

I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us About Their Path to Jesus

by Don Everts and Doug Schaupp

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In the book, *I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us About Their Path to Jesus* by Don Everts and Doug Schaupp reveal five thresholds<sup>1</sup> they believe a person crosses in their becoming a Christian. Everts and Schaupp point out that once a person reveals he/she is a Christian, people become leery and may become standoffish. It is as though Christians came from another planet and have to be scrutinized. The first threshold states Christians have to win the trust of others in order for a friendship to blossom. Could it be that our society has raised a generation that is untrusting of others but especially to Christians?

The book covers five thresholds which are: 1) “distrust to trust; 2) complacent to curious; 3) change from being closed to a different lifestyle to becoming open; 4) wandering to seeking; and 5) willingness to repent, believe, and surrender their lives to Jesus.”<sup>2</sup> For each of the five thresholds, testimonies were given as to how each was “crossed over” to successfully move to the next entryway. As they stated in the book, not everyone becomes a Christian and some who seem very interested in learning more may eventually lose interest. This type of evangelism takes time, effort, creativity, perseverance and spiritual warfare prayer. It is listening to the Holy Spirit and obeying what God tells you to do. This type of outreach could work well in a community setting where a seeker may be invited to events suitable to answer their questions, explore interesting topics, and eventually learn about the Bible in layman’s terms. This process is about building trust and a strong friendship bond.

Unfortunately, Christians have been viewed negatively by the world because of scandals, our views towards morality, sex, even hell. I remember on my first full-time job a co-worker stated she used to watch a big tele-evangelist but when he fell into sin and the media blasted him, she wanted nothing to do with the evangelist. Christians are put on pedestals and when they fall, it is damaging to our credibility. They feel we are hypocrites and “holy rollers” or “holier than thou” when we try to stand up for our beliefs. Sometimes it is easier not to state what we stand for (e.g. pro-life, marriage, etc.). Sidewalk evangelists that speak of Hell might be preaching a message that will touch someone’s heart, but most will reject the style and message. People may point to the Crusades as another atrocity related to Christianity. As one of my classes stated, we need to know there is the good but also the “ugly” that comes with mission. Hopefully, we will have more good, than ugly with our encounters. Seekers need to see Christians are real people and we are not perfect.

Everts and Schaupp discuss how people usually progress in their journey to becoming a Christian with their five thresholds. I agree with their observations and like their creative thoughts on how to engage others. Some of the items I would like to employ would be the following: Their concept of “Soul-Awakening Events”<sup>3</sup> which use pertinent themes to spark discussion from an outsider’s viewpoint and “GIG” (Groups Investigating God)<sup>4</sup> are appealing ways to start conversations. The names of these activities are thought provoking and inviting. Posting the ‘5 Rules’ on the wall to remind GIG attendees of the rules of engagement give clear guidelines and provide reasonable expectations of the group.<sup>5</sup> The idea of being a “case study” by hypothetically becoming a Hindu, Buddhist, etc. is a good approach to discuss what I would grapple with in each religion and presented in a non-threatening way<sup>6</sup> provided I study the main tenets of the religion.

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<sup>1</sup> Don Everts and Doug Schaupp, *I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us about Their Path to Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008), 23-24.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Everts and Schaupp, *I Once Was Lost*, 79.

<sup>4</sup> Everts and Schaupp, 93.

<sup>5</sup> Everts and Schaupp, 97.

<sup>6</sup> Everts and Schaupp, 92.

What wooed us to Jesus? It is coming to know of His love, forgiveness and compassion. Letting seekers know from the Bible of how Jesus hung out with sinners without judgment; how He fought for justice as in the case of the woman caught in adultery (where was the lover?); and the greatest story of compassion and love (Jesus' death on the cross) will be ways for the Holy Spirit to touch our seeker friends' hearts.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Everts, Don, and Doug Schaupp. *I Once Was Lost: What Postmodern Skeptics Taught Us about Their Path to Jesus*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2008.