

## **Moderator on Evangelism**

### **Denominational News**

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Posted on : 2008/3/21 9:10:00

A monthly column for the church-at-large by The Reverend Joan S. Gray, Moderator of the 217th General Assembly (2006) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). **Cracking a Tough Nut**  
March 2008    Evangelism continues to be a really tough nut to crack for many Presbyterians.

We worry about our shrinking churches, but we are not comfortable, by and large, talking with people outside the church (or sometimes inside it!) about our faith.    What can we do to help change this culture of silence into one that connects with people who need to hear good news? Here are a few suggestions I have picked up around the church.    **Give people in your church a chance to craft and practice their faith &ldquo;elevator speech.&rdquo;** When I was a candidate for Moderator of the 218th General Assembly (2008), someone told me that I must be able to tell someone why they should want me to be Moderator between the time they got on an elevator with me and the time they got off. I think every Presbyterian should have an &ldquo;elevator speech&rdquo; in answer to questions such as, why are you a Christian? What difference does God make in your life? It would give us a jumping off place to talk about faith and help us get over our evangelistic lockjaw. **Carry a give-away Bible.** Buy several small, inexpensive Bibles or Scripture portions and mark with a highlighter some passages that are particularly powerful for you in terms of the gospel message. Carry one of these around with you in your car, purse, or in your carry-on bag when you fly. If you get into a religious discussion, give the person the Bible with your blessing and invite them to read the marked passages. You can even read the passages with them to open the door to further conversation. **Pray that God will bring people across your path who need to hear of and experience God&rsquo;s love.** Expect it to happen. Pay attention and be prepared to respond graciously and authentically. There really are people out there who are desperate to hear some good news about themselves and the world. We have that good news! If we are willing, God will use us to plant seeds of the gospel in people&rsquo;s lives.