

Christ Community Covenant Church
Healthy things grow – Intentional Evangelism
Pastor Dave Scherrer - June 1, 2014

Vacation: the miraculous staircase at the Loretta Chapel



Ten Missional Markers – in the pew rack in front of you

Discussion: What exactly is Evangelism?

Word association

What kinds of things come to mind when you hear the word evangelism?

The Lausanne Covenant states that evangelism is:

“To spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe.”

Robert Munger : ***Evangelism is the spontaneous overflow of a glad and free heart in Jesus Christ.***

D. T. Niles : ***Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.***

So a church that excels in intentional evangelism has a church full of people who spontaneously and lovingly, in fact virtually unconsciously, tell their story of faith and can give definition of the good news of Jesus Christ. This church character never fails to pronounce and promote the glad truth that Jesus is a friend of sinners and that no one comes to the Father but by the Son. This is the church of ***intentional evangelism.***

Whose job is evangelism? The Pastor? The TV guy? The Billy Graham type?

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

This great commission passage lets us all know that evangelism – testifying of the good news of Jesus is job one for all those who call themselves a disciple of Christ. Now some may have a special gift for this task or character trait:

Ephesian 4:11

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers,

But that does not exempt us from telling the story of God's love any more than not having the gift of generosity or grace or helps exempts us from being generous and grace giving and helpful. In fact you can see from Paul's letter to Timothy that he saw evangelism as central to our lives:

2 Timothy 4:5

But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

[Personal testimony of life as an 'evangelist']

Charles Spurgeon wrote,

The propagation of the gospel is left, not to a few, but to all the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ: according to the measure of grace entrusted to him by the Holy Spirit, each man is bound to minister in his day and generation, both to the church and among unbelievers... [All Christians are] to exert themselves to the utmost to extend the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I think what gets in our way is that we sometimes feel that there are only two options available to us as believers: the confrontational model we sometimes see that some call soul winning and the more relational evangelism sometimes called lifestyle sharing. And you can see that as a kind of continuum or teeter totter.

The Soul Winning VS Lifestyle Sharing Continuum

In my old age I have become convinced there is only one form of evangelism, Spirit led evangelism:

Spirit – Led evangelism

This form of evangelism may be confrontational or relational or both at the same time but it is always biblical and always prompted by the Holy Spirit. If we are convicted to follow scripture as we share I have four truths for you this morning that help us shape our sharing. The first is that intentional evangelism persuades.

Intentional evangelism 'persuades'

2 Corinthians 5:11

¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try *to persuade others*.

This is an interesting idea. We know that it is God's job to save. That is the work of the Holy Spirit – to draw the lost to Himself. Remember Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 3:5-7

...⁵What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave opportunity to each one. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. ⁷So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth....

So the saving of souls is God's job. But still there is this responsibility on all of us *to persuade*. Our task is not an indifferent "well I tried" kind of effort. It is a prayerful and thoughtful endeavor that seeks to share with enthusiasm and confidence and enough grasp of the facts that our listener is compelled to listen. The reason that our evangelism is so important is that the crisis is so important – there is a life and death struggle for ever living never dying souls and we are to be the front line truth tellers in this confrontation. Intentional evangelism persuades. But it also brings:

Intentional evangelism 'brings'

John 4:28-30

²⁸ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?” ³⁰ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

John 1:35-42

³⁵ The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” ³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” ³⁹ He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus ⁴¹ was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus.

Then there is the idea that the love of God is for all

Intentional evangelism ‘includes all’

Mark 16:15

¹⁵ And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

Jesus had a heart for sinners – put another way he had a heart for the marginalized of the world, the broken and ashamed, the outcast and the ‘not included’ – Lepers and tax collectors, drinkers and adulterers, women and children. All were included in His love.

Today when I think of ‘all the world’ I don’t think of merely of geographical boundaries but of sociological boundaries. The marginalized of our world are the gang bangers and the drug addicts, the LGBT and the Illegal, the mentally and physically disabled and the families of the imprisoned and the returning veteran who struggles with unemployment and PTSD. Why are these people not in church? I think because they have not been invited. They are welcome in Jesus’ arms.

Remember what they accused Jesus of!

Matthew 11:19

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’

So we are instructed:

Luke 14:23

²³ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.

We are currently are exploring the possibilities of partnering with a ministry that works with the adult mentally disabled and with another group of those recovering from various forms of addictions and loss. We have a robust ministry in our church to the homeless and hungry and to the imprisoned. Do you know about all of this? Small groups are reaching out into their community to do good deeds that will bring glory to God. It is all pretty exciting! That brings us to our last point -intentional evangelism is powered by holy lifestyles and good deeds.

Intentional evangelism is powered by ‘holy lifestyles and good deeds’

Hebrews 12:14

¹⁴ Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Matthew 5:16

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Let me just say that you do not have to be a life-long theologian to be an evangelist. Some of the best evangelists I have known have been simple people filled with faith and love who cannot help but talk about Christ. The woman at the well is a great example! You just have to be able to tell your “Jesus story”:

Telling your Jesus Story

Just tell your story of what life was like before the Cross, how you came to know Jesus at the Cross and then how your life has changed after the cross – that’s it!

Prayer: Lord God, we come before you this morning as your church, and we submit ourselves to you. We pray that you will lead us deeper in Christ and further in His mission in the world. Let us be YOUR light Lord, shining in the darkness. Lead us through your Holy Spirit, embolden us with the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, to go and make disciples, from our own little corners to the ends of the earth. Give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand, and courage to follow where you lead. We ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Communion: Friend of Sinners!**Puerto Rico Mission Trip Commissioning**

Oh Jesus, friend of sinners
Open our eyes to the world at the end of our pointing fingers
Let our hearts be led by mercy
Help us reach with open hearts and open doors
Oh Jesus, friend of sinners, break our hearts for what breaks yours

Jesus, friend of sinners, the one who's writing in the sand
Made the righteous turn away and the stones fall from their hands
Help us to remember we are all the least of these
Let the memory of Your mercy bring Your people to their knees

Benediction

Every man is a missionary, now and forever, for good or for evil, whether he intends or designs it or not. He may be a blot radiating his dark influence outward to the very circumference of society, or he may be a blessing spreading benediction over the length and breadth of the world. But a blank he cannot be: there are no moral blanks; there are no neutral characters. --Thomas Chalmers

**Discussion questions from Male Call
We respond in obedience by ‘persuading’**

Matthew 28:18-20

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2 Corinthians 5:11

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We respond in obedience by 'bringing'

John 4:28-30

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We respond in obedience 'including all'

Mark 16:15

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We respond in obedience with a 'holy lifestyle and good deeds'

Hebrews 12:14

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Matthew 5:16

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Discussion Questions:

What is your first thought when you think of evangelism?

Have any of you had any experience with some of the missions ministries like Campus Crusade, Young Life, Youth for Christ, Child Evangelism Fellowship? Etc.? What was your experience?

What do you think of the idea between lifestyle evangelism and so called 'Soul winning' evangelism? What about TV evangelists?

Do you (or someone you know) have the gift of evangelism? What does that look like in your (their) life?

The verses below seem to imply that everyone has the responsibility of evangelism. How does that sit with you?

Was Jesus an evangelist? If we follow after Him, what does that mean to us? Is there a definable Jesus method of evangelism? How would you describe it?

Have you ever 'led someone to Christ'? Can you tell that story? Or Can you tell us briefly your Jesus story?