

## **Chapter 4**

# **SERVANT EVANGELISM EXPERIENCING GOD TESTIMONIES**

## **SERVANT EVANGELISM: EXPERIENCING GOD TESTIMONIES**

### **GOD IS AT WORK. WE JUST SHOW UP.**

A servant heart and attitude should characterize authentic Servant Evangelism. We earn the right for a hearing through being a servant. The attitude of a humble servant seeks to serve others. Instead of marketing the Gospel as a product, Servant Evangelism stresses a servant kind of life lived under the authority of Jesus Christ. **The model for a servant heart is Jesus.**

### **A SERVANT EVANGELISM OUTREACH**

“Lesson with a Hairbrush” by Beth Moore\*1

Beth Moore, a member of First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, truly has a servant heart. Beth is a Bible teacher, writer of Bible studies, conference speaker and a married mother of two daughters. Her testimony is both a humorous and yet a touching account of the Lord at work in her everyday life in the Spirit.

### **A SERVANT EVANGELISM PROJECT**

“Extreme Makeover” by Mark Jackson\*2  
Colonial Baptist Church, Carey, North Carolina

Paul Jackson was one of the pastors of Colonial Baptist Church until God called him “home”. One year later, the young people were challenged to have part in getting outside the walls of the church . . . to give themselves in service to others. Debby, Paul’s wife, was on the receiving end of a Servant Evangelism project.

Mark Jackson, Paul’s father, gives testimony to what God did through a Servant Evangelism project.

## **SERVANT EVANGELISM**

**Sharing God's love through practical acts of kindness,  
expecting nothing in return,  
for the opportunity to give a Christian witness**

### **A SERVANT EVANGELISM OUTREACH**

#### **"Lesson With A Hairbrush"**

by Beth Moore

I was heading to the east coast, and I had a layover in Knoxville. I was going from a rather large airplane to a very small plane, so I joined other travelers in one large room with several doors leading to commuter aircraft. Wanting to make good use of an hour layover, I sat with my Bible on my lap and continued to work on memorizing the first chapter of John . . . and was very intent upon what I was doing. I'd had a marvelous morning with the Lord. I say that because I want to tell you that sometimes it's a scary thing to have the Spirit of God really working in you. You could end up doing some things you never would have done otherwise. Life in the Spirit can be dangerous for a thousand reasons not the least of which is your ego.

Seventy or eighty of us filled this commuter area of the Knoxville airport, all waiting to board our planes. The seating in this large room had us facing one another in various rows of vinyl chairs. I see that peculiar arrangement often in airports, but I've never been able to figure it out. Certainly, I am a people watcher, but I prefer to do my people watching a little less conspicuously.

All at once the people sitting across from me were captivated by a sight over my shoulder. I smoothed down my hair, thinking my Texas-do may have been a bit much for them. In Texas we tend to believe the higher the hair, the closer to God, but I've noticed that other regions in the nation may not have reached such deep revelation. Since their expressions didn't change after I called my hair into submission, I knew something was going on behind my back. From the look of their expressions, I could also tell it was horrifying. I wanted to look so badly, but Southern girls who mind their manners know you can't stare while everyone else is staring. You wait to stare until all the others have stopped.

I tried as hard as I could to keep my eyes on my Bible, but I was so distracted by my fellow travelers that I couldn't concentrate. I had no idea what was going on back there, but I knew it had to be something big. In just a few minutes, I could see activity over my

left shoulder, and finally I glanced out of the corner of my eye. I will never forget what I saw. An airline hostess was pushing a wheelchair with an old man who looked not a day younger than 127 years old. I've never in my whole life seen a human being look that old and that weary and that drawn. I tried to keep from staring, but he was such a strange sight. Humped over in a wheelchair, he was skin and bones dressed in clothes that obviously fit when he was at least twenty pounds heavier. His knees protruded from his trousers, and his shoulders looked like the coat hanger was still in his shirt. His hands looked like tangled masses of veins and bones. The strangest part of him was his hair and nails. Stringy gray hair hung well over his shoulders and down part of his back. His fingernails were long. Clean. Unpainted, thankfully, but strangely out of place on an old man.

I looked back down at my Bible as fast as I could, discomfort burning my face. As I tried to imagine what his story might have been, I found myself wondering if I'd just had a Howard Hughes sighting. Then again, I'd read somewhere that he was dead. So, this man in the airport . . . an impersonator maybe? Was a camera on us somewhere? I recall being on an airplane on my way to Memphis once with a plane full of Elvis impersonators. Unbeknown to me, it was the king of rock and roll's birthday. I'd never seen so many men with bigger hair than mine or such a penchant for talking in Lyrics. OK, don't be cruel. The point is, the strange old man could have been an act, I supposed. But if he was, he deserved an Oscar. And a new makeup artist.

