

ENGAGING MINISTRY BY THE CHURCH TO THE WORLD

The Church's fourth mission, is to engage the world through evangelism. At the highly likely risk of being misunderstood, evangelism is *fourth* because it is imperative that the first three aspects of the Church's mission are in place before evangelism can be truly effective. I fear being misunderstood after making this statement because someone may misinterpret me as saying that evangelism doesn't matter or that it should not happen unless the first three aspects of the Church's mission are perfectly functional. But to make evangelism the first priority without having a functional church in place is to both deprive evangelism of its potency and its means of maturing its converts.

Why Evangelism Is Critical

1. Why was the Apostle Paul so upset about being hindered from preaching to certain Gentiles according to First Thessalonians 2:16?
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2. Based on First Timothy 2:4, what does God desire?
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3. According to First Corinthians 15:1-2, by what means are people saved?
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4. What were the first disciples commanded to do by Christ and why? (Acts 10:42-43)
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God has ordained that those who *understand* what it is to be saved, are the only ones who can proclaim salvation. This is why angels can not preach the Gospel because they have not been saved (1Peter 1:12). Even when angels appeared to the unsaved throughout the New Testament, they told people to call for certain preachers so that they might hear and receive the Gospel (Acts 10:1-5).

5. What were the last instructions that Christ gave His disciples as recorded in Acts 1:8?
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Christ calls His followers to be “witnesses” not to be “prosecutors”. In a court of Law there is a world of difference between the prosecutor and the witness.

6. In ways do some Christians evangelise with the manner of a ‘prosecutor’?
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7. In what ways is the role of a witness in a courtroom similar to the role of Christian bearing witness for Christ?
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It is true that the Church is called to “go” and engage with people who do not yet know Christ. But it is also true that the Church bids people to “come”. It is not either/or, but rather *and*. That is, the Church should *go* while also bidding the world to *come*.

Our Evangelism Strategy



8. Notice the order of our engaging strategy. Why should friendship come *before* prayer?
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A lot of evangelism ministries place the responsibility for effective evangelism on the follow-up of new believers. We don't. At the foundation of our strategy is the establishment of friendships with people *before* they come to Christ. When you make friends with a pre-Christian, pray for them, then seek an opportunity to invite them into the community of the Church initially through something outside of a Sunday meeting, and then eventually into a Sunday service.

9. As a witness for Christ, if you were asked why you became a Christian, how long would it take for you to answer? And how would you respond?
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Personal Evangelism

Most of the statistics which come in about how people come to know Christ consistently reveals that over 80% of converts to Christianity attribute their new found faith in Christ to the witness of a friend. Yet most believers find it difficult, awkward, and uncomfortable to share with their friends about Jesus.

10. Why do you feel most Christians find it difficult to share their faith in Christ with others?

Some gifted evangelists find it easier to start conversations with people about spiritual things. For the rest of us it's another matter all together. Here's some things which I have found helpful in helping me to be a witness for Christ.

- Not every conversation has to be *the* conversion moment.
- It's best to get permission to share the Gospel (respond to a person's query).
- Every time you share, you are sowing and sometimes it takes 20 years to harvest.
- Use the appropriate 'menu item' to appeal to people's differing 'tastes'. Some people are readers. Others are watchers. Some are listeners. The same Gospel can be presented differently (videos, books, cds, websites...).
- People always show more interest in another person's story than their message (share your testimony of how you came to realise you needed a Saviour and how you received Christ as your Redeemer - it's far less confronting than 'preaching' at someone).



You might like to try this. It's the RCCR Method. 1. **Relate** - take the time to have relationship building (series of) conversations

2. **Create** - make an opportunity to share about Christ

3. **Convict** - if the person shows interest in the discussion about spiritual things, bring conviction of sin to show them their need for a Saviour. If they show no interest and do not give you permission to take it further, then revert to simply relating to them.

4. **Reveal** - once a person senses the truth of what you are saying, reveal how God through Christ wants to forgive them, save them, redeem them.

11. Read Acts 26:1-29. What did Paul do well in this engagement? Was he successful in his witness for Christ?
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Pictured left is William Holman Hunt's "Light of the World" which bears the text of Revelation 3:20. William Holman Hunt shows Jesus knocking at a door in an overgrown orchard at night. Christ is holding a lit lantern. But this glowing lantern seems unnecessary because of the brilliant moonlight which enables the viewer to clearly make out the scene. F.W. Boreham was in London in 1924 and visited Mr Hunt's famous painting at St. Paul's Cathedral. He understood that the artist meant to show that there was no door-handle on the outside of the door. He understood that the overgrown vegetation over the door meant to show that the inhabitants rarely ventured outside. But the lantern? There was no need for it.

Yet Boreham knew that Mr Hunt wasted nothing in his allegorical art. He remarked to his wife that this was a mystery to him. A kindly older gentlemen standing just behind Dr. Boreham interrupted with an apology for eaves-dropping. He excused himself by pointing out that he was no further away than Mr Boreham's elbow when

he expressed this mystery. “I knew Mr Hunt well” he said. “If you would permit me, I can enlighten you with what Mr Hunt himself told me about the lantern.” F.W. Boreham welcomed the offer. The artist’s friend explained that Mr Hunt wanted to convey that Christ was knocking on the door of a lukewarm church. Because there is no handle on the outside, the occupants must open up to Christ and invite Him in. But this church is located on the edge of the orchard adjacent to the wild woods. While Christ wanted entry to the church, it wasn’t to be for too long because He really wanted to lead the occupants out of their dwelling and to journey with Him into the darkness of the wild woods - hence His lantern was lit and trimmed. The church becomes lukewarm when it ceases to venture out into the darkness with the light of Christ.

Christ is still knocking and He still bears a lit lantern to guide His Church into the darkness to rescue a lost world. Let us open up to Christ and enjoy our times with Him but recognise that He bids us to not just “go” but to “*go with Him*”.