

The following is a summary outline for the 10+ page final letter that students in Jerram Barrs' Apologetics and Outreach, and Cross-Cultural Communications classes at Covenant Seminary are required to write to a friend who is not a believer.

A letter such as this can be presented to a person in its entirety, but this letter is better thought of as an entire process of steps or movements for an ongoing relationship to move through in one's process of sharing the gospel relationally. Thus, it can be helpful to think of each stage of this letter as a progressing season of dialogue within the life of a relationship. See Jerram's books: "Heart of Evangelism" and "Learning Evangelism from Jesus" for a more thorough understanding of this evangelistic approach.

Requirements for The Letter:

I. Honor what God honors- 1+ page

- Why I respect and honor him/her
- A bit of the history of our friendship
- Treasured memories

II. Bridge Building- 3.5-4 page

- Where do I see elements of:
 - truth, goodness, wisdom, justice, mercy, beauty?
 - where has God not totally let him go?
- Identify a couple of areas of testimony the Spirit is bringing to bear
- Demonstrate to your friend that you have listened to their life well—you have taken the time and thoughtfulness to get to know their deepest values and loves, AND you have considered WHY they love the things that they do.
- Consider that they are designed in the imago Dei, therefore, how does their life display aspects of the Creator's glory and beauty? (you do not need to get to the fact of their brokenness at this point)
- Begin with the Doctrine of Creation before moving to the Doctrine of Sin

III. Clarify the Truth- 3.5-4 page

- Use bridge to declare clearly the appropriate aspect of truth
- Declare aspect of Biblical truth
- Clarify true foundation of the handful of qualities I've been commending
- Positive & Negative aspect: things I commend have no place in the world of their unbelief; rather, these belong to GOD
- Persuade of the glorious truth of the gospel: aspects of this will vary according to particular bridges built
- All truth is God's truth, we must show that the truth comes from God and leads to him—how do their commendable qualities point to the God of the Bible?
- Commend him, and then tell who this God is who created it
- Be clear and biblical, but do not use Christianese, look at Acts 14 & 17 for examples for language
 - Paul cannot assume knowledge of OT
 - Paul cannot assume knowledge of Messianic promises
 - Paul cannot assume knowledge of events in Palestine
 - Watch what we assume from our reader!

IV. Challenge- 1-2 pages

- Seek to understand what his/her fundamental need is, what is the need of their heart? What is going on in their “wanter” that is giving direction to their “chooser”/will? How are their desires displaying brokenness? How have the good things you have commended become the best things/idols in their life?
- PRAY for them, weep on their behalf—how is the Spirit testifying to Himself?
 - Where are they suppressing the truth in unrighteousness?
 - What stands between them and the Lord?
 - What primary doubts, questions, objections, resistance do they have? Have you affirmed these and at least begun the process of addressing these?
 - What is the idol of their heart?
 - What is the fundamental devotion of their heart? (will, emotions, mind) that captures them?
 - What are they serving instead of God?
- Don't make a list of sins!
 - What are they living for that requires them to make more sacrifices and give more devotion?
- Requires a deep knowledge of the person
 - discern devotion of the heart
 - GRACEFULLY help them to see the end result of living consistent to their devotions
 - DO NOT BE OVERWHELMING!!! Recognize where they are at in their spiritual journey and meet them there with the Gospel, this could look like a challenge to repent and believe or this could look like asking them a series of questions to consider
 - where do they need to humble their will to obtain true knowledge?
 - if they are legalistic elder brothers, then bring them the law to lead to grace
 - if they are hedonistic younger brothers, then approach them with the tenderness of grace
- Make sure to conclude well
 - present some next steps in your relationship and ongoing conversation
 - make sure at some point in your letter, you've confessed and sought forgiveness for any unrepentant sins or hurts they've suffered from you or other Christians
 - End by affirming and encouraging

Humility on your part: The best way to reach someone is often by revealing your own struggles and the areas of idolatry in your own heart – acknowledging how challenging it has been, and still is, for you to love God with your whole being makes it far easier for the person to admit his/her own idols and the barriers to God in the heart and mind

Remember: Some need an invitation rather than a challenge.

Remember: Jesus asked thoughtful, revealing, and difficult questions for people; and, he often let people go in order to wrestle through them. Our letter may just end with a handful of questions such as this for people to wrestle with, and continue to dialogue through