There I sat trying to concentrate on the Word to keep from being concerned about a thin slice of humanity served on a wheelchair only a few seats from me. All the while my heart was growing more and more overwhelmed with feeling toward him. Let's admit it. Curiosity is a heap more comfortable than true concern, and suddenly I was awash with aching emotion for this bizarre-looking old man.

I had walked with God long enough to see the handwriting on the wall. I've learned that when I begin to feel what God feels, something so contrary to my natural feelings, something dramatic is bound to happen. And it may be embarrassing. I immediately began to resist because I could feel God working on my spirit and moving me toward the man. I started arguing with God in my mind, *Oh no, God, please no*. I looked up at the ceiling as if I could stare straight through it into heaven and said silently, "Please, Lord, I know what's going on here. You want me to witness to this man. God, please don't make me witness to this man. Not right here and now. Please! I'll do anything. Put me on the same plane with him. I'll witness to him on the plane, but don't make me get up here and witness to this man in front of this gawking audience. Please, Lord!"

Don't' get me wrong. I don't have a problem with sharing the gospel with someone. I love to share Jesus, but this was a very peculiar-looking man in a setting that seemed a bit

unconducive to spiritual awakening. I tried my hardest to continue my memory work when I felt a serious rebuke from God. Something like, "Hide my Word in your heart. Don't hide in my Word from your heart." His Word is meant to teach us how to love Him and love others. To use the study of God's Word as an excuse not to serve is like using food as an excuse not to eat.

Then I heard His commanding voice loud and clear. When I say God spoke to me, it wasn't an audible voice. Like most of you, I would have instantly morphed into a corpse. . . .

There I sat in the blue vinyl chair begging His Highness, "Please don't make me witness to this man. Lord, please, please! Not now! I'll do it on the plane if you'll put us on the same plane." Then I heard it: "Oh, I don't want you to witness to him, I want you to brush his hair."

The words were so clear, my heart leapt into my throat, and my thoughts spun like a top. My chin practically dropped to the ground with shock as I quickly surveyed the two prospects. Do I witness to the man or brush his hair? No brainer. I looked straight back up at the ceiling and said, "God, as I live and breathe, I want you to know I am ready to witness to this man. I'm on this, Lord. I'm your girl! You've never seen a woman witness to a man faster in your life! What difference does it make if his hair is a mess if he is not redeemed? I'm on him. I'm going to witness to this man!"

Again as clearly as I've ever heard an audible word, God seemed to write this statement across the wall of my mind: "That's not what I said, Beth. I don't want you to witness to him. I want you to go brush his hair."

I looked up at God and quipped, "I don't have a hairbrush. It's in my suitcase on the plane, for crying out loud! How am I supposed to brush his hair without a hairbrush?" Where I come from, you fix your hair, spray it stiff, and don't touch it again until bedtime. Clearly this wasn't bedtime. God was so insistent that I almost involuntarily began walking toward the man as these thoughts came to me from God's Word: "I will thoroughly furnish you unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:7 KJV). I stumbled over to the wheelchair thinking I could use one myself. Even as I retell this story to you, my pulse has quickened, and I can feel those same butterflies. I knelt down in front of the man and asked as demurely as possible, "Sir, may I have the pleasure of brushing your hair?"

He looked back up at me and said, "What did you say?"

"May I have the pleasure of brushing your hair?" To which he responded at volume ten, "Little lady, if you expect me to hear you, you're going to have to talk louder than that."

At this point I took a deep breath and blurted out, "SIR," (No, I'm not exaggerating) "MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF BRUSHING YOUR HAIR?" At which point every eye in the place darted right at me. I was the only thing in the room more peculiar than old Mr. Longlocks. Face crimson and forehead breaking out in a sweat, I watched him look up at me with absolute shock on his face and said, "If you really want to."

Are you kidding? Of course I didn't want to! But God didn't seem interested in my personal preferences right about then. He pressed on my heart until I could utter the words, "Yes, sir, I would be so pleased. But I have one little problem. I don't have a hairbrush."

"I have one in my bag," he responded. I went around the back of that wheelchair, and I got down on my hands and knees. I unzipped the stranger's old carry-on hardly believing what I was doing. I lifted out undershirts, pajamas, and shorts until I finally came to the bottom of the bag. There my fingers wrapped around the familiar bristles of a brush. I stood up and I started brushing the old man's hair. It was perfectly clean, but it was tangled and matted. I don't do many things well, but I must admit I've had notable experience untangling knotted hair mothering two little girls. Like I'd done with either Amanda or Melissa in such a condition, I began brushing at the very bottom of the stands, remembering to take my time and be careful not to pull. A miraculous thing happened to me as I started brushing that old man's hair. Everybody else in the room disappeared. There was no one alive for those moments except that old man and me. I brushed and I brushed and I brushed until every tangle was out of that hair. I know this sounds so strange but I've never felt that kind of love for another soul in my entire life. I believe with all my heart, I—for that few minutes—felt a portion of the very love of God. That He had overtaken my heart for that little while like someone renting a room and making Himself at home for a short while. The emotions were so strong and so pure that I knew they had to be God's.

