

## WHAT IF'S OF EVANGELISM #9

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*\This month I wanted to do something different this month and so I am going to post an "open letter" I wrote.*

Dear non-Christians,

I'm not writing this letter on behalf of a group of people (Christians) because I'm not going to presume that I am speaking for all Christians in North America. I do, however, want to use this space to say something to you on my own behalf:

I want to say that I'm sorry and I want to apologize for some of my "brothers" and "sisters" (as some Christians call each other) who have maybe treated you with little or no respect. Some people (and I am including myself) may have treated you like you had the plague or that you were just not smart enough to understand the "profound" truth that we believe. The fact is, we love God and want you to experience what we have experienced because of what it means to us. Some may have wanted you to believe because they wanted another "notch" in their Bible but that is not how God intended it.

I am also sorry that many Christians may have, though often with great intentions, driven you away with a lack of humility and a desire to win an argument and to "prove a point". Because "proving a point" and winning the intellectual argument is sometimes seen by some as the "greater good". But I want you to know that my love, faith, and trust for God do not supersede my intellect but affirms it. I can never completely understand or know God but I also know that God has revealed himself in creation, the Bible, his son Jesus, etc. And it is about more than knowledge and scientifically proven statements - God wants us to be in a real relationship with him.

I also apologize for those who have used the name of Jesus to pad their wallets. You and I both can list examples of those "TV evangelists" who have used the Bible and Christianity to weasel people out of their lifesavings for their own financial gain. You need to know that I am as disgusted and angry as you are.

[I also want to apologize for anytime that I may have separated my faith with who I am with you. I am a follower of Jesus (God) and I know that you understand that, but there are times where it probably was odd that I remained silent in a conversation or didn't talk about Church or what was going on in my life because I was afraid. My fear at times was about how you would look at me and my reputation but it was also at times about not making you feel uncomfortable or awkward. I get that you know what I believe and know who I am and I want to be authentic with you as a friend because you mean enough to me to be authentic with. I never want you to feel uncomfortable but I also know there are times when my fear and silence created that uncomfortably.]

I also want to apologize for anytime that I may have separated my faith from who I am when I am with you. I am a follower of Jesus (God) and I know that you understand that, but there are times where it probably was odd that I remained silent in a conversation or didn't talk about Church or what was going on in my life. This was probably because I was afraid. My fear was about how you would look at me and sometimes it was also about not making you feel uncomfortable or awkward. I get that you know what I believe and know who I am and I want to be authentic with you as a friend because you mean enough to me to be authentic with. I never want you to feel cornered or awkward but I also know there are times when my fear and silence created that awkwardness.

I want you to know that I respect you and I respect your decisions. But I also want you to know that because I love you as a friend, deep inside I want and hope that you would know the love and peace that I feel with God. This is not something that is impersonal or distant but God is someone who is personal and real and I want you to know and experience that someday. Not because of a warped Christian "pyramid scheme" or so my church can have more money or that my Bible can get one more notch in it, but because I love you and want you to know the love of God in your life.

So I am sorry for what I have done and what others have done in the name of God (Jesus). I apologize and want to look at our relationship differently. Please forgive me and know that the actions of a few don't always speak for the many and I know that overtime I need to earn your trust and respect and I will do all I can to do that.

My apologies in love,

Bryce

*Like always, this article is meant to promote thought and discussion and if you disagree, it resonated with you, or you were challenged, please feel free to let me know. I am always open to talking - feel free to call, drop in, go for coffee or email me (bryce@devonalliancechurch.ca).*