

# SET YOUR MESSAGE *FREE!*

Secrets of teaching, speaking and communicating in a post-Christian environment.

by Mark Sayers

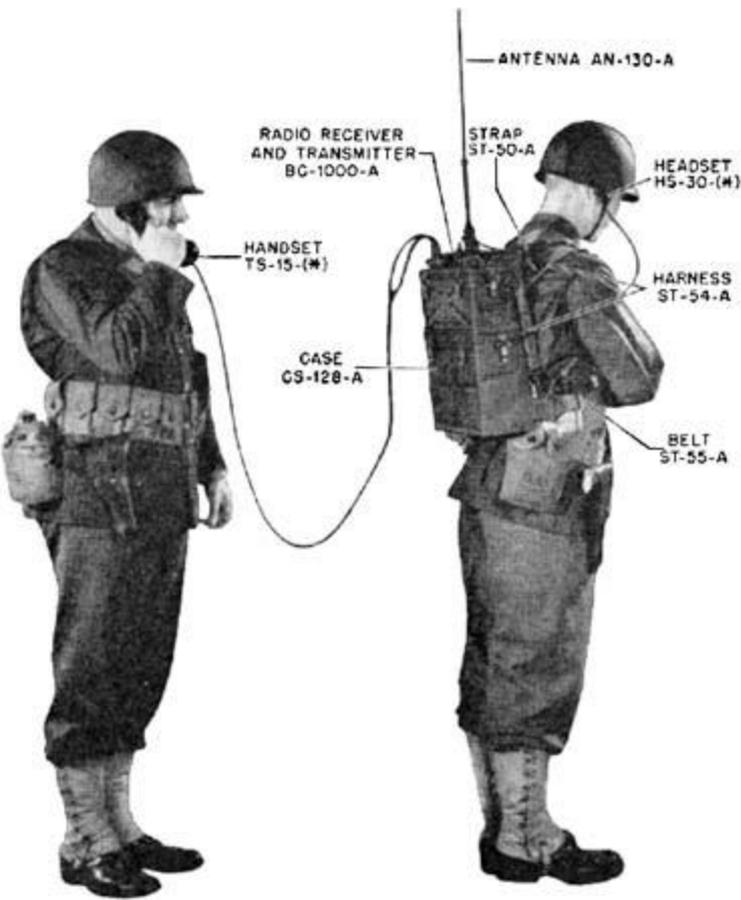


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# PEOPLE ARE BORED!

Most people forget a sermon within an hour of hearing it.

People have heard it all before.



We are drowned out  
by millions of  
competing  
messages.

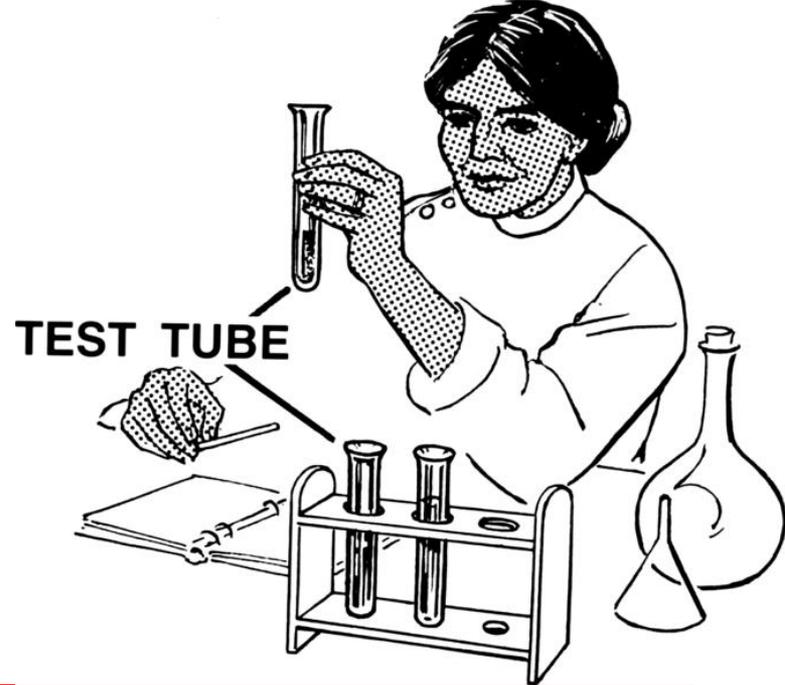
Yet God still speaks. How do  
we communicate key truths  
to people who think they  
have Christianity all worked  
out?



# COMMUNICATION SECRETS!

Here are some techniques I have used when communicating.

I have found that they work rather well.



# 1# Multiply your message!

You are not just talking to a room of people.

If your message is infectious, you won't be just talking to the people sitting in front of you, you will be talking to their friends, family and contacts. Think beyond the room. How can you communicate your message in a way that will 'live on' beyond that moment? Shape your message so that they will tell their friends, who will tell their friends, who will tell their friends etc. Are you preparing this weeks sermon, or are you crafting a message that has potential for exponential growth?



## 2#Make the familiar unfamiliar!

Speak old truths with freshness.

We are drawn to the intriguing. Humans resent that which we know too well. My book *The Trouble with Paris*, grew out of a message called “How Paris Hilton made me a better Christian.” I could have called the talk “Culture and the Kingdom”. Which title would you rather listen to? Which title would you tell your friends about ?



## 3# Shut up and Listen!

Get your ear to the ground.

Christian leaders hang out with other Christian leaders too much. We get stuck in professional rabbit warrens and internal debates conducted in Christianese. Get out and listen to what questions ordinary people are asking. Listen to their fears, hopes, dreams and doubts. Don't assume you know what they are thinking. I think you will be surprised.



