

# The “E” in the EPC

By Bob Stauffer, National Church Health Director



In 1981, the EPC was founded on several important pillars that have endured the test of time. Among those pillars was the priority of evangelism through the various governing bodies of the church. In fact, it was so important to the founding members of the EPC that they intentionally enshrined it in the name of our denomination and in our purpose statement.

That reality is based on the primacy of a Scriptural understanding of who we are as biblical Christians. Throughout Scripture, the priority of evangelism is declared again and again—and finds perhaps its deepest expression in the last words of Jesus, known as the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Secondly, the primacy of evangelism was talked about by our founding members as what would distinguish the EPC from all our sister denominations. They boldly proclaimed that evangelism is not only what would distinguish us from other denominations, but would be the very reason that we exist. Evangelism would be the

foundation for everything we did. EPC life, ministry, and mission would flow from that singular passion.

So, all the documents of the EPC call to the priority of evangelism in all levels and activities of church life. In other words, it is not just something that we do, it is who we are. We boldly proclaim the good news (Luke 4:17-20) which sets us apart from culture. For the EPC, evangelism is intentional, purposeful, and hopeful. It is the reason for our existence. Our Mission Statement reflects this reality well: *The EPC exists to carry out the great commission of Jesus as a denomination of Presbyterian, Reformed, Evangelical, and Missional Congregations.*

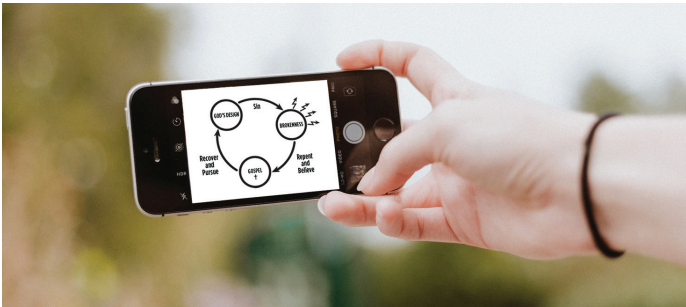
While our history shows strength in being Presbyterian and Reformed, we see opportunity for greater church health in answering the call to be missional and evangelical. While our history shows growth by transfer of congregations, we see opportunity for greater church health in conversion



## The “E” in the EPC continued

growth. While our history shows success of mission outreach to unreached people groups, we see opportunity for church health in personal evangelism in our neighborhoods. Many Christians will share their testimonies, but far too few know how to share the gospel story. There may be many reasons for that, including embarrassment or fear. But one reason that we can control is that Christians have not been trained to share the gospel story well and comfortably with others.

One of the first things that the National Church Health Team (NCHT) decided to talk about was to identify a resource that would help our denomination, our Presbyteries, and our churches in the area of knowing how to share the gospel story with those around them who don't know Jesus. Beyond simply having a “gospeling” tool to use in evangelistic conversations, the desire of the NCHT is to create an evangelistic culture that permeates every level and every member of our denomination. And beyond that, to agree on a tool that can be used across all EPC strategic priorities and give us common language and tools that can be applied to every aspect of our denominational life.



*Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations* (and its companion Life on Mission smartphone app and “Three Circles” evangelism tool), is the NCHT’s resource as a clear, practical, and simple approach to personal evangelism. The “Three Circles” tool is a simple way to explain the gospel through the lens of:

1. God’s design
2. Sin’s entrance into the world and the brokenness it creates, and
3. How the gospel of Jesus’ birth, death, and resurrection is the means to recover and pursue God’s design in life and the created order.

If a narrative of God’s design, our brokenness, and the redeeming power of the gospel sound familiar, it is because that language echoes ideas Reformed thinkers have articulated for centuries as regards the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ—often using the terms Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration.

But why choose one evangelism resource out of the many that are available? Why not just let everyone pick their own resource? In our experience, an EPC-specific tool for evangelism is the best way for all of us who wish to grow in our ability to share the gospel to do that together. The NCHT believes that we can achieve a greater power and synergy in having a common tool and using common language throughout the denomination so that we can consistently train and encourage our churches for evangelistic opportunities at every level of our denominational life.

Great evangelistic movements have developed simple gospeling tools that are reproducible, visual, simple, and adaptable. We need a tool that even a new believer can grasp and share with others right away—a reproducible tool that quickly multiplies disciples. In multiplying movements, leaders intentionally and repeatedly train believers in how to use these tools. They then stick with that tool.

People today are seeking relationships, so the tool must be highly relational and able to be contextualized for every different kind of person and context. We believe the EPC’s “Three Circles” is such a tool. The original tool, designed by Jimmy Scroggins of Family Church in West Palm Beach, Florida, is being used all over the United States and in dozens of countries around the world with incredible success. It has been demonstrated to be an effective evangelistic tool—not only in the U.S., but across the globe.

We want to use the amazing tools that Dr. Scroggins and his team have already developed and apply them in our EPC context. They have produced so many resources including leadership guides for churches, materials for youth groups, materials for children who are sharing the gospel as young as 7 and 8 years old, and a wide variety of other materials. As we have begun to demonstrate this resource around the EPC, we have been amazed at the stories already being told, and how powerful this resource is proving to be.

The EPC Church Health Team enthusiastically offers the “EPC’s Three Circles” evangelism tool and its supporting resources for use across the EPC for God’s glory and for His Kingdom.