His hair was finally as soft and smooth as an infant's. I slipped the brush back in the bag, went around the chair to face him. I got back down on my knees, put my hands on his knees, and said, "Sir, do you know Jesus?"

He said, "Yes, I do." Well, that figures. He explained, "I've known Him since I married my bride. She wouldn't marry me until I got to know the Savior." He said, "You see, the problem is, I haven't seen my bride in months. I've had open-heart surgery, and she's been too ill to come see me. I was sitting here thinking to myself, *What a mess I must be for my bride*".

Only God knows how often He allows us to be part of a divine moment when we're completely unaware of the significance. This, on the other hand, was one of those rare encounters when I knew God had intervened in details only He could have known. It was a God moment, and I'll never forget it. Our time came to board, and sadly we were not

on the same plane. Oh, how I wished we had been. I was deeply ashamed of how I'd acted earlier and would have been so proud and please to have accompanied him on that aircraft. The airline hostess came to get him, as we said our good-byes, and she rolled him on the plane.

I still had a few minutes, and as I gathered my things to board, she returned from the corridor, tears streaming down her cheeks. She said, "That old man's sitting on the plane, sobbing. Why did you do that?" She insisted, "What made you do that?"

I said, "Do you know Jesus? He can be the bossiest thing!" And we got to share. I learned something about God that day I'll never forget. He knows if you're exhausted because you're hungry, you're serving in the wrong place, or it's time to move on but you feel too responsible to budge. He knows if you're hurting or feeling rejected. He knows if you're sick or drowning under a wave of temptation. Or He knows if you just need your hair brushed. God knows your need. He sees you as an individual. Tell Him your need.

I got on my own flight, sobs choking my throat, wondering how many opportunities just like that one I had missed along the way . . . all because I didn't want people to think I was strange. God didn't send me to that old man. He sent that old man to me.

## A SERVANT EVANGELISM PROJECT

### **“Extreme Makeover”**

by Mark Jackson

Sunday, February 12, 2006 was the first anniversary of the Memorial Service for our son, Paul. Two-thousand people had filled the church to overflowing for the two-hour service. The memories are bittersweet.

Growing out of that, however, is a piece of sweet news that I want to pass on to you. It has given birth to a new hope in Debby's heart, delight for the rest of the family and great joy within the Church.

Colonial Baptist Church's youth group numbers about 600 students. Brian Eisner, Pastor of Student Ministries, had become convicted that not enough was happening of real value in many of the lives of the students and decided to suggest something a little different this year.

Normally, the students and youth leaders participate in a long weekend winter retreat featuring several sessions with challenging messages, bond building activities, and a large group activity, which is often a day ski trip. Brian challenged them to do something different this year and so he created the iSERVE '06' campaign aimed at giving themselves in service to families in the church and community who have physical and spiritual needs. Two hundred and fifty students and youth leaders signed up.

Colonial's student ministry is subdivided by care groups of 10-12 students for each youth leader. Each group searched the church and community for those in need and chose a family or organization to come alongside. Some groups chose to work together on larger projects. In all, there were 13 projects. The youth leaders met with their groups for three months, planning and determining how they could best meet the needs for their group project.

One group of 15 high school girls expressed a desire to help in Paul and Debby's home. In the last several years, Paul's failing health and strong determination to keep busy in the church fulfilling his projects, left many things around the home in need of repair.

Choosing to keep it a secret, all of the planning for the project had gone on behind Debby's back without a whisper of it coming to her ears! The girls' parents, who are Debby's peers, began to catch the delight of doing something in Paul's memory, too. Soon a major Sunday School class got word of what was happening, caught the vision and things began to happen.



They were a tight-lipped bunch! Debby continued to be clueless to the secret plans. While she was at work, her mother let groups of adults and youth into the house. They drew plans and made decisions and funds began to come in.

Finally, on Saturday, February 18, groups fanned out over the city and various projects got under way to the surprise and amazement of all the recipient families and organizations involved.

On the previous Tuesday, three of Debby's closest friends, came to her home with flowers, gifts and the announcement that they were going to make her Queen for a Day! According to plan, they picked her up on Friday evening at 5:00 PM and took her out to a lovely dinner, a concert and then did a sleep-over in a beautiful hotel in town.

The next day was spent in true Queen for a Day fashion including breakfast in bed, spa treatment with the works, pedicure, manicure, hair styling, lunch and a whirlwind of 'girl' fun throughout the day.

