

## The Priority and Ancestry of Evangelism & Evangelistic Preaching

***The first thing*** I'd like to do is suggest that **EVANGELISM** and **EVANGELISTIC PREACHING** are to be vital priorities in the church today.

But there is something that comes **BEFORE** our **EVANGELISTIC WORK!**

As David Larsen suggests,

*"Clearly all Christian priorities must be subsumed under the controlling affirmation: 'The chief end of man is to know God and Glorify Him forever.'" (The Evangelism Mandate, p. 13) (Matt. 5:15; Rom. 15:6, 9; 1 Cor. 1:26-31)*

**This is to say, that the FIRST PRIORITY for Christians is to worship God and enjoy a vibrant fellowship with Him--and--where possible--to join with others who love and want to serve Him in the fellowship of the worshipping community that we call the **CHURCH!****

**That is our personal DEVOTONAL priority—and it must be first!**

**But once that that priority is met, the next priority of the individual and the church is to serve the world through **EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH!****

One Christian author has said:

*"the overarching rubric in all Christian experience is the worship of the true and living God. And the first task of the worshipping community is evangelism." [Emphasis mine] (Evang. Mandate, p. 13)*

**Everything that the church does, then--from top to bottom--should have some connection to evangelism!**

**But how do we define, this **EVANGELISTIC MINISTRY**--since it's so important?**

**Walker** suggests several famous *DEFINITIONS* of **evangelism** (Evang. Preach., p. 14):

**One is:**

*“To evangelize is so to present Christ Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit, that men shall come to put their trust in God, through Him, to accept Him as their Saviour, and serve Him as their King in the fellowship of His Church.”*

(Archbishop’s Committee of the Church of England; One of the most widely used)

**Another is:**

*“To evangelize 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.”*

Lausanne Covenant

**These definitions appropriately describe what we as individuals and the church as a community should be in doing!**

**But if there is ever any question about the PRIORITY status of evangelism** for Christians, we must remember what Christ’s **Great Commission** actually SAYS and DOES;

**IT COMMANDS--NOT RECOMMENDS!**

*Mark 16:15- “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. . . .(V.20) Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied them.”*

**Notice the very FIRST WORDS** of the first paragraph of the book, Acts of the Apostles:

*“The Church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.” (p. 9)*

**It was no accident that Ellen White placed these words at the very beginning of this work**, describing the dynamic history of the Early Church.

**And there is no doubt** about the high position that evangelism should have in the **contemporary church**.

**Now, since evangelism is a top priority of the church, Evangelistic Preaching** must also be a top priority of the church, because it is one of the **key ways** of doing evangelism.

**Evangelism, of course, can be carried out in many different ways BESIDES FORMAL PREACHING:**

Visitation Ev., Education Ev., Personal Ev., Hospitality Ev., Worship Ev., Health Ev., etc.

(“Evangelism” was not generally used in relation to the ministry of the church until the 19th century, but it is appropriate to do so. (Evang. Mandate, p. 46)

**God uses many and diverse methods--and they are all important!**

**Evangelism, however, always carries with it the idea of VERBAL PROCLAMATION, of some kind, at some point!**

**Evangelism is Good NEWS!**

**“News”** implies that something is ***TOLD!***

**BUT, While the Bible does not spell out details of how evangelism is to be done, it does suggest **paradigms** or patterns! (Ev. Mandate, p. 46)**

**According to SCRIPTURE and CHURCH HISTORY a favored means of doing effective evangelism is ***POWERFUL PREACHING!*****

**Vernon L. Stanfield** expresses the view of many when he suggests that, ***“the pulpit is our supreme evangelistic opportunity”*** --no matter where it is: a church, a prison, or a crusade! Effective Evangelistic Preaching

**JESUS' OWN MINISTRY** is described as heavily weighted toward **PREACHING** as we see in **Luke 4: 18-19** where Jesus took up the scroll and read: ( from Isaiah 61)

*"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach (evangelize) good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim (Kerygma) freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim (Kerygma) the year of the Lord's favor."*

And as soon as he was **baptized** and passed the "**temptation test**" he zealously pursued his public ministry of spreading good news.

**Matt. 4:17** describes it well:

*"From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'"*

And He, Himself, later said to his followers in

**John 20:21-**

*"As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

So ***HIS ministry*** is to be ***OUR ministry***--and it involves **preaching!**

We can say with one past **seminary president**, that

*"Christian preaching is still the compelling engagement of the Church." (Evangelistic Preaching, 1921-Ozora S. Davis)*

And when we do, we base it on JESUS' **OWN EXAMPLE!**

Yes, Jesus had many **PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS** with people such as the WOMAN AT THE WELL and NICODEMOUS--always taking time for individuals.

But he also spoke to the **MULTITUDES** which thronged to see and hear him.