## 4# Communicate with emotion!

When it comes to moving people, hearts wins over heads.

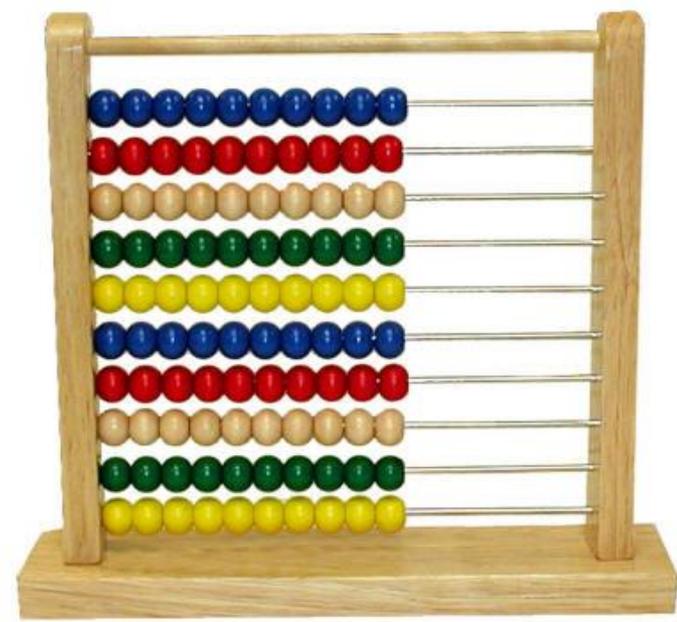
Christian leaders are trained to think. We learn it at seminary. We are skilled at suffocating our emotions. However ordinary people live in the world of emotions. Your favourite books, movies and memories elicit emotional responses in you. There is a huge difference between communicating with emotion and manipulating peoples feelings. People want leaders with soul. Great leaders , communicators and artists create an emotional connection with their audience. People want to be moved.



## 5# Speak visually!

The majority of people hear with their eyes.

We live in a visual culture. That however does not mean that you have to stop speaking. Paint word images, uses metaphors and allegories, tell stories. Create a diagram, use a painting, show a movie clip, incorporate a photo into your talk. Can you communicate your message without using words? If you can get people to leave with an image in their mind that illustrates what your are saying, your message will spread.



## 6# Simplify the complex!

People are confused enough. Wisdom is simple.

You are only as smart as you are able to communicate the most complicated message simply. Modern life is confusing enough without you adding to it. Theological intellectualism is a power trip, so drop it. Jesus managed to communicate to ordinary people deep truths with extraordinary clarity. The average person could understand his message, and those who wanted to take it deeper could. Great teachers simplify without being simplistic.



## 7# Pick your media!

Which medium is best for this particular message?

Today we enjoy the ability to communicate through a variety of mediums. When I feel that I have something to communicate I ask myself what is the best medium to use? Should I write a sermon, or a blog post? Should I record a podcast or shoot a short film? Should I write a book or could what I want to say be expressed in an email to my friends? Mix your media, you will find that each shapes your message in unique ways. Ask which medium will ensure your message travels the furthest.



## 8# Get passionate!

Passion is infectious.

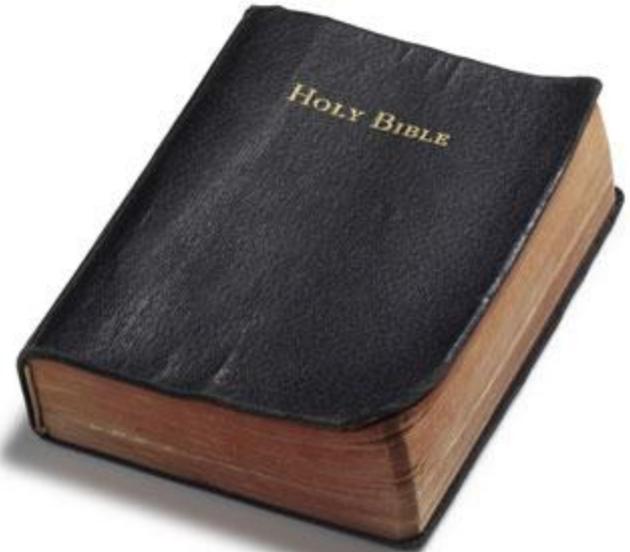
When someone is passionate about a subject, you want to listen to them. When you are passionate about a message, you learn it, you master it, it seeps out of your pores. People are sick of spin and rhetoric, they want to listen to people who mean it. Yet with passion people can spot imitations a mile away. Remember hype is very different to genuine passion. If you speak with honest passion, people will catch your bug.



# 9# Interpret peoples lives!

Help people make sense of it all

People will listen to you if you are helping them process and understand their lives and the world in which they live. People are living in a culture of change that moves at a million miles a second, their heads are spinning. Help them untangle the knots in their lives. Help them understand their kids, their neighbourhood, their spouse and their culture, and they will listen to you for hours. People want to see the big picture, they don't like being trapped in the details and drudgery. Show them where they fit in the story.



## 10# Use mystery!

We are drawn to the gaps.

We are drawn to mystery. We want to know what is behind the forbidden door. Your job is not to be the one stop shop for answers. You want people leaving with questions, you want them to ruminate and meditate for days. Provoke, stimulate and disturb. Leave holes and blank pages, make your audience work. You want people to go home and open their bibles, you want them debating in the car, you want them chatting with others. Once you start a conversation your message is off and running.