Making Mission Possible

LEADING EVANGELISM

LEARNING HUB

A CODE OF ETHICS FOR CHRISTIAN WITNESS

1. As Christians called by the living God, we seek first of all to honour him and his ethical standards in all of our private and public lives, including our efforts to persuade others to believe the good news about Jesus Christ.

2. As Christians looking to share our faith, we seek to follow the mandate, motives, message, and model of our God who is love, and longs for all people to know the life transforming power of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus to free all who are lost in sin and rebellion against him.

3. We believe all people are created in God's image and therefore endowed with the capacity to be in relationship with their Creator and Redeemer. We disavow any effort to influence people which depersonalise or deprive them of their inherent value as persons.

4. Respecting the value of persons, we believe all people worthy of hearing the gospel of this loving Lord Jesus Christ. We equally affirm the inalienable right of every person to survey other options and convert to or choose a different belief system.

5. We believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and affirm the role and goal of Christians sharing their faith. However, we do not believe that this justifies any means to fulfill that end. Hence, we disavow the use of any coercive techniques or manipulative appeals which bypass a person's critical faculties, play on psychological weaknesses, undermine relationship with family or religious institutions, or mask the true nature of Christian conversion.

6. While respecting the individual integrity, intellectual honesty, and academic freedom of other believers and skeptics, we seek to proclaim Christ openly. We reveal our own identity and purpose, our theological positions and sources of information, and will not be intentionally misleading. Respect for human integrity means no false advertising, no personal aggrandisement from successfully persuading others to follow Jesus, and no overly emotional appeals which minimise reason and evidence.

7. As Christians, we seek to embrace people of other religious persuasions in true dialogue. That is, we acknowledge our common humanity as equally sinful, equally needy, and equally dependent on the grace of God we proclaim. We seek to listen sensitively in order to understand, and thus divest our witness of any stereotypes or fixed formulae which are barriers to true dialogue.

8. As Christians, we accept the obligation to admonish one who represents the Christian faith in any manner incompatible with these ethical guidelines.

Revised by James Lawrence from 'A Code of Ethics for the Christian Evangelist' compiled and edited by Dietrich Gruen. In addition, take a look at Doing Evangelism Ethically, Gavin Wakefield (Grove Evangelism Series 108).

FOR REFLECTION

- What would you add or subtract from this 'Code of Ethics'?
- How would you implement such a code in your context?