

BECOMING AN EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

Most churches that are committed to being or becoming an evangelistic church, who want to reach the lost with the gospel, often start to think in terms of training in personal evangelism or even various strategies for attracting the lost to church or getting the gospel to the lost. But before those things are pursued there are some very obvious, “simple” things that a church can and should do first as it seeks to become more outward faced and effective in evangelism. These things do not require lots of money or great or extraordinary levels of commitment. All these things take is a fundamental commitment to be a church that strives to “seek and save that which is lost”. Some of these are:

1. **Mobilize to pray.** Pray for the vitality of the church, for the community itself, for a specific list of lost people supplied by the members (family, co-workers, neighbors, etc.). Pray for different people in your community on a rotating basis (e.g. the police, the firemen, government officials, other pastors, school principals and teachers, etc.). This prayer can take place in small groups, in a monthly or weekly prayer gathering with for this particular purpose, in a S.S. class, and by individuals.
2. **Build into the pastor’s job description** and schedule 5-10 hours a week to spend with non-Christians and church visitors including networking in the community.
3. **Become visitor friendly.** Things such as adequate signage, a warm and helpful greeting, a clean and orderly nursery, and a simple but attractive facility will go a long way in opening doors for the gospel. Without them many visitors simply don’t return and the opportunities are lost.
4. **Preach** in such a way that Christians will invite their unsaved, unchurched friends and associates. Sermons that are thoroughly Biblical, Christ-centered, grace-centered, in simple, clear language that avoids unexplained Christian terminology, practical, passionate, engaging, winsome, and relevant.
5. **Serve your community.** Identify ways for your congregation to be active in the community addressing real and tangible needs. Encourage the members to be active members of the community, serving on boards, participating in the schools, taking advantage of park district activities, etc.
6. **Equip the congregation to engage their network of relationships** by asking questions and being good listeners. The purpose is to learn about what people think regarding the church and its place/role in the community not evangelism, at least initially.

Once these pre-requisites are taking place in the life of the church any training that the church members receive will be much more enthusiastically embraced and will be all the more effective since many doors of opportunity will normally be generated and the congregation will have much more of an outreach mindset.

Some resources that can be considered for training/equipping the congregation include:

1. "Building Bridges, Tearing Down Walls" by Jerram Barrs (available through Covenant Seminary).
2. "3-D Evangelism" by Randy Pope (available through Perimeter Church, Atlanta).
3. "Christianity Explored" by Rico Tice.
4. "Evangelism Explosion" (still an excellent tool).
5. "Breakout Churches" and "The Unchurched Next Door" by Thom Rainer (+ "Surprising Insights From the Unchurched").