



LEADING EVANGELISM

LEARNING HUB



EVANGELISTS – A GIFT TO THE CHURCH

Evangelists are a gift to the Church. They help a church by modelling good evangelistic practise, by encouraging others in their evangelism, and by mentoring future evangelists. Identifying evangelists is a priority for those in church leadership in order to maximise their contribution to the life of the church. Then it will help to resource them and deploy them wisely.

‘The evangelist is a gift ministry... however, there is nothing in the New Testament that declares the evangelists are only meant to operate in particular ways, or for that matter on a particular scale. There have been many truly gifted evangelists over the years that nobody has heard of, and who have never filled a church hall let alone a stadium’

Gavin Reid

The Bible indicates that God gives spiritual gifts to his people, and that some are gifted as evangelists. However evangelists need to be considered in the context of the Bible’s teaching on evangelism.

God is a missionary God The father sends his Son into the world; the Son sends his Spirit on the Church; the Church is sent to the world. God’s people are caught up in God’s mission to God’s world. All Christians are called to show and share the faith to those outside the faith. This involves us in (Colossians 4:2-6):

- Dedicated prayer.
- Clear proclamation.
- Wise engagement.
- Maximising opportunities.

Evangelism is a body ministry Although all Christians are called to the above, each person will have different parts to

play within the overall mission of the Church. But because mission is central to the heart of God it must be central to the life of the Church. It is not an optional extra for the few. Evangelism is not the preserve of special people at special times doing special things. It is the church living out its faith and speaking about Jesus in everyday life.

The evangelist is not the person we look to do our evangelism ‘for us’ Just as someone who has the gift of intercession can’t do our praying for us. The evangelist is someone whom God gifts in a special way in evangelism to help the church to be all that it is meant to be. Evangelists are not meant to be on the edge of a church, regarded as awkward people to be tolerated, rather they are meant to be at the heart of a church, recognised as vital for the health of a church as they exercise their ministry.

BUT HOW DO WE IDENTIFY EVANGELIST?

1. Recognise that the evangelist is on a continuum from witness to evangelist, and the exact point at which you may describe someone as an evangelist may be difficult to identify.
2. Recognise that as a ‘gift’ from God it is not dependant on the age, background, gender, personality type, or experience of the individual. God gives the gift to whomever he pleases.
3. Recognise that God can and does take natural abilities (e.g. relational skills, communication ability) and empower them for use as spiritual gifts for his kingdom.
4. Recognise that like all gifts, its usage can be hampered by selfishness, disobedience, immaturity, lack of accountability, lack of use, and a desire for personal gain.
5. Recognise that there are different types of evangelist.
 - ⇒ Public proclaimer evangelist. This may be local or itinerant, but the person will have a ‘one-to-many’



aspect of their ministry. (Other gifts likely to be associated with this type of evangelist are teacher and apostle.)

- ⇒ One-to-one evangelist. May never speak in front of a crowd, nor be part of leadership of church, but consistently draws people to Jesus.
- ⇒ Leader-evangelist. Part of the leadership team of a church, responsible for the shaping of the evangelistic ministry of the church. (Other gifts likely to be associated with this type of evangelist are leader, teacher and administration.)

6. Recognise for the public proclaimer and the personal evangelist, there are different ways they may be exercised e.g. drama, spoken word, video, art, clowning, and so on.

Common Characteristics of an Evangelist

1. CONCERN FOR PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

- The evangelist has a love for lost people and longs for them to know Christ.
- The evangelist tends to think of such people first in any decisions made within the life of a church. How is this going to impact those who aren't yet Christians?
- The evangelist tends to consider any opportunity to meet with those outside the church as a potential opportunity to share the faith.
- The evangelist longs that every other Christian would play their part in sharing the faith.

2. ABILITY TO RELATE TO PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

- The evangelist relates well with those outside the church, understanding their world and making connections with them.
- The evangelist may well prefer spending time with those outside the church.

3. ABILITY TO EXPLAIN AN ASPECT OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

- The evangelist can communicate the Christian message with clarity and conviction.
- The evangelist can connect the Christian message with people's needs.

4. ABILITY TO HELP PEOPLE TAKE THE NEXT APPROPRIATE SPIRITUAL STEP

- The evangelist has 'volitional intelligence'. They sense where people are, what will help them take the next step, and long to serve in helping them take that step.
- The evangelist appeals to the will.

5. INDEBTEDNESS TO THE GRACE OF GOD

- True of all Christian people, but vitally important in the evangelist, otherwise they can be motivated by a range of unhelpful factors that may lead them to manipulate others or inappropriately drive themselves.

Important side-note: ability is made up of skill, knowledge, talent and gift. When all four are present the individual will be competent in this ability. Skills can be learnt through training and experience. Knowledge can be acquired through learning. Talents are formed by the time you are an adult, but need nurturing and developing for effective use. Gifts can be given by God at any time.

Process for Identifying Evangelists

WHY EVANGELISTS ARE IMPORTANT TO CHURCH LIFE

A leader is unlikely to spot an evangelist if they don't value the role of the evangelist within the life of the church.

'A person with the gift ministry of evangelist is not only someone who evangelises. He or she, by exercising that ministry, encourages and reminds the whole church of its calling to evangelise. Properly used an evangelist stimulates rather than inhibits congregational evangelism.'

Too often the assumption is that evangelists are often disconnected from the local church. But Ephesians 4 suggests they should be wedded into the body, exercising their ministry just like anyone else.

'Evangelists must be in Christ, seeking to live lives modelled on Christ, proclaiming the gospel of Christ, equipping the saints of Christ, from within the body of Christ.'

James Lawrence

When evangelists are integrated into the life of a church they will permeate the church with an outward looking evangelistic focus. They will be part of shaping the culture of the church.

HOW TO SPOT AN EVANGELIST

Like all gifts, the main way to spot them is by their fruit. Evangelists are uncommonly fruitful in helping people become disciple of Jesus Christ. This may be an ability to get alongside people and draw them into the life of the church; an ability to explain their faith or the faith in a way which engages with people; an ability to help people make a commitment to following Jesus.

All of have a part to play in evangelism, but the evangelist will be more fruitful than most, and is likely to be more passionate than most.

There are a variety of spiritual gifts inventories that help people to know if they may have the gift of evangelist. We have devised a very simple inventory specifically focused on the gift of evangelist. You may like to use this to reflect on whether you are an evangelist or not.