Within 30 minutes of their Friday evening departure, 50 people converged on her home. Ultimately over 100 people had a hand in transforming the Jackson home.

The plans had been meticulously arranged. Men, women and girls tore into most of the corners of the house, removing furniture, painting rooms, tearing out plumbing, replacing fixtures, replacing the floor underneath the refrigerator and changing the lighting.

As that work began, a group of the students distributed fliers to all the homes in the area telling them what they were going to do and requesting for them to please not call the police! Several neighbors came and offered to help while others offered their garages for use in whatever painting or building projects were needed.

Work was going on outside the house as well. Flood lights were erected, the entire home was power washed, shutters were painted, the front door was changed from green to a brilliant Chinese red, flower boxes were painted and replanted, flower beds were filled with tulips, pansies and other flowers, 75 bags of mulch were spread, their lovely fishpond was grubbed out and brush was cut in the back of the house. The porch and chairs were painted and the garage door was replaced. The work continued throughout the night.

I knew I would only be in the way if I had joined in the work so I stopped by to take some pictures. The house was so crowded with people it was difficult to get inside. I have never seen such a happy spirit of people working so diligently. Young people were wiping up messes, cleaning cupboards, scrubbing floors, washing windows, running errands and a hundred other spring-cleaning-type jobs. Some people were crying as they worked. The preeminent sound, however, was joyous laughter.

One girl had the job of keeping track of time and every half hour announced through a bull-horn how much time was left until 5 PM when Debby would arrive.

The trucks began arriving. One held a new side by side refrigerator/freezer and a microwave; another brought a complete bedroom set including a lovely queen sized bed with bedding, a desk, a chest of drawers, an overstuffed reclining chair and an HDTV, all for the master bedroom; yet another, new toilets, sinks, lighting fixtures and new pictures to be hung throughout the home.

One man brought all his tile-laying employees and the tile to redo the bath rooms, floors, showers, back splashes. The crowning touch was a new electric fireplace for the family room.

The neighbor said, "Can I come to your Church?" She came the next day.

At 5 minutes until 5:00 the last workers crawled out from under sinks and toilets, rinsed paint brushes, stored ladders in the garage and with joy all over their faces, walked out of the now spotless house.

At promptly 5:05 PM a large Hummer pulled up in front of the house and stopped behind a strategically parked bus located so that Debby could not see the house when she got out of the vehicle.

The leader of the project made a little bull-horn speech and ended by saying: "There is a surprise for you on the other side of the bus!" Then he turned to the crowd whom he had primed and began the countdown that could be heard all over the block: "ONE, TWO, THREE – MOVE THE BUS!!" The bus rolled away and Debby stared at her house in obviously genuine surprise. Her daughter, Bethany, stepped up beside her and put her arms around her to support her. Everyone was crying and hugging each other and there was a holy feeling in the air.

Then everyone took off their shoes and followed Debby as she walked into her "new home". The changes were many and beautiful but when Debby saw the fireplace, it stopped her in her tracks. Her hands flew to her face and tears poured. They had known that she had always wanted a fireplace, but none of them knew that they had unknowingly put the fireplace in exactly the spot where the hospice bed was located and where Paul had passed away just a year before!

Later that night, long after all the workers and friends were gone, Debby sat for 2 or 3 hours, alone in her "new family room". There she thought about all the love that had been showered on her by loving friends and by the Lord, and spent a long time in conversation with Him. She thought about Paul and the warmth of the fireplace that was coming from that spot in the room. She dedicated the whole thing to the Lord for His glory. She did not sleep at all that night.

The next night, Sunday, there was a meeting of all the workers and their families. Debby and her family and many friends from the church, who came to hear the story and the testimonies of what had happened in the hearts of those who had been so involved and giving.

Men, women and young people all told how their lives had literally been changed through this huge effort. There were dedications and commitments to Christ and many tears. It was as close to an old time revival as I have seen. Such love is not that often expressed in churches these days but this was a classic expression of it that will not soon be forgotten. One girl, in her testimony said, "Let's not go on any more ski trips. Let's just do things like this and serve the Lord and not our own interests."

One of many miracles recorded during this event was told on Sunday night by the women to whom it happened. Three of the organizers had gone to the furniture store to buy the new bedroom set. They realized that they did not have enough money to buy all the pieces they wanted for the Jackson home. The spokeswoman for the group was leaning on the desk they wanted to purchase when her cell phone rang. The call was from someone she did not know and who was not a member of Colonial. The caller said, "I have heard what you are doing in memory of Paul and for Debby. Is there anything you need?"

The spokeswoman paused before answering, and then moved by the Spirit, mentioned the piece of furniture they wanted and hesitantly mentioned the price. The lady said, "Where do I send the check?"

That loving gesture seemed to characterize what was happening all over the city in 13 such heaven-sent gestures of love and particularly in the home of Paul and Debby.