



The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission: Promoting the Gospel with More Than Our Lips

By John Dickson

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This book comes out of years of reflection, failures, and some successes in the task of reaching out to others with the gospel. Many Christians think of the task of mission as an entirely verbal activity, when perhaps the best kept secret of New Testament teaching about mission is that it involves a whole range of activities that explicitly promote Christ to the world and draw others to him, and only a few of them involve speaking. Without diminishing or downplaying the importance of speaking the gospel, John Dickson shows that, on the other hand, downplaying the range of activities that promote Christ to the world has its own set of problems. It can make those who are not confident about speaking—of anything, let alone Jesus—feel inadequate and self-conscious in the task of reaching out to others. Equally, it can make those who do have a flair for speaking feel as though they are fulfilling Christ's mission just by talking. But the reality is that the Lord wants our whole life, not just our lips, in the task of bringing the gospel to the world. Every facet of our lives can be used by God to promote the news of his power and mercy. In this practical guide to the biblical art of sharing your faith, John Dickson offers refreshing insight into the ways that all Christians can and should be involved in spreading the good news of Jesus. While not all Christians are called and gifted to become evangelists, we are all called to promote the gospel through a wide range of activities—prayer, financial partnership, good deeds, godly lives, public worship, daily conversation, etc.—with and without our lips. As readers engage with this book, grapple with its arguments and hear the stories of people coming to faith, they will be inspired to see the whole of life as significant for bringing the gospel to the world, and they will be liberated out of guilt and self-consciousness in evangelism into becoming perfectly natural promoters of Jesus Christ.

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Editorial Review

Review

Whereas so many books on evangelism are filled with techniques and strategies, the first and most heartwarming thing to commend about this book is that it is biblical---excitingly, eye-openingly biblical from start to finish, moving backward and forward within the Bible and between the Bible, and offering abundant 'case studies' in today's world. The book's second great feature is that it is balanced---showing us in just how many ways the Bible speaks about what we can do to promote the gospel. Everything is there, from being bold to being beautiful (yes, even that is biblical), from doing good to doing worship. Here is a book that takes us beyond merely talking about the gospel (without ever leaving that behind) to really living it, and also makes sure that when we do talk about the gospel, we actually have in mind something that the gospel writers and the apostle Paul would recognize. Biblical, balanced, and---well, brilliant. -- Christopher J.H. Wright, Author, *The Mission of God and The Mission of God's People*

|This book has the potential to radically change for good your perspective on evangelism. It is required reading at Parkside. -- Alistair Begg, Senior Minister, Parkside Church

|This is as lively and sensible a book on evangelism as I have seen, especially valuable for bringing out the wide range of activities that need to be carried on in effective Christian witness in contemporary society. It encourages congregations to recognize the varied gifts of their members and to enable each one to be involved in evangelism, even though not all of them may be called to be evangelists in the narrower sense of the term. -- Howard Marshall, Professor, University of Aberdeen

|When I was asked to review this new book on evangelism, I didn't know what to expect. But I soon discovered: this is a terrific book! Without compromising or reducing the gospel to pious platitudes, Dickson presents evangelism as the Christ-centered imperative of biblical faith. Theologically rich and practically helpful. -- Timothy George, Editor, *Christianity Today*

|John Dickson's *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission* was not only a great stimulus to my own thinking about evangelism but also proved a real help to our congregation at St. Ebbe's, Oxford, as we thought through how we could best fulfill our role as Christ's witnesses. It's a wonderful mix of thoughtful reflection on the Bible and down-to-earth practical application. -- Vaughan Roberts, President, *The Proclamation Trust UK*

|Even---or perhaps especially---if you do not consider yourself to be a gifted evangelist, John Dickson will encourage you from Scripture with many varied ways to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ. -- Collin Hansen, Author, *Young, Restless, Reformed: A Journalist's Journey with the New Calvinists*

|John Dickson shows that taking seriously the church's message, worship, and ecclesiology, along with the biblical call for Christians to impact the social and cultural world around them, does not negate the mandate and high calling of evangelism. In fact, to be ambassadors for the gospel of the kingdom is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian and to change the world. This is a message that needs to be heard. -- Jim Belcher, Author, *Deep Church*

