

Meet John Sorensen

Launched April 6, the new 1:00 feature **"Share Life Today"** brings the renowned legacy of Evangelism Explosion to the Christian media arena. The infectious enthusiasm of EE International President John Sorensen makes for a most winsome presentation ... as you'll see in the responses below!

How early in life did you come to know Jesus as Savior?

I was 26 years old when I came to Christ. I had grown up in a religious home (in fact my dad was a pastor). I had even attended a few years of Bible college! But I still did not know what was going to happen to me when I died. Then Dr. Tom Stebbins asked me two great questions: 1-Did I know for sure I had eternal life? I said, "No. Could anyone know?" and 2- What would you say to God if He asked why He should let you into Heaven. I said, "I'm trying to be a good person. I hope the good things I do outweigh the bad things I do!" He shared the Gospel with me (using the Evangelism Explosion outline) and it was right in the middle of the chair illustration when I understood for the first time the difference between simply knowing about Jesus and trusting in Him. That day, in September 1988, I put my trust in Christ and Him alone. And my life was radically changed!

What was the catalyst for you personally joining the Evangelism Explosion organization?

Two years later I was trained in Evangelism Explosion by this very same pastor. The first night we went out to share the Gospel. I was scared to death! But we saw a real miracle happen. The man we visited prayed to receive Christ! Needless to say, I was hooked. Little by little sharing the Gospel became the desire of my heart and the other things that I did started to fade in importance. My wife Ann and I joined EE's staff in 1997 and have loved being here ever since.

When you became President of EE, you stepped into the position formerly held by the ministry's founder, Dr. D. James Kennedy—a great friend to all of us in NRB. What was it like to take that leadership role?

Dr. Kennedy was arguably the best Christian I have ever known. While he was intensely busy, he knew how to keep the main thing the main thing. Every week he took out a team and showed them how to witness. Even to his last breath, hearing a story of someone coming to Christ got him excited! I would often go to lunch with him; and I cannot think of one time when he did not start a conversation with someone we met, asked some great questions, and had a chance to testify to the life-changing truth of Jesus Christ. He was gifted in so many ways! There is rarely a day when I don't recognize the great contrast between him and me. We do have several things in common—one of which is loving to see people come to Christ! You should know that it is not my goal to become

the next D. James Kennedy. I honestly don't think anyone could be. My goal, by God's grace, is to continue the mission for which this great ministry was founded until Christ calls me home.

Since its founding, do you know how many individuals have been trained through EE to be a witness for Christ? Results?

EE has operated fairly consistently since 1962. Once 1970 came around, the ministry was all over the world. There are times when one country excels while others struggle. But overall, there is a consistent growth to the work worldwide. This past year, over one million Christians were trained to share their faith! So the number could easily approach 30+ million people! In just the first 15 years of this third millennium (2000 through 2014), we have, by God's Hand, seen right at 100 million people make a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. God is good!

You would probably not be surprised to know some of us aren't as bold as you about sharing our faith. Why is that?

Satan's greatest tool against the Church is discouragement/insecurity. If he can make us believe that we are useless, unable, or insignificant, then he has gone a long way to remove us from this epic spiritual battle that is described in God's Word. Sadly, we don't understand how God can and will use us in leading others to Christ. Even some pastors do not believe that lay people should be involved in such things! The truth is that God has placed us as missionaries to our friends, relatives, work associates, and neighbor—even to the strangers that we meet. And frankly, nothing is more exciting and fulfilling! Most Christians just don't know how. And they are filled with fear (What if I do it wrong? What if I make it worse? What if they ask me something that I can't answer?). This is why EE, and ministries like EE, are so vital in the Church.

Why radio now for Evangelism Explosion?

EE was founded on one basic principle: lay people are the KEY to reaching the world for Christ. The evangelism "explosion" being referred to is the expansive growth of witness that can happen as one Christian learns to witness and then trains someone else to do it too. Many Christians are able, but we get busy with life. So radio is a wonderful tool to encourage believers to focus on witness, in whatever way we are able, today. If we can make witness a daily habit, we will see God do wonderful things through our lives. And that will further encourage us to trust Him to "live out loud" to fulfill His purpose in our lives.

Is there someone you consider to be your spiritual mentor? I've had many great mentors in my life. Certainly Dr. Tom Stebbins (the man who led me to Christ and equipped me in EE) was a great mentor to me. And then



Dr. D. James Kennedy. Others, like Dr. Jerry White, past president for the Navigators, and Bobb Biehl (MasterPlanning Group) have spent time building into my life. It's one of the things I love about the Church. We should each have a mentor, and be a mentor. Pardon my shameless plug, but I think EE is a great way to mentor others!

Tell us about the Sorensen family. I have a wonderful bride, Ann. We are in ministry together. She is one of the best trainers in EE that I know! I also have, by God's grace, four children: two daughters and two sons. My oldest daughter, Erin, lives in Nebraska and works for a large non-profit, working in social media. My son Josh was the first married, lives in Asheville, and works with the ministry in development. I got a great daughter-in-law Emily out of that! My daughter, Hannah, just got married to a fine young man, Kevin, who is studying to be a pastor. Hannah teaches music at a private school in Florida. And last, my youngest son, Jacob, attends Appalachian State University and wants to be a medical missionary doctor in Africa.

Your work finds you on the road a great deal—what do you do to relax? I love to read. I generally read one book a week (sometimes more!). Still, if you spent some time with me you might say, as others do, that I work pretty much all the time. Frankly, I love what I do. My grandfather once told me, "Find a job doing what you love to do and you'll never work a day in your life!" Amen... go grandpa!

As a lifelong learner, what's on the reading table right now? I read through God's Word each year. I read different translations, etc. But I stay in His Word primarily. This week I'm in the book of Joshua, this week on my desk are *Jesus in the Gospels* by my friend and pastor Jim Dykes, *David and Goliath* by Malcolm Gladwell, and *Leaders Eat Last* by Simon Sinek.

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