**Larsen** refers to a study by **J. Arthur Baird**, which suggests that **98%** of **Jesus' preaching** was to specific, clearly-identified **audiences**--and even suggests that there were **four clear audience "types."** (J.Arthur

Baird, Audience Criticism and the Historical Jesus, cited in Evang. Mandate, p. 49)

Matthew refers to **Jesus' preaching** some **12 times**;

Mark mentions it **12 times**;

Luke mentions it **24 times**.

**The importance of Jesus' evangelistic preaching is emphasized when Luke records of Christ in Luke 4:43-44**

*"But he said, 'I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.' And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea."*

(emphasis mine)

**Jesus certainly was an EVANGELISTIC PREACHER—and forever established the MODEL for his followers.**

### ***THE MODEL OF EVANGELISTIC PREACHING***

In the N.T. we see the apostles, elders, and deacons continue the pattern of evangelistic preaching.

**ACTS records an EXPLOSION of evangelistic preaching.**

**LARSEN cites a writer who calls what happened in the book of Acts:**

*"An explosion of divine dynamite continuing page after page, life after life." (Ev. Mandate, p. 52)*

**Clearly, PREACHING is what drove this explosion.**

**James** was able to say,

*"For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."*

(Acts 15:21)

**Raymond Bailey**, professor of preaching, has written a book entitled: Paul the Preacher.

In it BAILEY analyzes **Paul's** powerful **evangelistic sermons** and his carefully honed methods.

**Bailey** makes it clear that Paul was very “intentional” about his preaching.

**Paul** employed craftsmanship, rhetorical skills, and strategic planning in his sermon construction--all to further the Gospel.

**And Christian preaching continued** in the **Early Church** with richness and variety.

**Michael Green** suggests that for a **hundred and fifty years** the early church had no buildings as such, and “*there was the greatest variety in the type and content of Christian evangelistic preaching.*” (Evang. In the Early Church, p. 194; cited in Ev. Mandate, p. 53)

[Larsen suggests, however, that sermons tended to hold key elements in common, such as: targeted the unconverted, used lots of O.T. Scripture, were heavily doctrinal, Christ-centered, plain, called for commitment, and powered by prayer and the Holy Spirit.](Ev. Mandate, p. 53)

**Christian History, beyond scripture, also supports the value and priority of evangelistic preaching!** (See Evang. Mandate, pp. 57-66))

**Larsen** notes:

“After the collapse of the Roman Empire, the wreckage wrought by the barbarians, and the doctrinal divisions in the church came a thousand years known as the Dark Ages or Middle Ages.” (Ev. Mandate, p. 60)

**But God worked through INDIVIDUAL PREACHERS** and Christians even during that dark period of history.

**Bernard of Clairvaux** (AD 1091-1153) was said to be a preacher of great power and spoke out against the abuses of the Roman Church, uplifting Christ.

**Anthony of Padua** (AD 1195(?)-1231) drew huge crowds as he traveled about from his native Portugal and Africa.

**Francis of Assisi** (AD 1182-1226) became a free-lance evangelist and proclaimed Christ-centered sermons.

**Others** *“punched holes in the darkness.”*

**But it was the REFORMERS who re-introduced preaching and exalted it on a wider scale--replacing ceremonies and sacraments--according to Martyn Lloyd-Jones.**

(Ev. Mandate, p. 61)

**However, while the Reformation renewed evangelical faith its WEAKNESS was, according to **A.T. Pierson**:**

“Its failure to revive evangelistic activity . . . .”

(Ev. Mandate, p. 63)

**The Evangelical Awakening of the 18th Cent.** brought about a revival in preaching.

**Jonathan Edwards,**  
**George Whitefield,**  
**John and Charles Wesley** and others contributed.

**The 19th cent.** saw spiritual renewal in **North America** and **abroad**.  
(Mandate, p. 64)

**Charles G. Finney** (1792-1875), sometimes called the *“father of modern evangelism”* brought about a powerful revivalism.

**FINNEY brought “new measures” into evangelistic Preaching:**  
evang. music, the mourner’s bench, participation of women, and the long revival meeting. (Mandate, p. 64)

**Then came Charles Haddon Spurgeon, Lyman Beecher, and Dwight L. Moody, and others.**

**Then in 1949** came the huge **Los Angeles crusade** with **BILLY GRAHAM**.

**Today, preachers and laypersons alike on every continent are heralding the message of the Gospel.**

**In the East and the West, in Christian and non-Christian cultures, in developed and newly-emerging nations—*PUBLIC EVANGELISM* is being done every day--AND IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**

**Today, our fervor for Evangelistic Preaching is based on the *PRIORITY* given to it  
in SCRIPTURE,  
in the life of Christ,  
in the life of the apostles,  
in the life of the Early Church,  
in the life of the Modern Church!**

Let us, therefore, MAINTAIN it, SUSTAIN it, and KEEP IT BURNING ever more brightly to the glory of God and the salvation of souls!