|John Dickson has given us a biblically rich and powerfully written book on evangelism. His views are deeply embedded in Scripture and well-rounded. He does not fall into formulas, but encourages us toward a

lifestyle of living and speaking the gospel in our culture today. I recommend this book to those whose passion for evangelism has flagged as well as for those who are actively sharing Christ with their friends and neighbors. -- Tremper Longman III, Professor, Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College

|Any twenty-first-century Christian who has felt the dread of proselytizing people into the faith should read John Dickson's empathetic, confessional treatise on Christian mission. He combines the mind of a scholar with the heart of a pastor to talk to us as fellow Christians about the compelling wonder of Christ for the twenty-first-century world. -- David Livermore, Executive Director, Global Learning Center, Grand Rapids MI

|Some years ago John Dickson ran an excellent evangelism training course in our local church. The course material--now available in this book--is biblical, liberating, and practical. I commend it as a stimulating resource for congregations and church leadership teams. -- Christopher Ash, Director, Cornhill Training Course , London

|A biblical, practical, warm, and encouraging book that does exactly what it sets out to do: equip us as the Christian community to promote the gospel. This should become a standard text on the subject. -- Michael Frost, Director, Centre for Evangelism and Global Mission, Morling College, Sydney

|Having read Dr. Dickson's published doctoral thesis, I am delighted that he has now produced this highly readable book for all church members in the biblical art of mission today. The style is down-to-earth and lively. I warmly recommend it. -- Donald Robinson, Principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney

|Here is a compelling case for the involvement of all believers in promoting the gospel, not based on hype or overwrought exegesis but on a profound understanding of Scripture and illustrated with contemporary and moving human experience. A must-read. -- Robert Forsyth, Bishop of South Sydney, Anglican Church of Australia

|I warmly recommend this book. I have learned from reading it, and I have no doubt that others will as well. It challenged me, encouraged me, and often inspired me. And at my age that's quite an achievement! -- Alister McGrath, President, Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics

|In *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission*, John Dickson winsomely demonstrates how each of us can be part of the greatest story ever: God's mission to our hurting world. He insightfully observes that proclaiming the gospel is not only about witnessing to the reality of God's worth and uniqueness with our lips but with our very lives--through such everyday but life-transforming acts as prayer, faithfulness, compassion, and worship ... I wholeheartedly commend John's book to you and know you will be richer for his insights. -- Ravi Zacharias

|'John Dickson presents a bigger picture of evangelism than most of us are used to. We should, he insists, recognise worship, love, prayer, and generosity as all part of 'gospel' work. Still more refreshing is the heart of the book: a treatment of Jesus and the Kingdom of God--the message of the four Gospels--as the centre of 'the gospel.' God's good news is about the entire new creation, and ourselves caught up into it; it is not just a mechanism for getting individuals into heaven. Dickson explains the whole picture with so many real-life stories that one cannot fail to be drawn in to the excitement of this many-sided gospel work. Here is a book offering fresh energy for the whole task of the whole people of God.' -- N. T. Wright, Bishop of Durham

|Dickson offers a thoroughly biblical account of evangelism, informed and enlivened by stories from his own

experience. For many who are weary of what often goes by the name evangelism, this book will be a most refreshing and inspiring experience. -- Richard Bauckham, Senior Scholar, Ridley Hall, Cambridge

From the Back Cover

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--**Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School of Samford University and senior editor of *Christianity Today***

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--**Vaughan Roberts, rector of St. Ebbe's Church, Oxford, and president of The Proclamation Trust UK**

About the Author

John Dickson (PhD, Macquarie University, Sydney) is a senior research fellow of the Department of Ancient History, Macquarie University; codirector of the Centre for Public Christianity; and senior minister at St. Andrew's Roseville. The author of more than a dozen books, he is the host of two major historical documentaries for Australian television and is a busy public speaker in corporations, universities, churches, and conferences.

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