

Evangelism: Just Do Something

It is high time we started sharing the gospel with the people around us.

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Sometimes, when people read the word *evangelism*, they stop reading. They think it does not matter to them and they move on to doing something else with their day.

Below I want to highlight a few things to help you, especially if you are a pastor or church leader, to find new, intentional ways to prioritize evangelism in the life of your church and ministry, as well as in your own personal life.

Decline in Evangelism

The major problem with evangelism today is that we have seen a bottoming out of interest on the subject. There are a few reasons for that. Reason number one is that older methods of evangelism have lost credibility. That's not always a good thing. I can see how people might think a different method would work better, and that's great—if you're actually doing it. But what I hear is people more likely to make fun of evangelistic methods than engage in evangelism.

What we have today is that most of the old evangelism methods, such as Spring and Fall revivals for evangelism or door-to-door visitation evenings, are not being used as much today. People say they're too obtrusive or ineffective. Again, I'm not 100% sure that's helpful. I'm for any means of evangelism where the gospel is shared.

Instead of people replacing older evangelistic strategies with new strategies that they feel better fit our time and cultural context, we seem to have replaced these old strategies with a new level of angst.

Ultimately, that means evangelism doesn't get done.

For example, evidence of lessening interest in evangelism can be seen in the huge decline in the number of evangelism conferences that are hosted and attended. We just finished hosting the Amplify Conference, which is now the largest evangelism conference in North America focused on outreach and evangelism.

Such conferences used to fill huge venues. So much has changed. People like to explain away the decline by saying people have turned to online tools. But we all know that they're not all engaged in evangelism training online either.

What Should We Do?

Given this situation, what should we do? Some people are throwing up their hands in the air and saying, "Well, we can't do evangelism anymore." That's the wrong answer. Since I'm serving at Moody Church, I need to use a D.L. Moody reference. So, the story goes, *a woman came up to Moody and said, "I don't like the way you do evangelism." He asked her how she did evangelism, and when she answered that she didn't, he replied, "I like the way I do evangelism better than the way you don't do evangelism."*

People (including me) share that quote a lot, and for good reason. The solution to our problem is *not* to stop evangelizing.

That tells us what we should not do, but what should we do? The first step is to figure out what the best approach for your church is. Let me point out that this means you are going to find a way to prioritize evangelism at your church. It's not *I want to*, but *I will*.

Taking church assessments are good, but only if they lead to action and change.

Remember, between his resurrection and his ascension, Jesus gives four commissions. I wrote an article about evangelism for the Washington Post a few years ago when I changed jobs. In it, I wrote "Jesus' last words should be our first priority." I was writing that to a secular audience. This should be plain, basic stuff to the church of Jesus Christ. Jesus' last words should be our first priority.

I wrote another article for CNN, "Why Do Christians Keep Inviting You to Church?" It was one of the most read articles that Easter weekend; it had over a million reads. I was trying to explain why Christians keep inviting people to church and also trying to motivate Christians to invite their friends to church. I hoped that by seeing in CNN an article about why Christians keep inviting people to church, believers would think *Oh, I should be doing that*.

So, I had the privilege of writing in the Washington Post and in CNN about why Christians evangelize. But honestly, I felt like I ought to be writing about what Christians *should* be doing, not what we *are* doing. The saying, "Talk is cheap" is quite appropriate in this context. *Are we really sharing the gospel? Am I? Are you?*

So What?

Here's what it boils down to: Find a way to start to share your faith. When I was a kid, luggage didn't have wheels. The wheels help you carry your luggage around, right? People seem to need luggage wheels so they can use the luggage of evangelism, because sometimes evangelism can be a challenge to handle. So, look for resources that will help you, and your congregation, engage in evangelism.

There are many different resources you could choose from. At Our Gospel Story, we have a list of resources for evangelism. We have even created a helpful curriculum to get you started. They are all really helpful.

What's the right resource for you? The one that you will use. It should be theologically sound, orthodox, and gospel driven. Beyond that, the right evangelistic strategy for your church is one that you will do.

I'm not saying these new resources are better or worse than the older methods, like revivals and evangelistic visitations. I don't know what the "best" method is. But I do know that you should do something. And if these new resources are something you haven't tried yet, then that's a great way to begin.

Maybe this is a moment where we need to take Shia LaBeouf's advice for a second and "just do it." Just do something. It's high time we started sharing the gospel with the people around us.