**END**

## **The Relevance of Evangelism and Evangelistic Preaching!**

**Some people today feel that evangelism and evangelistic preaching is out of date!**

**They say that it:**

**\*Hasn't ended national or ethnic hatred** in Bosnia & Serbia--or racial tensions here in the U.S.!

**\*Hasn't prevented the horrors of poverty and famine** around the world!



**\*Hasn't rid the Middle East of assassinations or suicide bombers!**

**\*Hasn't prevented mentally deranged mothers and fathers from murdering their children** or troubled students from shooting their classmates--Columbine style!

**\*Hasn't kept our politicians from having affairs with interns** or from stuffing their pockets in greed!

**\*Hasn't shut down terrorism or stopped child molestation.**

**SOOOOOOOO what good is it???**

To them it seems ridiculous in seriously addressing issues of our day.

Some might even suggest that evangelism may actually be detrimental in taking away energy from methods they consider more real and effective in attacking these problems.

**W.E. SANGSTER expressed the way some critics feel this way:**

*"An aspirin as a cure for cancer would be less ridiculous than evangelism as the answer to the world's present ills. The human situation is so urgent. Talk of 'world revolution by individual conversion' is like talking about a long endowment policy to a man sitting on a time bomb."*

**IS evangelism and evangelistic preaching truly *RELEVANT* for today's complex world? --or is it an outmoded concept?**

**Leighton Ford** answers the question this way in his book, The Christian Persuader (and I agree with him):

**1) Yes, evangelism is relevant because the MESSAGE OF EVANGELISM IS RELEVANT!**

There are many evangelistic methods and techniques--and they do sometimes become out of date.

HOWEVER, the **essence** of evangelism is not its **METHODS**, but its **MESSAGE!** And the message is JESUS CHRIST!

And Jesus will always remain relevant!

Evangelism does not stand or fall based on its **techniques!**...but it **does** stand or fall on its ***message about Christ!***

## **2) Yes, evangelism is relevant--for GOD-CENTERED PEOPLE!**

**-- Or those who are ready to become God-centered.**

**But not for people** who want to hold on to worldliness;

**Evangelism will tear away phoniness and expose a person's real value system.**

**People who maintain worldly practives and lifestyles will find evangelism very **disturbing** and out of step with their lives.**

**Some people simply want to USE GOD.**

**They follow Him only as long as he doesn't "*rock their boat*," or use their boat for a purpose that's different than theirs.**

**Remember the 5,000 who followed Christ and found him relevant as long as he kept feeding them. (John 6) and as long as it looked like he might be a political deliverer?**

**JESUS declined being King on their terms.**

The question is not really whether or not **evangelism** or **Christ** is **RELEVANT!**

But "ARE **WE** **RELEVANT TO THE PURPOSES AND PLANS OF CHRIST -- AND HIS *EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH* throughout the EARTH?"**

Evangelism is relevant only to people who **sense their need**, who **have come to utterly depend on Christ** as the *'bread of life'* --because there is *no one else to turn to*.

### **3) Yes, evangelism is relevant in light of ETERNITY!**

**Only in eternity will we sense the full value and relevance of evangelism.**

Only when Christ ***pulls back the curtain of history*** will we be able to see its relevance clearly.

Relevance can't be measured alone by the number of baptisms in the most recent evangelistic series.

**\*Jesus' evangelistic outreach** seemed a failure when he ended up abandoned and publicly shamed at the **cross**.

**\*Paul's evangelistic preaching in Athens** seemed but a frustrated failure to some.

Who would have believed that it eventually would turn the **Parthenon** itself into a ***Christian Church*** for centuries?!

\*John Wesley's preaching in **18th century England** looked futile.

As **Wesley preached to farmers** out in a field one might have been tempted to say: *"Come on down to reality John, get relevant."*

But the revival brought about by Wesley's preaching **transformed England** and, many believe, saved her from a revolution like France's.

**Evangelism is VERY relevant!**

Yet it is true that **Evangelism** faces some new and significant **CHALLENGES!**

There are sin-hardened men and women who seem repelled by spiritual things.

In their minds, evangelism--**even as message**--is irrelevant. Largely because they don't understand it.

**How will we reach those who see no relevance in the Christian Gospel?**

**That is, how do we make our Gospel preaching relevant?**

**I suggest that this is not difficult, because --  
by its very nature--the Gospel is  
relevant!**

**Canon Webster** in his book, What is Evangelism? talks about those who are difficult to reach as falling within one of two classes of modern society:

## 1) Intellectual Man & Woman- Characterized by despair.

Feels that *God is dead*.

Life is waiting for "*an explanation that never comes*."

Emphasizes **SCIENCE** as the answer to his material needs.

Is relatively prosperous and without many tangible needs.

Feels Life is simple and stable--but without meaning.

Doesn't understand his **personal needs** and the potential that his life has in Christ.

## 2) Industrial/Blue Collar Man & Woman- Lost in the masses!

Has little sense of his personal value.

Doesn't believe he makes a difference, and doesn't sense much personal responsibility for the world around him.

Madly caught up in his materialistic pursuits; Has to work hard to provide for his family's needs.

Watches the same TV programs, reads the same newspapers, caught up in the same routines as his neighbors.

