnished in order to convince.</p>	<p>Modernist approach › words are the priority</p>	<p>1) The <i>life</i> of the Christian takes precedence.</p> <p>2) The words of the Christian (testimony, plan of salvation and apologetics) elucidate why s/he is like this.</p>	<p>Postmodern approach › life is the priority</p>
Finish line	<p>Through repentance and faith in <i>Christ</i> › receive forgiveness, grace, relationship, new life, joy and freedom.</p>	<p>Mt.28 & Ro.8 the goal › make disciples and obey Christ</p>	<p>Through repentance and faith in <i>Christ</i> › receive forgiveness, grace, relationship, new life, joy and freedom.</p>	<p>Mt.28 & Ro.8 the goal › make disciples and please Christ</p>