

THE EVANGELIST



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Evangelism: The spreading of the Christian gospel by public preaching or personal witness.

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Acts 13:47, Acts 20:24

For this is what the Lord has commanded us: “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 13:47

“However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.” **Acts 20:24**

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Dale's Viewpoint

The Apostle Paul told his son in the ministry, “*Do the work of an evangelist.*” Exactly what is an evangelist? According to Kittel, the word “*euaggelistori*” means **the one who proclaims the glad tidings.** In that sense, anyone who brings good news to another is an evangelist. The concept that one who is called into itinerant evangelism can not also possess the heart of a pastor or the mind of a scholar is unbiblical.

As we read, “*But one and the same Spirit works all these things distributing to each one individually as He wills.*” So, the evangelist is to be a bearer of the glad tidings of Jesus Christ whether he serves in itinerant evangelism, the pastorate, the classroom or some other God-called vocation. Every born-again child of God is an evangelist if we take the Great Commission seriously.

In Him,

Bro. Dale

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Three Ingredients for an Evangelistic Church Culture

I'm convinced it's better for your church to have an evangelistic culture than just a series of evangelistic programs.

In a church with a program-driven approach to evangelism, sharing the gospel can become something mostly for certain people at certain times, like when the evangelism team goes out visiting.

But in a church with an evangelistic culture, each member is encouraged to play a role within the larger church's effort to reach the people around them with the message of salvation in Jesus. It becomes a part of every believer's life.

Three Ingredients Of An Evangelistic Culture

Here are three ingredients that may help to create an evangelistic culture in our church.

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1. The Gospel: The Fuel for an Evangelistic Culture

The gospel message is the fuel that feeds an evangelistic culture in a church. We all naturally share the things that excite our hearts. If the Cowboys ever won another Super Bowl, you wouldn't have much luck shutting me up about it. In the same way, if we want to create cultures in our churches where it's natural for members to talk to about the gospel message with non-Christians, then we need to help our members fall deeply in love with the gospel.

That means they must understand the gospel message. It also means that the beauty of the gospel message must be put on display week in and week out in our churches. When Christians truly grasp the depth of their sin, the wonderful holiness of God, the perfection of Christ and the depth of his suffering for them, the power of his resurrection and the gift of eternal life for all who repent and believe, our affections for Christ will grow.

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The gospel message also frees Christians from motivations that might lead them to dislike evangelism. The gospel says that we don't have to evangelize in order to earn God's love. Our position in God's family isn't dependent on how often or how well we share the gospel. Instead, we can be certain of God's love, which frees us from the overwhelming concern for the opinions of people around us that makes us afraid to speak up about Jesus.

2. Prayer: the Power of an Evangelistic Culture

Second, a church that is sharing the gospel must be committed to prayer. Evangelism seems a hopeless task. We are calling spiritually dead people to embrace life. How are we going to equip and encourage people for that work? It seems utterly futile.

That's why an evangelistic culture must begin with a culture of prayer. In prayer, Christians go to the Lord with a confession of their insufficiency for the task of evangelism and his sufficient strength.

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God alone can make the seeds that we sow spring up to eternal life in our hearers, and so we must begin with prayer.

When we pray, as a church, that the Lord spread his gospel through us. This prayer serves a few purposes. First, it commits these things to the Lord, who normally has us ask before we receive in these matters. (James 4:2)

Second, it involves the whole church in the work of sharing the gospel. It's not a burden or a project that we undertake alone, but we have brothers and sisters to pray and encourage us.

Third, this sharing makes it clear that evangelism is the work of "normal" Christians. The people asking for prayer aren't usually pastors or elders or gifted evangelists. They are just believers who have embraced their calling to share the good news with the people around them.

Finally, this prayer gives people a good place to begin reaching out to their neighbors and co-workers. If people are nervous or uncertain

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about sharing the good news, begin with prayer. Pray that the Lord will give opportunities, and that He would bring people who need the gospel to their attention. That's a much less intimidating first step than rushing out with a tract in hand.

3. Training: The Blueprint for an Evangelistic Culture

A third ingredient is training, the blueprint for an evangelistic culture. Remember that the goal is for our churches to have evangelistic cultures rather than merely evangelistic programs. But that doesn't mean that there is no place for church leaders to organize and equip people to share the gospel. In fact, a love for the gospel and prayer may not be enough to motivate Christians to a lifestyle of evangelism.

While evangelism will come naturally to some people in your congregation, there will be many people who love the gospel and pray faithfully but still need to be equipped to share the gospel. Here are a few ways church can equip their congregation:

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Recommend good books on the topic. J.I. Packer's *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* and Mack Stiles' *Speaking of Jesus*. Give them to the people you are discipling or give them away to people who will read them.

Bring people with you when you have a chance to share the gospel. It's a good opportunity to model for them how to share the good news. Take time to thoughtfully consider the questions or objections that an unbeliever might have and then speak to those issues.

Better Than The Best Program

There is no program that can create an evangelistic culture in a church. Instead, it will require church leaders to teach, model, and pray until members of the church realize that sharing the gospel is their privilege and responsibility. A church with such a culture will be far more fruitful and effective than a church with even the most effective programs and strategies.

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