Today, we would add a **3RD category**:

## 3) Corporate Man & Woman- Caught up in vicious competition as he "*climbs the ladder of success*"!

Work is like going to battle with every co-worker and every other corporation--in a mad search for power.

**Life's focus** is on making sure that his *investment portfolio* is strong and piling up **big capital gains!**

**Stressed on the job** and at home--with little or no family life!

**Caught up** in a *world of marvelous technology* which promises--but fails to satisfy his deepest needs!

**He too, has lost his identity** and sense of fulfillment in the vast **corporate milieu!**

## ***How can we reach***

**INTELLECTUAL MAN** with his sense of meaninglessness and worship of science,

**INDUSTRIAL/BLUE COLLAR MAN** with his low self-esteem and materialistic preoccupation,

**And--CORPORATE MAN** with his passion for wealth, palm-held computer, and drive for success ?????

**By meeting basic *FELT*  
*NEEDS--through Gospel*  
*Preaching!***

The fact is that there are certain ageless and classless ANXIETIES which are common to intellectual, blue collar, and corporate man.

Philosophers like Paul Tillich and others refer to **three types** of  
**HUMAN ANXIETY!**

- 1) Anxiety of DEATH
- 2) Anxiety of GUILT
- 3) Anxiety of MEANINGLESSNESS

**The Gospel** *addresses* each of these in a powerful way.

**1) ANXIETY of DEATH-**

Everyone faces the fact that life doesn't go on forever.

**Evangelistic preaching** offers an **explanation of death** and the **hope** of the **resurrection** and **eternal life!**

**2) ANXIETY OF GUILT-**

**Many are struggling with the psychological and emotional effects of sin.**

**Dr. Hobart Mowrer**, famed research professor of psychology, was quoted as criticizing psychoanalysis for its loss of the concept of sin and calling for a "*rediscovery of moral responsibility.*" Atlantic Monthly

**Donald Baillie** has asked:

*"why is it that such maladies as 'nervous breakdowns' are so common in our modern world? Is it entirely unconnected with the fact that there are now so many serious-minded people who have no belief in God, who are trying to have morality without religion?----Because they have no God, they have no saving secret for dealing with their moral failures."*

**The message of the CROSS** is the only thing that can cleanse the depths of guilt!

The CROSS **answers three great questions** related to guilt:

### ***1. Is forgiveness necessary?***

**The cross says, yes!** Guilt is devastating to the human psyche! And the mind must be given relief.

**Look at the agony that Jesus experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross** because he felt the weight of the whole world's sin and guilt.

He sweat blood and felt a devastating emotional separation from the Father, and a horrible, cosmic loneliness--finally death!

**The cross clearly proclaims the consequences** of a life without forgiveness and *drives home the fact* that **guilt** will not be overlooked.

### ***2. Is forgiveness possible?***

**The cross again says, Yes!**

**People can be forgiven because Jesus died as our substitute**--as the sacrificial lamb.

**He took our stripes** so that we can be healed.



### ***3. Is forgiveness just?***

**Again the cross says, Yes!**

**The Lord didn't take sin lightly, but paid a tremendous price to redeem us.**

**He went beyond mere justice in giving His **divine life** for a human life.**

**He paid the full price for sin--AND THEN SOME!**

### **3) MEANINGLESSNESS-**

**Some may not be that concerned about death, and feel that they're a pretty good person morally,**

**But modern men & women is are often willing to admit that their lives are AIMLESS and EMPTY.**

**Modern people are often unhappy!**

**One CORPORATE man described how he began to get turned around, and turned on to Jesus when he said:**

*"I asked the older generation what I should live for. And they in effect said 'seek ye first the vice-presidency and all things shall be added unto you.' But I looked at them, and many of them were vice-presidents, and they weren't happy".....so I sought Christ and his kingdom and righteousness and I FOUND REAL JOY!*

**Yes, as we do **evangelistic preaching** we proclaim the answers to these common anxieties of life:**

**We preach Christ in evangelism as the Lord over death**--because Jesus said- *"I am the resurrection and the life."*

**We preach Christ as Lord over sin and guilt**--because Jesus said- *"I am come to give my life a ransom for many."*

**We preach Christ as Lord over meaninglessness**--because Jesus said- *"I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly."*

In the end, it's not that Christ (or evangelism) is **irrelevant** that makes people turn from Him, *but that He is--TOO RELEVANT, TOO DISTURBING, TOO DEMANDING*--for He demands our total lives!

**But why "PUBLIC EVANGELISM? "**

**and WHY public "EVANGELISTIC PREACHING?"**

**A DEFINITION of Public Evangelism:**

*"Public evangelism is any evangelistic outreach that specifically attempts to reach a large group of people by proclaiming the Gospel in some type of public forum."*

It's a different approach to **"PERSONAL EVANGELISM,"**

**A DIFFERENT METHOD,**

**BUT NOT A DIFFERENT PROCESS!**

**Public evangelism is still personal evangelism.**

**It is simply a specialized platform for doing personal evangelism.**

**It is still presenting the Word of God to individual people.** It's just that many individuals are present rather than one or two.