Visit the [www.epc.org](http://www.epc.org), then click “What We Do”, then “Evangelism” for additional information.

Contact TE Bob Stauffer, EPC National Church Health Director, at [bob.stauffer@epc.org](mailto:bob.stauffer@epc.org) for more information and resources.



# Turning Everyday Conversations into Gospel Conversations

by Jimmy Scroggins and Steve Wright

*We live in a broken world*

And the gospel is how God puts broken people back together again. Once we repent and believe in Jesus, God's Spirit helps us recover and pursue His design. God is the one who created the world and every human being in it.

Authors Jimmy Scroggins and Steve Wright outline a reproducible method of sharing the gospel that has been tested in the real world. *Turning Everyday Conversations Into Gospel Conversations* is a simple strategy to train new and seasoned believers to join God in His reconciliation work.

*Turning Everyday Conversations Into Gospel Conversations* equips believers to use the innovative "3 Circles," a user-friendly evangelistic tool for a new generation. Scroggins and Wright train readers to incorporate the biblical metanarrative, as well as their own personal stories, to tell the good news that Jesus has made a way out of the broken places we find ourselves.

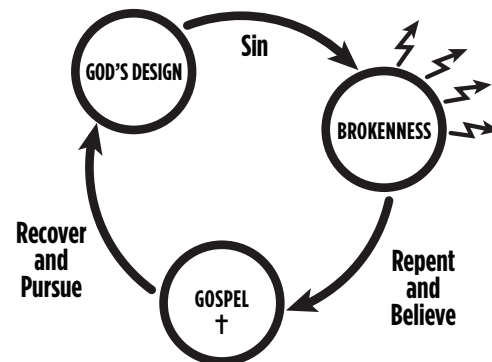
Churches around the world are training people to share the gospel using this method. It has proven appeal across generations and cultures. They've heard stories about an eight-year-old boy leading his twenty-six-year-old cousin to repent and believe in Jesus and a seventy-plus-year-old church member, who had never before shared his faith, leading his Spanish-speaking neighbor to Christ. It's been used to train the Mixtec in Mexico, Maasai Warriors in Kenya, and prisoners in America. It's been presented on napkins, in concrete, in the sand, and using tortillas. The 3 Circles works, and this book will train you and your church members to use it.

It doesn't matter if you have been a Christian for decades or days, you can learn to do what God asks us to do—to make His appeal to others through us (2 Corinthians 5:20). This short training manual will empower and inspire millions of Christians to turn hundreds of millions of everyday conversations into gospel conversations.

- ▶ The book: *Turning Everyday Conversation into Gospel Conversations*, and a pamphlet: "Life – 3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide" can be ordered from Lifeway Resources.
- ▶ Check out "3 Circles in 3 Minutes" YouTube video, published by NCL (The Normal Christian Life).
- ▶ Check out the videos of the EPC 42nd General Assembly and the EPC Church Health presentation by Jimmy Scroggins and Todd Thomas on Tuesday, June 21, during the Leadership Institute. Also see Tuesday's lunch presentation, "The State of Evangelism in the Nation and Our Churches."

## "The 3 Circles"

The 3 Circles is *really* simple. It involves three circles connected to three arrows.





## How to Build an Evangelistic Culture – 10 Steps

Using the “3 Circles” for sharing the gospel is a great tool – simple, direct, easily learned. Yet too many churches don’t embrace evangelism as a major function of the church. There is no focus on creating a church-wide environment for training and mobilizing congregants to share the gospel. Below are ten steps a church should consider to make gospel sharing integral to all activities and ministries of the church body – collectively and individually.

### 1. Focused Prayer

- Opening hearts of individuals and communities
- Watchful of the Holy Spirit’s leading

### 2. Choose a Gospeling Tool

- Pick one that you are comfortable with
- Pick one that can be used by all people in your church
- Pick just one – creates useful synergy

### 3. Train Your People to Use the Tool

- Practice, practice, practice

### 4. Help Your People Engage with “far from God” People

- Build-in ways for ministries to engage in the community (e.g., mentoring at a school, volunteering at a community organization, church teams in a community sports league)
- Eliminate ineffective ministries that occupy time away from the community

### 5. Emphasize Rapid Obedience

- New Christians are often the most excited to share with others
- New Christians are more likely to have close connections with non-Christians
- Keeping the gospel message accurate yet simple is key

### 6. Coordinate the Air War with the Ground War

- Emphasis is on evangelism in all areas of church life
- Culture develops when people connect what they hear with what they do

### 7. Create “Bottleneck Conversations”

- There are passages (“bottlenecks”) of church life that everyone goes through (e.g., new member classes, weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.). Present 3 Circles at all of these.

### 8. Involve ALL Ministries of the Church – especially Student and Children Ministries

- Children and teens often have more relationships with non-Christians than adults
- Children and teens are still forming their spiritual identity and are frequently more open to discuss spiritual matters
- Engaging children and teens provides an opening to parents

### 9. Collect Stories

### 10. Celebrate God Stories – make it a big deal!

- Involve everyone involved with the new Christian
- Celebrate during the main worship service



# EPC

*A Global Movement of  
Evangelical Presbyterian Churches*

5850 T.G. Lee Blvd., Suite 510  
Orlando, FL 32822  
(407) 930-4239 | (407) 930-4247 fax  
[www.epc.org](http://www.epc.org) | [info@epc.org](mailto:info@epc.org)