

Evangelism is ...

By Andy Gerns

Evangelism is effective proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ to those who do not believe and to those who have not heard. This is a good place to start, but there is much more to evangelism.

We tend to confuse the call and gift of evangelism with the associated techniques. This is for many our chief block to evangelism: confusing technique for content. We tend to turn something more into something less.

Within Evangelism, there is a variety of techniques and methods. Their utility depends on the time, commitment and energy we have invested to do them well. But even as we work hard at doing these well, we must always be careful never to confuse the medium for actual evangelism.

We might spend a lot of time marketing our churches; that is, letting the community at large know we are there. While marketing is not evangelism, it can be a useful and effective tool for evangelism.

We have focused a lot lately on hospitality; making our churches as genuinely welcoming as can be. This is at the heart of what many congregations can do to practically evangelize the people who come to the worship or programs of the Church. Hospitality is not evangelism, but an essential element of evangelism.

We have also spent time over the years on storytelling as at the heart of evangelism. To effectively tell the story of our faith, of how God has touched our lives and how we have changed through our relationship with Jesus Christ under the power of the Holy Spirit, is at the core of what it means to be an evangelist. Even this, in and of itself, is not evangelism.

Evangelism is *more* than the effective proclamation of the Good of Jesus Christ to those who do not believe and to those who have not heard. The people we share the Good News with may respond, but maybe in a way that is different than we expect. They may join a church of another tradition. They may choose to become a "solo" or "lone" believer who does not attach to a single community. They may hear, understand, and even accept the validity of what we say, and still not choose to come to the waters of baptism. Our job is to bring the message and to leave the results to God.

How do we know our evangelism is working?

The subsets and tools of evangelism have their own measures of success: for example, the number of visitors might tell us how good our marketing campaign was. We might measure the quality of our hospitality through how many visitors returned and how many of them became inquirers. We might measure how many inquirers become baptized members and this will tell us how effective we are at incorporating new members into our

congregations. But none of these, even taken together, tell the whole story of what effective evangelism is.

We know we are doing effective evangelism when we see more and more Christians showing and telling the Good News of God in Christ. When we become natural and effective communicators of the Gospel, then we know that evangelism is making a difference. When our evangelism transforms our living so that we do not compartmentalize our faith but instead see every day, every relationship, every encounter as being and seeing Christ, then we know that our evangelism is making a difference both in our lives and in the lives of others.

Evangelism is more than communication, marketing, hospitality or even storytelling, no matter how well we do it.

Evangelism, at its heart, is sharing with others without strings or conditions the gift that we ourselves have been freely given: new life in Jesus Christ.

Sign up now for a regional evangelism workshop near you on April 28, May 5 and May 12th. Go to to [Find out here how to register.](#)

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