**Public evangelism aims at achieving all of the things accomplished by "personal evangelism" --Including one-on-one contact via "counselors" or "Bible workers."**

**God has used PUBLIC EVANGELISM throughout history--and STILL USES IT TODAY!**

## **THE CONTEMPORARY ENVIRONMENT FOR EVANGELISTIC PREACHING:**

**Political, Social, and Cultural changes are greatly altering the climate in which to preach the Gospel.**

**\*Change, however, is often a good thing as “church growth” studies show that when people are experiencing changes in their lives, they are often open to personal changes--and possibly spiritual ones. They may become more receptive to the Gospel since their lives are already in “flux” and they are looking for stability and security.**

**\*But change can also present difficulties for sharing the Gospel.**

## **What are we facing today?**

### **The General Political/Social/Economic Scene:**

**1) Communism has largely collapsed around the world, esp. in Eastern Europe and Russia**

- 2) Democracy & Capitalism are on the rise**
- 3) Numerous old ethnic, religious, and national conflicts are re-emerging. (Bosnia vs. Serbia, Kurds vs. Turkey and Iraq, Pakistan vs. India, etc.)**
- 4) There is a worldwide climate of 'terrorism' and fear.**
- 5) The Middle East continues to be in turmoil.**
- 6) There are heightened tensions between Islam and Christianity—and East and West.**
- 7) The role of the European Union is rising in political, economic, and social issues.**
- 8) Russia and the West are on more cooperative terms.**
- 9) China is slowly opening to the world—including the West—esp. economically.**
- 10) The United States is the only surviving Super Power.**
- 11) The 'global economy' is increasingly coming into play.**
- 12) the 'internet' is shrinking the globe.**
- 13) The current 'Hi-Tech, Low-touch' environment has increased depersonalization and loneliness.**
- 14) People are often caught in a 'stressed-out' lifestyle.**
- 15) There are widening racial, cultural, language, education, and income gaps.**
- 16) The idea that there are 'moral absolutes' appears to be held by fewer and fewer people.**

## **Societal/Cultural Trends which hinder gospel proclamation:**

### **1) PLURALISM**

**Society accepts a variety of ideas and beliefs**

**Many claim to be religious, yet religious heritage and traditions are eroding**

**Idea of making “exclusive claims” for moral values and religious positions tend to be giving way to a spirit of “acceptance” and “non-judgmentalism”**

(homosexuality being accepted, along with pre-marital and extramarital sex, hollywood produces movies with an almost “anything goes” theme, etc.)

More couples getting married coming from very different religious backgrounds (Cokie Roberts and husband)

### **2) SECULARISM**

**Refers to the tendency to remove everything that refers to the “transcendental” or “God” from custom and consciousness.**

(comes from Latin *saeculum* [this age]) (David Larsen in Ev. Mandate, pp. 69-70)

***Religious confusion:***

**Gallup** says: *“Most Americans who profess Christianity don’t know the basic teaching of the faith, and they don’t act significantly different from non-Christians in their daily lives.”*

(National and international Religion Report, May 20, 1991)

\*(Gallup says that while Americans claim to be born-again Christians(74 % adults), less than 10% are deeply committed.)

At same time there is a new hunger for spirituality and religion as seen in the popularity of the “New Age” movement.

### 3) PRIVATISM

**ROBERT BELLAH** and co. in Habits of the Heart have classically defined the “**exaggerated individualism**” which is the bane of significant spiritual commitment.

**76 million Baby Boomers (those born between 1946-1964) are seeking self-fulfillment.**

Many today are “narcissists,” that is, those obsessively preoccupied with **self!** They practice soft living and lack discipline

**Studies show that SELF-DENIAL ethic has faded** leading to a terrible decrease in “national morality” according to David Riesman of Harvard and others.

### 4) CYNICISM

**People feel political and religious systems are unresponsive**

**Have no heroes or role models**

**People feel alone & are expecting the worst**

**OTHER IDEOLOGICAL “-ISMS” WHICH MAKES  
EVANGELISM TODAY MORE CHALLENGING:**

(EV. Mandate, pp. 30-32)

**1) Universalism-** the idea that everyone will be saved.

**Nels Ferre** suggests that HELL should be preached as *“having a school and a door in it.”* (p. 30)

**2) Social Activism-** conversion is reduced to meaning relinquishing wealth, lowering our atomic stockpile, and fighting “Big Tobacco.”

**3) Psychologism-** “pop” psychology and health and wealth messages are increasing in popularity. People are urged to look “within” for answers to their problems, rather than to look “outwardly” to God.

**4) Liberationism-** Liberation theology proclaims salvation by means of political and social means--sometimes using force.

**5) Ecumenism-** the attempt to build the “Kingdom of God” in the “here and now” by uniting various faiths under a broad system of belief which plays down distinctive Christian teachings and condemns proselytizing,

## **CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN HOW EVANGELISM AND EVANGELISTIC PREACHING IS DONE:**

### **GENERAL TRENDS:**

**1. Evangelism most commonly done by most churches in the setting of a REVIVAL SERIES!**

- Fewer straight-forward “evangelistic crusades.”
- Revivals often done in church setting
- Revivals aim to re-evangelize professing Christians as well as reach out to the unchurched
- Especially popular term in the South
- Billy Graham (Jr. and Sr.) and certain others, of course, still do large evangelistic “crusades”

## **2. Televangelism is slowly rebounding from scandals.**

(Jim Bakker and Jimmy Swaggert)

Televangelists often have area crusades in addition to TV ministry

A good number of televangelists evangelize in the context of their regular worship services:

- Robert Schuller*
- Jerry Falwell*
- Charles Stanley*
- Bill Hybels*

**Televangelists often features some kind of social ministry.**

- \*Feeding children
- \*Building homes for the homeless
- \*Clothing the poor
- \*Sponsor an educational institution

## **3. There is a strong emphasis on ‘small groups.’**

People are seeking intimacy and comfort in getting to know people on a one-to-one basis. Discussion groups, reading groups, common-problems groups, and Bible study groups are popular.

## **4. Popularity of experimental “Mega-Churches.”**



These churches offer to meet “felt needs” through innovative worship services and various educational programs.

- \*Willow Creek
- \*Crystal Cathedral

Contemporary music, drama, lively audience participation featured.

Often based on transfer growth or biological growth--but also try to reach unchurched through “friendship evangelism” of members

Willow Creek devotes Saturday evening and Sunday services to “seekers,” while Wednesday and Thursday evening services target the “believers.”

Educational programs feature topics such as:

*“Strengthening Family Finances”*

*“Coping with Grief”*

*“Enhancing Parenting Skills”*

*“Divorce Recovery”*

## **5. The practice of holding a traditional ‘Sunday Evening’ evangelistic service is dying out.**

Was a historically popular tradition in many churches--such as the Southern Baptist church--but just not as effective anymore.

## **6. Para-church organizations are growing in influence.**

- Campus Crusade for Christ
- Navigators
- Promise-Keepers
- InterVarsity Fellowship

**7. Few local Pastors are holding their own public evangelistic meetings; there continues to be an emphasis on the ‘professional’ evangelist.**

Most emphasize “personal evangelism” in various forms or have a “professional evangelist” hold meetings.

**8. Public evangelism is viewed as “difficult” in North America as compared to other parts of the world.**

Growth generally is small (George Barna suggests that only a small percentage of converts are made through public evangelism. (See tape - “*Does Evangelism Have a Future in America?*” (1995)

Great growth in Central and South America, Africa, Eastern Europe, Russia, Pacific Rim (Korea)--and other areas.

In 1900, 84% of world’s Christians were in the West. By 2000 it is projected that only 29% of Christians will be from the West (The Evangelism Mandate, p. 122)

**DAVID LARSEN** says:

*“The North American church in general is resting in a morass of passivity. . . . There are a hundred and thirty five million unchurched people in the U.S., making our country the fifth largest unchurched country in the world (behind China, Russia, India, and Indonesia).” The Evangelism Mandate, p. 123*

According to The Barna Research Group, only 24% of U.S. Citizens who claim to be Christians worship God at least once a week. The Evangelism Mandate, p. 123

### **TRENDS WITHIN ADVENTISM:**

**1. The number and importance of full-time evangelists is diminished.**

Not every conference has an evangelist

**2. There are far fewer large campaigns than in the past—except for recent ‘NET’ programs.**

Ken Cox, John Carter, and Mark Finley have some of the larger campaigns

**3. Pastors and congregations are beginning to show signs of weariness with frequent ‘NET’ crusades, and are beginning to show renewed interest in more personal, local, public evangelism.**

Churches are looking to use more ‘local,’ ‘live’ evangelists.

**4. The outreach to former communist or ‘previously-restricted’ countries, such as Russia, is very popular.**

Many Lay and professional preachers have gone to these areas.

- 5. Evangelistic growth continues to be much higher outside of North America in places such as South- and Inter-America.**
- 6. There continues to be the historic emphasis on the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation in public evangelism—while interest grows in exploring new approaches.**

\*Smaller groups

\*\*Pre-packaged series

\*Continuing emphasis on prophecy

- 7. An emphasis on ‘small-group’ and ‘cell-church’ evangelism is catching on in some areas of Adventism.**

- 8. There continues to be a strong emphasis on ‘*DOCTRINAL*’ preaching and the uniqueness of becoming an SDA.**

- 9. Continued use of specialized radio and television programs as evangelistic tools—with new ‘*experimental*’ formats.**

It is Written, Breath of Life, VOP, etc.

- 10. “Sequencing” programs are still seen as important preparation steps for harvesting new believers via public evangelism.**

\*Correspondence courses

\*stress and smoking-cessation programs

\*Nutrition and cooking classes

**11. There is very little real “innovation” in thematic approaches, operational methods, or advertising.**

Continued use of old standbys: prophecy, archaeology, etc.

Programs are conducted just as they have been for years as far as advertising and the program format and elements

**12. There remains a tendency to target ‘other Christians’ rather than those of other world religions—or of no faith –esp. in North America.**

## **HOW TO CREATE INNOVATIVE EVANGELISTIC SERMONS!**

**1. Be more “expository!”**

**2. Use the “inductive” approach more freely!**

**3. Don't limit your sermons to the "prophetic" portions of scripture!**

**4. Focus more on Biblical "narratives," "parables," and "biographies!"**

**-“Gospel” narratives**

**-Acts** - the stories of the expansion of the Early Church

**-Parables:**

“The Loving Father”

“The Talents”

“The Wedding Banquet”

**-Biographies:**

Governor “Felix” (Acts 24:24-26)

“Rich Young Ruler” (Matt. 19)

“Peter” and “Judas”

**5. Always make your sermons deal directly with a “practical,” “contemporary” issue!**

-Justice

-Morality & Ethics in personal and professional life

-Financial Security vs. Greed/Generosity

-Violence/Drugs/Crime vs. Law & Order

-Humankind's “stewardship” over the earth and its environment

-Family/Marriage issues

-War and Peace

Mental/Emotional Health and Happiness

**6. Make sure that each sermon clearly reveals something about the character of God and His love for Humankind!**

## **AN S.D.A. STRATEGY OF EVANGELISM**

### **1) SPECIAL APPROACH - *Wholistic Restoration***

**\*Mental** - Education = through truth-filled thinking.

***Jh. 8:32- "The truth shall make you free."***

**\*Physical** - Health Emphasis

***3 Jh. 2 - "I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well."***

***Isaiah 62:12*** - refers to the "Holy People."

Holy = “whole,” “complete,” “healthy,” etc.-- from old English word “Hale” or “Heal.”

**Jh. 5:6** Jesus said to man at pool of Bethesda - *“Do yo want to be made whole?”* (KJV) or *“well”* (NKJ)

Desire of Ages, p. 556 says: *“Holiness is wholeness for God.”*

**\*Spiritual** - Spiritual Nurture = Care and spiritual instruction through Bible preaching and teaching

**\*Social** - Fellowship with God and Others

**Jh. 15** - *“I am the vine your are the branches.”*

**Jh. 17 :11** - *“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one.”* (NIV)

Just as **JESUS** met the **Paralytic** in *Matt. 9:2,6* at every level of his need, so **WE** are called to do that in our evangelistic efforts!

The **PARALYTIC** was:

***Mentally*** - depressed and discouraged; Jesus cheered him up

***Physically*** - crippled; Jesus healed him

***Spiritually*** - guilt-ridden and under judgment; Jesus forgave him

***Socially*** - hampered; Jesus restored his independence and Mobility and his ability to interact with others

## **2) SPECIAL DOCTRINES** - i.e., our *Unique “Combination: of Doctrines*

See Doctrinal Statement of 27 Fundamentals of Belief!



**3) SPECIAL TIMING** - Raised up in the “*time of the end*” to announce the Judgment (*Dan. 8:14*); 1844-Second Coming)

**4) SPECIAL PURPOSE** - To urge all Christians to join us in doing three things:

1. Delivering the Elijah Message in the form of the Three Angels' Messages (*Rev. 14, Mal. 4:5-6*)

-*Judgment is come*

-*Fall of Babylon*

-*Warning about the Beast and His Mark*

2. Calling for a world-wide “Remnant” fellowship.

-*Rev. 12:17; Rev. 18:4*

3. Preparing for the Final Harvest and the Coming of Christ

-*Rev. 14:14-15*

## **ARE 'DOCTRINAL' SERMONS 'EVANGELISTIC?'**

**\*See Loscalzo's observation and concern about "doctrines" on p.58 of Evangelistic Sermons That Connect.**

**1) Yes, if they winsomely present the character and truth of God and bring people into a "SAVING" new relationship with God—OR move individuals as step closer to Him!**

-Doctrine simply means "teaching!"

-The doctrines or teachings of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ certainly are evangelistic in presenting "good news" about God and his intentions toward his human children (especially related to sin and death)--and nurture the beginning or deepening of a personal relationship between us and God..

**-Doctrines** certainly have to do with a saving relationship with Christ and the Father.

***1 Tim. 4:16*** - "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."

***2 John 9*** - "Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son."

**-Jesus' evangelistic ministry involved definite "teaching's" or doctrines!**

See **Luke 4:16-18** where Jesus tells what he was to tell and to do!

*The Holy Spirit has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of  
sight for the blind, to release the oppressed . . . .”*

-Jesus announced the “*euangelion*” of the “**kingdom of God.**”

+The idea that there is a “kingdom” is a doctrine.

+And everything that has to do with the “KINGDOM” is good news in the form of doctrine.

+Christ is the King of the kingdom and that is the ultimate basis of the good news!

## **2) Yes, if each doctrine is Christ-centered, kingdom-centered, and offers “good news” about present and future salvation.**

-Jesus’ teachings in the “Sermon on the Mt.” represent such evangelistic doctrines.

See **Matt. 5-7 !**

-Jesus’ doctrines in this great sermon offer clear “principles” showing how the kingdom and kingdom people operate!

-The teachings of Christ have a “here and now” dimension, as well as “kingdom to come” perspective.

## **3) Yes, if the doctrines set people free from error in thought and action and enable them to enter into a special fellowship with Christ called “discipleship.”**

Notice, **John 8:32-** “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples .  
Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32) NIV

-Being “released” (i.e., set free) is, again, a key concept that is central to the “good news” of evangelism  
(as Loscalzo has pointed out on p. 52 of Evangelistic Preaching That Connects.)

-Doctrines “release” people from ignorance and error--from mental, emotional, and spiritual bondage.

## **ADDITIONAL FACTS ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD WHICH MAKES EVANGELISM DIFFICULT:**

(Ev. Mandate, pp. 122-123)

**1) Half of the world’s population is poor!** Half a billion are on the verge of starvation.

**2) While in 1900, 84% of the Christians were in the West**, currently around 30%--or less--are in the West!

**3) Soon there will be more missionaries from “The two-thirds World” than from the West.**

**4) Old religions are resurging!** Hindu fundamentalism is claiming converts from Christianity faster than Christianity is making converts.  
(Ev. Mandate, p. 123)

**5) The North American church is caught in a morass of passivity!**  
It has been said that there are a hundred and thirty-five million unchurched people in the U.S., making our country the fifth largest unchurched country in the world (behind China, Russia, India, and Indonesia).

**6) Only 34% of U.S. Citizens who claim to be Christians worship God at least once a week!** Ninety percent of the people in Alaska are unchurched and 70 percent in Hawaii, with California, Oregon and Washington leading the lower forty-eight states.”  
(George Barna, cited in Ev. Mandate, p. 123)

**7) Today there is a massive moral decline in our Western society!**  
Christianity has been acculturated, mainline churches are dying, while evangelicals--generally--are plateauing and becoming all too passive. Mormons are growing the fastest among religious groups.--6% annually.

**8) Movies and television are, by far, out-competing the church for listeners.**

**9) The “good news” is that many souls are being won**  
in **Central and South America**, in **sub-Sahara Africa**, on the **Pacific Rim** (Korea is now almost 1/3 Christian), and in **eastern Europe** and the **former Soviet Union**, we see a tremendous interest in Christianity. (Ev. Mandate, p. 122)

*(\*NEEDS SECTION TO BE UPDATED- SEE BARNAS NEW BOOK- “BOILING POINT!”*

**\*RIGHT HERE IN AMERICA**, evangelism has been crucial for the CHURCH!

**Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette** has documented the relationship between revivalism and evangelism--and **CHURCH GROWTH in America**.

1800 - 6.9 % of the population in america belonged to a church(Latourette)

1910 - 43.5 % of the population in America belonged to a church (Latourette believes that the tremendous evangelistic work during this period directly correlates to this enormous change)

1947 - 76% of the population in America belonged to a church ("Emerging Trends" Jan. 83)

1982 - 67% of the population in America belonged to a church (According to "Emerging Trends" Jan. 83) {Some would suggest that many churches lost their enthusiasm from the 60's to the 80's and that this directly contributed to the loss of growth in church affiliation}

**\*Currently-** 68% of the population in America belongs to a church.  
(John Wimber in his book, Power Evangelism)

**Church attendance** has--according to some sources--also been on a downward trend over the past 15 yrs. (Power Evangelism)

*(\*THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE UPDATED!) SEE BARNA'S NEW BOOK:  
"BOILING POINT"*

## **OLD TESTAMENT EVANGELISM**

(See Evang. Mandate, by David Larsen, Chap. 4)

While there is **not a lot of "formal" preaching in the O.T.**, there is plenty of "*proclamation*" regarding sin and the way to salvation by means of prophets and teachers.

The **sinfulness of humankind was made clear** and the idea of needing forgiveness was clearly communicated in various ways.

**Noah** was a preacher of righteousness--in preparing people for the flood!

Later, the whole **sacrificial system** proclaimed the idea of being made righteous and clean before God.

**Paul** says in **Gal. 3:8-9** "*The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'*" (emphasis mine)

**Surely God was at work through prophets** telling of a great **Messiah** who would come and suffer and be beaten and killed for the sins of the people--though the message was often distorted or misunderstood.

Look at **Jonah** and how he was sent with a message from God to turn the people from their sins.

And **Israel, itself, was to be an evangelistic movement**, bringing people to God.

While it can be said that, “the preaching office as such was not to be established until New Testament times” (Evang. Mandate, p. 48), nevertheless, God was active in proclaiming the sinfulness of humankind and the forgiveness of God!